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Operations Director

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The State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) will close over the Christmas period from 5.00 p.m. on Friday, 21 December, 2018 until 8.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 2 January 2019.

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 6th Edition of SWEP e-News for Consumers

Hello everyone and welcome to the 6th Edition of our annual newsletter.

This year we celebrate our 8th year of operation as the State-wide Equipment Program. 2018 has been a year of 'change' for us as we expanded into new areas of service delivery; launched a new database; restructured our teams to address increasing demand; undertook extensive procurement activity; renovated our office space to facilitate and welcome the arrival of two Ballarat Health Services Departments; fare-welled some of our staff, welcomed new people to our team and expanded the SWEP family with the arrival of new babies.

We have worked closely with Craig Wilding, our Executive Director from Primary & Community Care at Ballarat Health Services (BHS), to understand what we do that is of most value to you, our clients and your carers, and also to our other stakeholders – prescribers, suppliers and funders. We think we now have a better understanding about these elements of our service delivery model and I have outlined these things below, but would love to hear from you if there are other things that you consider are important.

- Transparency about the order in which we support people
- Timely access to support
- 24/7 support for emergency repairs



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- Supply of equipment and services that are 'fit for purpose', reliable, cost effective and meet any relevant Standards or legislative requirements
- Ready access to refurbished equipment
- Confidence that your prescriber has the right qualifications and level of expertise to provide you with the right advice about equipment that will help you
- That we hold up-to-date records about the equipment that we have supplied to you
- That we are efficient in managing applications on your behalf

You can read more about our activities this year in the following articles.

I wish you and your families a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.

Jeni Burton

Operations Director - State-wide Equipment Program

New SWEP Database (client application management system)

In July this year SWEP were excited to launch our new database 'Service Now' (SNow), for the secure management of client applications/records.

Project Manager, Greg Parker (who has extensive IT experience), along with a Project Committee, has worked closely with the Database Developers since May to design a Database with functionality intuitive to the needs of our various program streams.

What does this mean for you?

There is no change really – Ballarat Health Services and SWEP takes its responsibility seriously about keeping your personal information secure. The information that is collected about you is stored securely and only accessed by authorised staff. The process for data migration from our old database is also secure.

What does this mean for SWEP?

- A prescriber portal for registration and direct submission of applications – allowing your referring prescriber (i.e. Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Respiratory Physician etc.) to load your application direct to our Portal.
- Asset (Equipment) tracking systems – allowing us to provide a proficient repairs service and maintain extensive equipment history of your equipment.
- Extensive data reporting capabilities.
- In-built Financial Management systems.

Although the transition to our new Database has not been seamless, ongoing feedback from our registered prescribers has allowed for ongoing 'tweaks' and up-dates to functionality. Our ultimate goal is to decrease the administrative burden for our prescribers and staff, facilitating efficient and timely lodgement and assessment of client applications.



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SWEP Restructure

As the State-wide Equipment Program continues to evolve and expand into new areas, we recently underwent an extensive team restructure. This will help us to respond to increased sector demands, and support both our State funded clients and people under 65 years of age, who have transitioned to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

Our teams have merged to form new equipment teams, who will respond to all applications and queries for State-funded clients and NDIS participants. This has resulted in changes to our email addresses and phone queues, enabling you to make direct contact with a member of the relevant equipment team.

		Phone 1300 747 937
Asset Management Team/Repairs	sweprepairs@bhs.org.au	Press 1
Continence Aids Team	swepcont@bhs.org.au	Press 2
Oxygen, Electronic Voice Aids and Laryngectomy Consumables Team	swepoxy@bhs.org.au	Press 3
Community Equipment Programs	swepcep@bhs.org.au	Press 3
Home and Vehicle Modifications and Environmental Control Units	swepmods@bhs.org.au	Press 4
Information Management Team	swepimt@bhs.org.au	Press 5
Bedding, Bath and Seating Team	swepbbs@bhs.org.au	Press 6 - select option 1
Mobility, Walking and Transfer Aids Team	swepmwt@bhs.org.au	Press 6 - select option 2
Orthotics, Wigs, Lymphoedema and NDIS Miscellaneous Team	swepowl@bhs.org.au	Press 6 - select option 3
Customer Service Team	swepcustomerserviceteam@bhs.org.au	Press 7
General Email Queries	swep@bhs.org.au	

As always, your feedback is extremely important to us. We would like to encourage you to provide us with feedback in order to ensure that the changes we have made are positive, achieve the outcomes we intend and continue to improve outcomes for YOU ..our clients! For further contact information including direct contacts for our Leadership Team visit our website [here](#)





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In the 2017/18 financial year we were able to support nearly 30,000 consumers with provision of over 50,000 individual pieces of equipment and/or products, repairs or home/vehicle modifications. We received more than 30,000 applications for support (~600 applications per week). We also received more than 90,000 incoming telephone calls during the year (~400 calls every day we are open).

