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Welcome to the 1st Edition of SWEP e-News for consumers.

Welcome to the very overdue First Edition of our Newsletter. We aim to update you on what's new in our world every 6 months. The SWEP model continues to evolve, as does the suite of programs that sit under our umbrella.

This year, SWEP has been nominated as an 'in-kind' service provider for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). This means that people who are assessed as needing equipment in the Victorian pilot will still get their equipment via SWEP. The roll-out of the NDIS is a very exciting time for us all, and SWEP is very pleased to be involved in helping build the foundations for this concept.

We are developing strong networks with our interstate equivalent programs, sharing information and ideas. I actively encourage you to give us feedback about your experience with us, as this helps us to identify processes that can improve our service.

We are currently looking at how we can provide more information to you about our service and next year we will be introducing client welcome packs for new clients.

The team has been very busy travelling across the State and meeting with key stakeholder groups. We have just finished meeting with our metro based oxygen prescribers and have also conducted a series of forums across the State, to meet with our continence prescribers about changes within that program. 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.

Jeni Burton

Director, State-wide Equipment Program

The State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) will be closed over the Christmas period from COB on Tuesday, 24 December until 8.30 a.m. on Thursday, 2 January, 2014. An emergency breakdown service will be available during this period, by phoning SWEP on 1300 747 937 and selecting the 'press 2' option. *If your query is not urgent, you can leave a message on our message bank by selecting the 'press 1' 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



SWEP CLIENT INSERVICE

“Walk a Mile in My Shoes” says Peter



In November the State-wide Equipment Program welcomed Peter Smith, who provided a client in-service for the team. Peter had been invited by the SWEP Director following valuable feedback of his interactions with SWEP.

Peter, who has enjoyed a successful career as a Teacher, provided a rare insight into his experiences living with Post-Polio syndrome, and the challenges he has faced following a stroke in 2009. Peter is now reliant on a powered wheelchair, modified vehicle and the strong support network provided by his wife and two adult sons.

Peter has inspired the SWEP Management Team to commence planning for a staff training initiative “walk a mile” in 2014. The aim is to provide staff with the tools to develop an understanding of the difficult and diverse challenges faced by our clients and the “human story” behind each application, whilst striving towards positive individualised interactions and outcomes.

A WORD FROM PETER

I was really pleased to receive the invitation to talk to staff of SWEP as a result of my feedback. I was delighted both to hear of the terrific things being done and to have my misconceptions ‘blown away’ by the dedication and responsiveness of the staff at SWEP. I think that the services provided by SWEP have really assisted in me maintaining my independence. I am also a strong believer that if I think that the service I receive is not what I expect then I have a responsibility to speak out, not in an angry way, but to try to get my point heard. It is very important to me to be able to engage and negotiate on behalf of people with disability because I have the skills and capacity to advocate for people with disability. I look forward to continuing my relationship with the staff at SWEP.





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Why Re-Issue?

SWEP has a large amount of equipment available for re-issue including manual and powered wheelchairs, hoists, scooters, shower commodes, beds, mattresses, pressure care and paediatric equipment. Upon receipt of an application from your prescriber a mandatory check is performed to see whether the equipment requested is available from the re-issue pool. 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 refurbishment, viability check and service, prior to re-issuing to the next client. All re-issue assets are registered via a re-issue data base, which allows prescribers to view and select suitable re-issue equipment for their clients.

For the 2012/2013 financial year SWEP assisted 1,422 unique clients with 2,129 re-issue equipment items. By supplying refurbished items, rather than funding new equipment, SWEP achieved an approximate saving of \$3Million for the 2012/2013 financial year. These significant savings enable SWEP to service more clients and assist in reducing waiting times.

SWEP has recently appointed Janet Colbourne into our Asset Management Team Leader position. Janet is responsible for monitoring SWEP assets for re-issue and liaising closely with prescribers to ensure smooth and timely processing of re-issue applications.





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PROGRAM UP-DATES

Aids & Equipment Program (A&EP)

The A&EP Children's team are very pleased to report that 1,725 children have received assistance towards their equipment since January this year. The equipment provided through the A&E Childrens program helps to enhance the lives of the children supported, their families, and carers greatly with the provision of a broad range of equipment from orthotics through to power wheelchairs. The exciting Top-up Fund for Children program has been able to support 232 children since January this year with the provision of funds for wheelchairs and walkers. This program covers the gap between subsidy and full item cost for children's power and manual wheelchairs, pressure care cushions and walking aids. These equipment items go a long way towards enhancing a child's independence, school experience and the family's ability to access the community.

Did you know that the A&E Adult's program (over 18) has provided subsidised equipment to over 7,250 clients since January 2013 enabling independency, access to the community and safety in their own home? Equipment provided such as manual and power wheelchairs, orthotics, walking and toilet aids, transfer equipment and home modifications supports families and carers in their demanding roles.

