



To use an interpreter over the telephone – Ph: 9280 1907

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The State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) will close over the Christmas period from 3.00 p.m. on 24 December until 8.30 a.m. on Monday, 4 January, 2016.

An emergency repair service will be available during this period by phoning SWEP on 1300 747 937 and selecting the 'press 1' option. If your query is not urgent, you can leave a message on our message bank by selecting the 'press 2' option and we will call you back when we return.

We wish you all a safe and happy festive season.

Warmest regards and best wishes, SWEP Management and Staff



## Welcome to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition of SWEP e-News for Consumers.

Hello everyone, another year has whizzed by, it seems like only last month that we were compiling last year's annual Consumer Newsletter!

To ensure that you can find information about what SWEP does we've released a new version of our brochure this year and are very excited about the improved functionality of our new website. While the website has been active since August, it won't be long before prescribers are able to lodge and check statuses of applications for clients on-line.

We've also released a series of monthly 'Performance Snapshots' throughout the year to provide information about the number of people we help through the different programs that we administer. You will notice these snapshots on our website.

We've changed the way in which you can reach our teams by telephone recently and now, if you know which team you want to speak to, you can select an option to talk to that team directly. This year we have also been able to offer basic insurance for our wheelchair and scooter users through Blue Badge Insurance and you will find more information about these initiatives in this edition.

Like all of our stakeholders, we are watching with keen interest how our clients will transition to the National Disability Insurance Agency next year. We have established strong relationships with the Agency staff at the Geelong trial site and continue to adapt processes so that our systems meets the needs of this exciting program. We are



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anticipating that we will continue to be involved as the NDIS transitions across Victoria over the next few years and we will update you as soon as we know how the Agency plans to roll this out.

The demand on most of our programs is extremely high, and this year we have formalised a process for prescribers to tell us when client's circumstances or needs change and the urgency for assistance increases while on our wait list. We regularly meet with clients and carer support groups, so please let us know if you would like us to meet with a group that you are involved with.

Some of you may have been asked to participate in a SWEP survey and we encourage you to fill these in and send back to us. Please give us feedback about these new initiatives and/or your experience with us, it's the best way for us to understand what we can improve as our service delivery model continues to evolve.

The SWEP extended family continues to grow and we have welcomed to the world a number of new babies in the last 12 months. Once again we have farewelled some of our team, and welcomed new staff.

Jeni Burton, Director

## SWEP STAFF TRAINING/INSERVICES

Throughout 2015 the SWEP Team have had many training opportunities.

In March four members of our Aids & Equipment Team were invited by the Ballarat Health Services, Occupational Therapy Department, to attend client home visits. These staff got to experience first-hand the comprehensive client assessment phase undertaken by therapists (prior to lodgement of an Application with SWEP) which is pivotal in ensuring that people receive the most suitable equipment.

In May SWEP was visited by representatives of the Disability Services Commissioner (DSC) who provided training for our admin teams focusing on communication skills and complaints management. Chris who works with DSC to deliver this training (who is a blogger, poet, public speaker, actor and social advocate through his business CVI Disability Awareness Consultancy), facilitated a valuable role play session, where administrative officers were presented with complex scenarios and had the opportunity to hone their communication and telephone skills. This was followed up by a further mandatory full day communication training program for all SWEP staff facilitated by Ballarat Health Services in August.

In September SWEP staff welcomed Emilio Savle, President of Disabled Motorists Australia. Emilio shared this life experiences with us, his broad knowledge of aids & equipment with regard to functional independence and an overview of his extensive advocacy work in addressing accessibility issues in public transport, accommodation etc.



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## Affordable Insurance for wheelchair/scooter users

SWEP and Blue Badge Insurance Australia have recently announced the launch of a specialist insurance product designed specifically for users of funded equipment. We have partnered to create a product that will protect scooter and wheelchair users against accidental loss and damage, third party property damage and third party personal injury.

The insurance will cost scooter users just \$105 per annum and wheelchair users (both manual and electric) from \$155 per annum, depending on the cost of their chair.