A brief glance at some of our programs

➤ Preventative Maintenance Program

In October 2017 SWEP launched the Preventative Maintenance Pilot for State funded consumers, with a view to improving reliability of equipment and consumer and/or carer safety. The Program has now rolled out across Victoria to all State funded consumers and to date we have raised orders for the maintenance of over 4,400 items of equipment.

The Program provides annual servicing of SWEP equipment that comes under the below categories, to ensure the equipment meets safety requirements and is maintained in good condition.

Some of these checks include:

- Electrical safety testing
- Castors, wheels, frames & welds, brakes, batteries, steering columns, handsets & controls
- Airbed pumps, leaks, CPR valves, filters, alternating functions
- General/overall equipment operation
- Labelling and safe working loads

The following equipment items are covered under the program

- Multifunction electric beds
- Change tables
- Patient lifters (including mobile floor hoists/ceiling hoists - **excluding** the ceiling hoist tracking)
- Slings
- Mobile shower commodes
- Pressure relieving cushions and mattresses
- Scooters
- Electric lift/recline chairs
- Specialised seating
- Manual and power wheelchairs

If you have equipment that falls into the above categories and have not been contacted by a member of our team, please contact the SWEP Asset Management team on PH 1300 747 937 and select option 1.



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A brief glance at some of our programs cont'd

➤ Laryngectomy Consumables Program

Through a Victorian Government initiative announced earlier this year, the Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) agreed to expand funding for consumers to access consumable products associated with their laryngectomy.

On 1 July 2018 SWEP were excited to launch the new program ensuring that this crucial funding is administered to help Victorian laryngectomy patients access everyday items they need to assist with breathing and the prevention of infections. SWEP now administers funding of up to \$5,000 per patient (over a twelve (12) month period from the date of the first application) for laryngectomy consumables.

For any queries regarding access to this program, please do not hesitate to contact SWEP on 1300 747 937 and select option 3.

➤ SWEP and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

What a busy year it has been for SWEP in the NDIS space as we continue to work alongside the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA), ensuring that equipment supplied to consumers is fit for purpose and represents best value for money. In the 2018/2019 year to date, SWEP has reviewed over 6,800 applications for NDIS participants which has resulted in the provision of over 12,000 items.

SWEP acknowledges that due to high work demands we have experienced some processing delays in the second half of the year, however we are extremely excited to announce that by Christmas we will be up-to-date, reviewing applications and forwarding them to the Agency for review within three business days.

SWEP will continue to liaise with the Agency to determine how we can carry on supporting our consumers throughout roll-out and beyond.

➤ Community Equipment Programs – Lymphoedema Compression Garments Program (LCGP)

SWEP has been administering the LCGP program since February 2017. The program assists people who have been medically diagnosed as having primary or secondary Lymphoedema, with subsidised compression garments. SWEP has been managing the program without a waitlist, ensuring that consumers receive subsidised garment funding without delay.

In October 2018 in consultation with our funding body, Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), SWEP were pleased to announce that we are now able to cover all costs associated with the postage of garments supplied through the program.



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Procurement - why we buy what we buy for you

Thinking about this time of year, if “the big guy in red” met our eligibility requirements, what equipment could SWEP supply?

- The obvious first thing would be a mobility scooter. Although he could have it in bright red, probably not much of a swap for the sleigh and reindeer. There aren't any with the sort of performance he probably needs.
- A pressure cushion to provide stability, comfort and prevent pressure injury. That's a long time in a sleigh!
- Portable ramp – for those difficult-to-access chimney tops
- Mobile hoist and sling – to help with those heavy, awkward packages.
- Lift/recline chair – to help him get back into it after a rest for milk and biscuits
- A 4-function bed and mattress – he'll need it after that 1 night of the year

SWEP can provide all of these things to people who need them.

