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Welcome to the 2nd Edition of SWEP e-News for Consumers.
Hello everyone, it's hard to believe Christmas is almost upon us again! Life at SWEP continues to whizz by at a frantic pace with a number of new initiatives rolled out.

This year we have expanded our prescriber registration and credentialing framework for both the Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme and Domiciliary Oxygen Program. We have developed a SWEP specific catalogue and simplified the application process for any items we have a contract in place for.

With a sigh of relief we have completed a 2 year process to contract suppliers for low cost, non-customised equipment that we purchase frequently. For this range of equipment, we have gone through a tender process with our interstate equivalent program in South Australia. The evaluation process of the tender responses was extremely robust and the evaluation panel included consumer and consumer advocacy group representation, as well as our prescribers. As prescribers start recommending these items, we are expecting that waiting times for clients will start to decrease. We have undertaken 32 forums with our prescribers across the State since the contracts with the 10 suppliers were signed in October. Our newly contracted suppliers have enthusiastically engaged with us to rollout a series of Expos across the State so that our prescribers can meet with the suppliers and view their products.

With regret we have farewelled some staff throughout the year but have also welcomed a number of new faces across most programs. Our SWEP family continues to grow with 3 new babies arriving this year and another 2 due in the New Year. My Deputy (Loretta) and I both love our journey into 'grandmother-hood'.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Jeni Burton

Director, State-wide Equipment Program

The State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) will close over the Christmas period from COB on 24 December until 8.30 a.m. on Monday, 5 January, 2015.

An emergency repair 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 TRAINING AND INSERVICES

Throughout 2014 the SWEP Team have had many opportunities to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the aids and equipment funded by our programs, through various training days. This allows us to develop a better understanding of the difficult and diverse challenges faced by our clients. Our training program includes regular visits to the Independent Learning Centre (ILC) in Brooklyn, who offer various training opportunities on a broad range of disability specific aids and equipment.

We have also conducted several client in-services this year, inviting people to visit SWEP and share their experiences and feedback with the team. The feedback from these sessions allows us to identify and implement service improvements.



In May our team met with Vehicle Modification Suppliers/Converters, who travelled from around the State in their modified vehicles to attend a demonstration day in Ballarat. Staff embraced the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the various types of vehicle modifications, for which funding of up to \$10,000.00 is available through the VMSS Program.



A number of our team also attended the ATSA Expo in May, conducted by the Assistive Technology Suppliers Association. Staff engaged with various Assistive Technology Suppliers who eagerly shared their product knowledge.



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PROGRAM UP-DATES

Aids & Equipment Program (A&EP Adults)

The Aids & Equipment Program (A&EP) has over 33 staff who are employed in various roles. These include: Application Management, Finance and Ordering, Repairs and Maintenance, Reissue and Specialist equipment, Customer Service and Home Modifications. During 2013/2014 we responded to 12,393 applications and placed 22,398 orders for equipment and repairs.

Did you know that all applications received are triaged based on the information your prescriber provides in the application? We determine urgency on the implications of non-provision. That means that we use a score to determine what the consequences will be if we can't provide the equipment immediately. For some people, that could be straight away and for others they may be placed on our waitlist. Your prescriber will identify the urgency in your application.

The demand on the program exceeds funding availability and we now have over 6,400 people on the waitlist.

If you are one of these people on the waitlist, your prescriber can escalate urgency, if your clinical needs change and you need the equipment more urgently. They just need to contact SWEP.

Aids & Equipment Program (A&EP Children)

The Aids and Equipment Children's program has provided assistance for 1,983 children in obtaining equipment over the last 12 months. During this same period, 3,186 applications were received. With a dedicated children's team, at the end of the financial year, there was no waitlist for children's items other than those waitlisted for Top up Fund for Children (TFC). Through the TFC program, we were able to support 256 children with the funding of wheelchairs and walkers. For those of you that are unaware of the TFC program, this initiative provides families and children with funding to meet the difference between existing subsidies and the full cost of eligible mobility equipment. To learn more about this program please don't hesitate to contact our friendly team who will happily answer any questions that you may have.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Scheme (SAEAS)

The SAEAS program assisted over 400 clients in the 2013/14 financial year with in excess of 940 pieces of equipment. The equipment provided has ranged from beds and mattresses to manual and power wheelchairs. 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.



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PROGRAM UP-DATES continued

SWEP and National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is administered by the 'National Disability Insurance Agency' (NDIA).