Continance Aids Program (CA)

The Continance team would like to welcome you all to their world. It has been an incredibly busy period in the CA program at SWEP. Having been recently appointed as the new CA Manager, I must say I am in awe at the numerous projects, reviews and actions being undertaken by the team with the major focus always being on continuous improvement and best practice models. The products provided through the CA Program continue to assist and enable people to remain living independently in their own home and actively participate in the community. Over the last couple of weeks the team has run a number of forums across the State, engaging with our continance nurse prescribers, proposing, discussing and evaluating various initiatives, continually striving to assist more clients through best practice initiatives.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Scheme (SAEAS)

SAEAS provide funding for clients living in shared supported accommodation funded or registered through DHS under either: the Disability Act 2006 or Children, Youth and Families Act 2005. Many of our SAEAS clients have complex needs, requiring highly customised equipment. Despite the complexities and requirements, the program utilises re-issue equipment wherever viable. The program has supported over 330 clients since January this year.

Should you have any queries regarding any of our programs or the equipment that we fund, please do not hesitate to call and speak to one of our team members, who will be happy to assist you. Ph: 1300 747937.



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PROGRAM UP-DATES continued

Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP)



At present there are 3,738 people receiving oxygen from the Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP). Each person who uses oxygen cylinders receives a delivery each month to ensure they have adequate oxygen to ensure they can access the community.

This year we have been busy reviewing client packages to ensure that the program is meeting individual specific needs. These reviews will continue next year and this will be an ongoing project for the DOP team to ensure all clients are receiving the appropriate equipment based on their regular usage and flow rates as prescribed by their Physicians.

In July this year the DOP purchased four Portable Oxygen Concentrators (POC's). These POC's are handbag sized and designed for intermittent usage only.

These POC's are now available for loan to Respiratory Physicians across the State to allow for client assessment of suitable flow rates. You may be eligible for a POC if your saturation levels are below 88%. The assessment involves a six minute walk test with saturation levels taken after each minute. For more information about your eligibility please speak with your Respiratory Physician.

Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme (VMSS)

It is great to report that over 150 people have received vehicle modifications since January this year. These modifications can be life changing for so many people, and it can be a simple driver modification to allow a client to drive their car independently or a lowered floor conversion to allow a child to be safely transported in their wheelchair. There are many different types of modifications available, so if you have any questions at all please don't hesitate to call SWEP and ask to speak to one of our friendly staff who will be more than happy to answer any questions you might have.



SWEP TENDER...DID YOU KNOW??

SWEP currently has a tender out for the provision of non-customised aids and equipment. We encourage consumer involvement across all areas of SWEP and this tender is no exception, with the appointment of a consumer representative on the evaluation panel as well as representation from other assistive technology stakeholders. This tender will be finalised mid next year and we hope to see significant benefits, especially to our clients with the introduction of standard equipment items, provided by quality and consumer oriented suppliers, and reduced equipment costs allowing more clients access to equipment sooner. Updates will be posted on the SWEP Website.



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SWEP CLIENT COMPLIMENTS



The following feedback letter was recently received from a client of the Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme and Aids and Equipment Program

"Thank you so much for all your help with organising our vehicle modification subsidy, but most of all, thank you for being so delightful and friendly on the phone!"

We have been feeling just about "buried" by all of the paperwork and medical appointments associated with Xxxx's condition and I can't tell you how lovely it was to hear your bright, cheerful voice on the phone, and the fact that you could give us some "real" information.

It is fantastic that the car and the wheelchair funding will be made to coincide, as the need for both is becoming more urgent. We will look forward to receiving confirmation of the funding in early October.

With our sincere thanks – R&R Dennis"

The following client feedback was recently received regarding SWEP/Chemtronics Repairs Service

"Just a quick note of thanks if you could pass it on please. Saturday 26 Oct 2013, we had an early morning start with carer coming at 7.30 am I had just put the wife onto the commode chair as was putting the hoist back on charge and it stopped working. As the wife is full hoist transfers you can imagine 8am Sat morning what to do! Rang your Tel: and was put though to after Hrs & the lovely lady was very helpful and reassuring and said she will get on to the repair service, and William rang shortly after and then came and replaced the hoist with a spare and took our unit away to be fixed. If you could please pass on our thanks and appreciation for the excellent service. "Kind Regards and Thanks Mr & Mrs A.C.S. Victoria"

"I would like to thank SWEP for the excellent service I have had for my electric wheelchair. In particular I would like to thank the visiting technician, Martin, who has been very helpful and very efficient at attending to my problems."

CONSUMER

SURVEY 2013

During May to June 2013 Nitty Gritty Marketing Insight and Research conducted a formal survey on behalf of the Department of Human Services, to gauge customer satisfaction with Victorian DHS funded Aids & Equipment Programs.

Survey results confirmed an overall customer satisfaction of 90% 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.

