

# PUTTING OUR BEST FEET FORWARD - A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO HEALTHY FEET

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## Background

The Northern Grampians Shire Foot Care Program is a collaborative between the HACC funded Aged and Disability Services at Northern Grampians Shire Council (NGSC), Stawell Regional Health (SRH), East Wimmera Health Service (EWHS), the Grampians Region HACC Project Officer and supported by the Grampians Pyrenees Primary Care Partnership.

The initial project evolved in response to an increasing reliance on local podiatry services for basic foot care.

The goal of the foot care project was develop the skills of the existing community support workforce to develop the knowledge and skill base of Direct Care Workers (DCW) to:

1. Support personal care clients to care for their feet,
2. Identify when a client should see a podiatrist, and for selected DCWs
3. Offer additional training for DCWs to provide basic nail care under the supervision of a local podiatrist

## Method

A community development approach was used to develop the foot care program. The working group engaged key stakeholders and ensured that existing policy guidelines and resources were incorporated.

## Results

Over 2 years the key elements of the project have been developed and piloted. They include:

- An education session to direct care workers about foot hygiene and the podiatrist's role
- A screening tool to support DCWs to recognise when a client should see a podiatrist
- A communication and referral pathway,
- Opportunities for DCWs to do the foot, skin & nail care unit, and
- Additional training & supervision to provide basic foot care

## Outcomes

Since the implementation of the project in September 2014, six personal care clients now have basic foot support in their home and a review is currently underway

The program guidelines and resources are available at: <http://wimmerapep.org.au/hacc-and-community-aged-care/grampians-region/foot-care-program/northern-grampians-foot-care-project/>