In Victoria, from July 1, 2013, the first stage of the scheme commenced for people living in the Barwon region within the local government areas of: City of Greater Geelong, Borough of Queenscliffe and Colac-Otway and Surf Coast Shires with a phased intake of approximately 5,000 eligible participants between July 2013 and September 2014. The scheme will be fully operational across Victoria by July 2019.

SWEP has been nominated by the State Government as an in-kind service provider to provide Assistive Technology to eligible people in the Barwon Region. We have been very busy this year, working closely with the National Disability Insurance Agency in Geelong, setting up processes and systems for the launch site.

We now have a team of 5 staff working only on NDIS applications and for 2013/2014 we processed just under 1,000 applications and 1,200 orders.

We are very pleased to be working on this exciting pilot that will eventually roll out to the entire State. For those people that need funded support, participant plans will be developed with an NDIA Planner. The range of supports that can be provided can be diverse and can include assistive technology (AT), with the overarching aims for support that will enable daily living, participation in the community and to make progress on goals and aspirations.

If you think you are eligible, contact NDIA on 1800 800 110 or go to the website www.ndis.gov.au

Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme (VMSS)

The VMSS program now has all prescribers credentialed who are registered to prescribe vehicle modifications. These include driving mods, or passenger mods depending on the needs of the client and their families.

In 2013/2014 we processed 231 applications and provided 160 people with vehicle modifications.

Did you know the subsidy for vehicle modifications is \$10,000 every 7 years?

If you think you may be eligible or require a vehicle modification, please discuss this with your prescriber or contact SWEP and one of our friendly staff will be only too happy to answer your questions.



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Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP)

The Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP) now has a Clinical Advisors panel consisting of 7 highly qualified Respiratory Physicians. DOP Physicians who prescribe oxygen are now required to register with the program ensuring a faster application process. This process was introduced in July 2014 following the resignation of the DHS appointed Respiratory Physician, who was involved with the program for over 20 years.

If you require more than 8 cylinders per month, you may be eligible to receive a Portable Oxygen Concentrator instead of your regular cylinder supply. If you think that this applies to you, please contact your Respiratory Physician to discuss this option.

Did you know that DOP provides funding to approximately 3,500 clients every month? This means that there are approx. 14,716 cylinders and 2,236 concentrators provided by the SWEP contracted Supplier every month.

Continence Program (CA)

During the last financial year, the CA program processed 11,518 applications and assisted 6,486 clients in receiving continence products. In February 2014, the Continence Program implemented the 'bundling' of products, meaning that all of your required products would be supplied to you in a one off order instead of receiving multiple deliveries of products throughout the year. This cost saving initiative has allowed the program to assist more clients at a reduced administrative cost.



SWEP Tender update...did you know?

The Tender for Non Customised Aids and Equipment is now complete. The process was very successful resulting in significant savings across all equipment categories. This should also help reduce the gap funding required by clients for some equipment items.

CONSUMER SURVEY

Each year the Department of Human Services engage an Independent Consultant to conduct a customer survey to gauge satisfaction with Victorian DHS funded Aids & Equipment Programs. Thank you to those of you who were contacted to participate in the survey. Survey results are yet to be released by the Department but we look forward to up-dating you in our next Edition.



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SWEP CLIENT COMPLIMENTS



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

“Dear SWEP, What a difference you have made to my life this last week. Thank you for everything you did to get me mobile again, for the provision of the loan chair and for the excellent service you provide. I’m sure you probably don’t understand the value of what you do for people like me whose chairs is like life blood! My warmest greetings to you all and sincere thanks. Jean ”

The following feedback was received from a client of our VMSS Program



“Hi Ann & Narelle, Here are some photos of our beautiful Jess enjoying her new van, the smile on her face says it all she loves her new van. Angela can now drive and Jess has a comfortable ride in the back and is able to enjoy the scenery. We sincerely thank you both for taking the worry and stresses out of our everyday lives in the part you played in making it all possible. Kindest Regards Don, Angela and Jess”

SWEP CLIENT COMPLIMENTS



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

February 2014

“Thank you so much for the quick response and repair for my daughter’s wheelchair. Staff were great to deal with and friendly. Such service has been greatly appreciated. Regards Julie. “

November 2014

“Dear SWEP

Thank you for all your help in fixing my Shoprider Scooter, it’s truly wonderful to feel free again. Thank you to all the staff who work behind the scenes, including your Chemtronics team.”

Yours sincerely

James”