Clients will now have access to a product that protects them against accidents and other unexpected events through Blue Badge Insurance. The insurance is not compulsory and this offer is available only for SWEP clients in Victoria. This product became available to SWEP clients on 1 September 2015.

## Customer Services Changes

SWEP have expanded the options you can choose when contacting us via our 1300 747 937 phone number. This will enable you to directly contact an Administration Officer in the team you require. This change occurred in October 2015. Previously you had 4 options to pick from, this has now been expanded to 9 options as follows:-

- If you are an NDIA participant or have a query in relation to the NDIA program please press 0
- If you require a repair or maintenance to your equipment please press 1
- If you are calling in regards to continence products please press 2
- If you are calling in regards to oxygen enquiries please press 3
- If you have an enquiry in relation to a supported accommodation application please press 4
- If you have an enquiry in relation to home modifications please press 5
- If you have an enquiry in relation to a child's aids & equipment application please press 6
- If you have an enquiry in relation to a adults aids & equipment application please press 7
- For all other SWEP enquiries please press 8
- To hear these options again please press 9

The after-hours message will remain the same so you can still choose option 1 to request an emergency repair or option 2 to leave a message for a next business day response.



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## Quality Children's Equipment Available from Re-issue

SWEP has a large amount of high quality children's equipment available in the re-issue pool. Due to the ever changing needs of children with a disability (including growth) equipment is often returned to the re-issue pool in a quicker timeframe and in excellent condition. Re-issue equipment reduces delays for clients to receive equipment and from sourcing large amounts of gap funding for the purchase of new equipment.

Re-issue stock is managed by the SWEP contracted Supplier, Chemtronics, at their warehouse located at Thomastown in Melbourne. As each item of equipment is returned to the warehouse it undergoes a complete viability check and service, and refurbishment prior to re-issuing to the next client.

Chemtronics Direct follows stringent cleaning guidelines to ensure all equipment is thoroughly cleaned and disinfected prior to being reissued to a client. As Chemtronics Direct is owned by Cabrini Health, the cleaning guidelines used have also been ratified by Cabrini Health's infection control department.

All equipment is cleaned in line with these guidelines which include –

- Preliminary cleaning of larger items with a hot water high pressure washer to remove any larger contaminants;
- Cleaning all surfaces with the appropriate detergent and hospital grade disinfectant suitable for the material being cleaned;
- Any equipment with upholstered parts is also further steam cleaned and disinfected;
- Once cleaned, equipment is covered in plastic sheets to eliminate any possible cross contamination, prior to delivery to the client







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Chemtronics has a long association servicing medical equipment in medical facilities across Australia. The same cleaning guidelines adopted when preparing SWEP equipment, are accepted across these medical facilities. The guidelines adopted have been done so with consideration of:

- Australian Guidelines for the Prevention and Control of Infection in Healthcare - National Health and Medical Research Council [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au) © Australian Government 2010
- The Decontamination of Medical Devices, Cleaning, Disinfection and Sterilization, Guidelines and Procedures – National Health Service (NHS) (UK) Walsall Community Health. May 2009



## Low cost items

SWEP funds a number of low cost, personal use items which are not re-issuable. If you receive funding for one of these items, you retain the ownership of that equipment and are responsible for disposal when it is no longer needed. SWEP will not collect the following items.

- Bath boards; bedside commodes; bed sticks/poles; Kingston / Bridge chairs; kitchen trolleys; over toilet frames; shower stools/chairs; walking frames (Pick up or Zimmer); toilet seat; wheeled walkers; child car seats

When you contact SWEP for a collection, the customer service officer will discuss with you what items SWEP will collect.



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## PROGRAM UP-DATES

### Aids & Equipment Program (A&EP Children)

The Aids and Equipment Children's program has received 3,465 applications in the last 12 months, assisting 1,849 children in obtaining equipment.

The Top-up Fund for Children program received 211 applications for new wheelchairs (with modifications) and walkers, supporting 254 children to obtain those pieces of equipment.