But, unlike Santa, demand vastly exceeds our capacity to supply and we put a lot of effort into developing our catalogues of products. We call it 'equipment', because to us, a chair is not just a chair. With clinical experts – the same therapists that you consult – we work out what will benefit people, and defining what a good quality item is that will meet those needs. We put out tenders and we are offered products that meet our clients' needs to one degree or another - the wheelchairs, the walkers, the beds, the shower chairs, (etc.) and we assess them objectively to work out which fit the brief, are fit for the purpose and value for money.

It's not simply the cheapest thing we could get: we buy the thing that is the best value, and best fit for the intended purpose. Prices come into it, but in the end we invariably buy the equipment that has been recommended by your therapist.

But no partridges in pear trees, French hens, turtle doves, lords-a-leaping, maids-a-milking, etc., regardless of who you are or what the season is - And probably not to Santa, to be fair.





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Staff In-Services & Community Engagement Activities

Our 'Walk A Mile professional development program at SWEP supports staff to understand the importance of consumer centred model in systems and process design. This focus is integrated into our staff professional development program that considers such factors as client centredness, staff interest, mandatory requirements and where we have identified the need to develop additional skills in our workforce.

So far this year, we have covered:

- In house training on the scripts in our new database – presented by one of our Clinical Advisors to discuss the new forms as well as Implications of Non-Provision & Triage training
- Application process training
- Family Violence and how this impacts our community
- Cyber Security Education
- Professional communication sessions

In addition, the many members of the team have attended expos and equipment forums across the State, where face-to-face catch-ups with our consumers and their families, prescribers and suppliers have provided excellent networking opportunities. Just some of the community forums we have attended and presented to this year include:

- Polio Network Victoria
- Valid Disability Advocacy Group Network
- Incontinence Products Promotion Group
- NDIS Provider Forums/Expos
- International Day of Disability Expo
- ARATA (Australian Rehabilitation & Assistive Technology Association) Conference;
- ATSA (Assistive Technology Suppliers Australia) Expo;
- Seniors and Disability Expo Melbourne
- Sydney Studer Conference – Presenting: 'What's right in Healthcare'
- Victoria AOPA (Aust. Orthotic Prosthetic Assoc.)
- Victorian Allied Health Directors
- Allied Health Clinical Educators Network
- OTA & APA Forum



These community engagement activities, allow us to broaden consumer knowledge of our services across the State, reflect on our systems and opportunities to improve, as we continuously seek ways to contribute towards better client outcomes.

SWEP look forward to 'kicking off' the New Year with a presentation to the 'Having a Say Conference' in Geelong in February.

If you would like us to attend a community group or forum you are connected to, please contact our customer service team on 1300 747 937 who will direct your call.



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SWEP Compliments/Positive Stories



'Thank you to all those involved with approving Stephanie's electric lift pressure relieving bed. Stephanie is 3 years old and after just 4 sleeps on it she told me in the morning that her new bed was so comfy that she wanted to lay in there all day! I think it can be easy for us able bodied adults to underestimate just how much discomfort young disabled children can be until we take that discomfort away. For those of us adults who care for Stephanie, we are also grateful for the extra reduction in manual handling load that this bed affords. Thanks again'



'This is Aura on her birthday and her mum was able to take her into the hall where her extended family and friends were celebrating her first birthday in her reissue Shuttle. She has very poor head control and is cortically blind and is often very irritable and unresponsive but as you can see here she was able to be the centre of attention in her new seating. Her mum was so happy and appreciative. Had we not been able to get a reissue system their quality of life would still be poor and realistically for a lot longer.'





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SWEP Compliments/Positive Stories cont'd

'I write to express my heartfelt gratitude to you for my recently received wheelchair. It is truly amazing that I now have this customized wheelchair to support my back and neck. The construction of it is incredible, and I appreciate being able to have parts of its structure in my favourite colour purple.

In my current apartment, I shall be moving it to and from three different activity areas within my main room. As you can well imagine, I look immensely forward to the possibility of moving to a more disability-compatible housing arrangement wherein I shall be able to move it from one room to another and where it can be used for general and cultural outings, where I would not otherwise be able to attend due to pain from standing still and having a high risk of falls when out and about.

My few words seem an inadequate appreciation of the most generous contribution towards the cost of the equipment. It is a real privilege to have access to your aids & equipment service.

Yours most gratefully indeed, Warmest regards'