The SWEP Management team continue to focus on budget management strategies in an effort to reduce waiting times for approx. 650 children requiring aids and equipment through both the Aids and Equipment Program and Top-Up Fund for Children.

### Supported Accommodation Assistance Scheme (SAEAS)

The SAEAS program received 995 applications for equipment and assisted over 580 clients in the last 12 months.

The SAEAS team is focused on providing quality service by understanding the very complex needs of many of our clients and working with their registered prescribers to ensure that the equipment is funded within the earliest timeframes.

The program is also working with SWEP's repair agent, Chemtronics and selected SAEAS clients in trialling and scheduling 12 monthly maintenance of equipment. This planned maintenance should improve the life span of the equipment and alleviate the number of repairs required.

The Department of Health and Human Services now have a new requirement in the assessment of height adjustable beds funded through SWEP for people with a disability who reside in accommodation services that are staffed and managed by DHHS. The Department has released the '*Standard requirements for height adjustable beds*' to guide the prescription of beds for residents of accommodation services managed by the Department. Registered prescribers were advised of the new requirements in November.

### Aids & Equipment Program (A&EP Adults)

The Aids & Equipment program continues to receive a steady flow of client applications. For the current financial year (2015-2016) we have already processed 5,113 client applications and placed 5,912 orders for equipment. As we are only 5 months into the current financial year we expect to exceed last year's total number of applications received (12,393).

In 2014 SWEP contracted 10 Suppliers following the tender process for non-customised low cost equipment and the new catalogue of equipment has been available now for approx. 12 months. SWEP has seen significant savings which has enabled us to supply more items to more clients within the same budget. This has also enabled us to reduce gap amounts for clients, as some tendered items no longer require gap funding.



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## PROGRAM UP-DATES continued

### SWEP and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

SWEP continue to build their relationship as an 'in-kind' service provider to the National Disability Insurance Agency and are now connected to and are servicing over 1,150 participants living in the Barwon trial site.

We now have a team of 7 staff working only on NDIS applications and for the 2014/2015 financial year we processed just under 3000 NDIS applications and ordered over 3,500 items for NDIS participants.

SWEP are also very excited that the long awaited transition plan for the remainder of Victoria has been released. Victoria has signed a bilateral agreement with the Commonwealth that outlines the transition plan from July 2016 to June 2019. It is estimated that upon completion of full rollout there will be over 105,000 people registered as participants of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

The sequence of transition across Victoria is as follows:

1 July 2016	Banyule, Darebin, Nillumbik, Whittlesea, Yarra
1 January 2017	Ararat, Ballarat, Golden Plains, Hepburn, Moorabool, Pyrenees
1 May 2017	Campaspe, Central Goldfields, Greater Bendigo, Loddon, Macedon Ranges, Mt Alexander
1 October 2017	Inner Gippsland: Bass Coast, Baw Baw, Latrobe, South Gippsland, Ovens Murray: Alpine, Benalla, Indigo, Mansfield, Towong, Wangaratta, Wodonga Western District: Corangamite, Glenelg, Hindmarsh, Horsham, Moyne, Northern Grampians, Southern Grampians, Warrnambool, West Wimmera, Yarriambiack
1 November 2017	Inner East: Boroondara, Manningham, Monash, Whitehorse Outer East: Knox, Maroondah, Yarra Ranges
1 March 2018	Hume, Moreland
1 April 2018	Bayside, Frankston, Glen Eira, Kingston, Mornington Peninsula, Port Phillip, Stonnington
1 September 2018	Cardinia, Casey, Greater Dandenong
1 October 2018	Brimbank Melton: Brimbank, Melton Western Melbourne: Hobsons Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Moonee Valley, Wyndham
1 January 2019	Goulburn: Greater Shepparton, Mitchell, Moira, Murrindindi, Strathbogie Mallee: Buloke, Gannawarra, Mildura, Swan Hill Outer Gippsland: East Gippsland, Wellington



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## Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme (VMSS)

Enhancements to the VMSS service delivery model have continued in line with other SWEP programs including:

- Implementation of a prescriber registration and credentialing framework to ensure assessments are undertaken by prescribers who have necessary qualifications and level of expertise to make recommendations on the most appropriate vehicle modification for our clients.
- Triaging of applications to determine each client's urgency of need and order of access to funding.
- Appointment of two expert vehicle modification Clinical Advisors to our Clinical Advisory Panel who now provide support and advice to the program and our prescribers.

In the past 12 months the VMSS program has processed 227 applications, with 190 people receiving vehicle modifications.

## Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP)

The Domiciliary Oxygen Program currently supports 3,356 clients with the provision of 2,161 concentrators and 3,904 cylinders per month.

We have changed the way we report back to Physicians when annual reviews are due. The team are completing the documentation with the number of cylinders, as reported by our supplier, that each client uses per month over the previous six months. This enables the Physician to review the number of cylinders a client uses in comparison to the prescribed usage and flow rate. After this review equipment options are frequently changed. If you have any queries about the new processes please feel free to call the DOP team who will be happy to assist you.

## Contenance Program (CA)

During the last 12 months the Contenance Program has processed 9,983 applications and assisted 6,989 clients in receiving continence products. There is currently no waitlist for children however, demand on the adults program continues to increase with approx. 1,500 clients waiting for assistance.

In September 2015, the Contenance Program went back to market in the form of an Open Tender for the provision of all continence products funded by the State-wide Equipment Program (for non-disposable products) and the National Disability Scheme (for disposable products).

This process is due to be finalised in late February 2016 which should result in an increase in projected savings from the current contract to enable SWEP to assist a greater number of clients within the same budget, whilst ensuring the provision of quality products is maintained.





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## SWEP CLIENT COMPLIMENTS



### The following feedback was received regarding the SWEP/ Chemtronics repairs service

*"My wheelchair is now OK. XX contacted me and called a couple of days ago. He was very efficient and thorough, and made sure that the relevant connections are exactly as they should be.*

*I am very grateful to you for your prompt, courteous attention to the problem. When my powered wheelchair suddenly refuses to function, I am in all sorts of trouble.*

*Thank you very, very much. Sincerely,"*

*"Dear XX*

*A couple of weeks ago I experienced a problem with my wheelchair in that one of my front caster wheels was not rolling.*

*I contacted SWEP and can't thank your staff enough for the service I was provided. I think XX took my call (my apologies for not being 100% as she deserves recognition) and couldn't have been more helpful. As you are aware I have previously managed problems with my chair myself, so was not sure of the process however in future will not hesitate to seek assistance.*

*Within half an hour of my call Chemtronics contacted me and my chair was fixed in time for me to enjoy my birthday dinner that evening.*

*People are often quick to complain and positive feedback is often not shared so please pass my thanks to your team. Regards"*



### The following feedback letter was recently received from a client of the Aids and Equipment Program

*I just needed to drop by and say thankyou. THANKYOU to all involved in approving and arranging for my scooter to be delivered to me.*

*It has been a life changing experience. No longer do I have to put my life in danger catching buses. The freedom in being able to do what was beyond me ~ means more than I can put into words. Pre-scooter I use to use a coffee shop to sit quietly as I attempted to control the pain in my body. Post-scooter I have been able to sit in a coffee shop and enjoy the coffee. It is the first time in around a decade that this caffeine addict has had that pleasure. (this was a surprise I never expected)*

*To One and All a heart-felt THANKYOU! Especially to those who would laugh at my bad jokes when I use to ring to find out what was happening (and for the patience of everyone when I rang).*

*with respect and kindest regards*

RECEIVED



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## CONSUMER SURVEY

During May and June DBM Consultants conducted a formal survey on behalf of the Department of Health and Human Services, to gauge customer satisfaction with Victorian DHHS funded Aids & Equipment Programs.

Survey results confirmed an overall customer satisfaction of 88% over a range of services, being a slight increase of 2% from the previous year. The final report will be used to assist the planning of future customer service initiatives and service improvements by the State-wide Equipment Program.