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## IN THIS ISSUE

4th Edition Welcome – SWEP Director

### Page 2

- > Welcome cont'd
- > New Website

### Page 3

- > SWEP Restructure

### Page 4, 5 & 6

- > Program Up-dates

### Page 7

- > Staff Training/In-services

### Page 8

- > SWEP Compliments

### Page 8

- > SWEP Compliments cont'd
- > Consumer Survey

### Page 9

- > Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights

The State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) will close over the Christmas period from 3.00 p.m. on Friday, 23 December until 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 3 January, 2017.

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 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of SWEP e-News for Consumers.

Hello everyone and welcome to the 4th Edition of our annual newsletter. It seems like only yesterday that I was contemplating what to include in the December 2015 e-News, and here we are looking at Christmas again!

Although it's been 6 years since SWEP began, our model continues to evolve. Most recently we've transitioned our teams from program specific to equipment specific teams over the last 6 months, and we are already seeing the benefits of this transition.

We are always looking for opportunities where we can do things better, and as such, we rely on your feedback to help us identify things that we can improve, so please continue to share your experiences with us. At the same time, we are always very grateful to receive positive feedback about the difference our service makes to you, and we've included a couple of these stories at the end of the newsletter. Creating partnerships with our key stakeholders including you, our prescribers and suppliers continues to be very important to us, and we regularly travel around the State meeting with different groups, so if you would like us to visit a group that you belong to, please contact us. Some of the key activities undertaken in yet another productive year have seen us:

- Take the supply of oxygen equipment back to tender, and the Evaluation Panel (which includes a consumer), is currently evaluating the tender responses. Their recommendation is then taken up to our Executive Tender Steering Committee for consideration, before being presented to the Board of Management for ratification. It is unlikely that a decision will be known until early in the New Year.



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- Worked closely with the National Disability Insurance Agency who are very keen to leverage off a number of the systems that SWEP has developed. We have developed formal 'Working Arrangements' with the Agency, so will still be involved in helping coordinate access to equipment for people through this scheme.
- Redesigned our Home Modifications Service Delivery model following the withdrawal of access to Archicentre services. We've worked closely with industry peak bodies including the Victorian Building Authority and Consumer Affairs Victoria to understand the regulatory body requirements for domestic building modifications and have designed a model with the help of many of our prescribers that provides a much greater level of protection for our home owners and clients. The final stages of this project include a supplier (builder) registration system. We are hoping to roll this model out early in the New Year.
- Partnered with Central Queensland University (CQU) to develop competency based training modules for our prescribers to ensure that when they help you determine your equipment needs, you can be assured that they have the appropriate level of expertise to do so.
- Rebuilt our website to implement a number of efficiencies including a portal that allows prescriber to lodge applications for you on-line, and for you and your prescriber to check the status of your applications.
- Implemented an organisational restructure to ensure consumer focus and equity of access remains pivotal to systems developed.
- Commenced review of some of the specific item categories that we provide.

As always, we've experienced some changes in staffing, losing some long standing employees and gaining some new staff. Our SWEP family continues to grow, and this year we welcome a number of new babies to the SWEP extended family and have a number of staff commencing maternity leave soon.

Wendy Hubbard has had portfolio responsibility for SWEP at an executive level within BHS, and has been the real driver (mostly behind the scenes), assisting to build the innovative and consumer focused model that SWEP has evolved into. Wendy has recently resigned from BHS and her unwavering commitment to our program will be sadly missed. At the same time, we welcome and congratulate Craig Wilding who has been appointed as the Executive Director of Primary and Community Care at BHS, and look forward to working with him in the future.

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

**Jeni Burton**  
**Director, State-wide Equipment Program**

## NEW WEBSITE

On 1st July 2016 SWEP introduced a new website that allows your prescriber (i.e. Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Respiratory Physician, Continence Nurse Etc.) to lodge your application/s online. The website provides better tracking of applications for SWEP, prescribers and consumers. Prescribers can now access all applications submitted and check for status updates via their online portal account. SWEP is also committed to reducing our stamp on the environment and one of our environmental sustainability initiatives includes significant paper reduction.



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When you receive a letter from SWEP about your application it will have a website number on the bottom right hand side. You can use this number on our website to check the status of your application. You can access our SWEP website at <https://swep.bhs.org.au/> and hover over the 'For Individuals' link on the top, left hand side tool bar and click on 'Check Application Status'. Here you can enter the 10 digit website number from your letter and this will give you the status of your application.

## SWEP RESTRUCTURE

In order to improve SWEP's services we have now changed our team structure.

Rather than contacting a specific 'program' at SWEP when you call us, you will be asked to select an option that will direct your call to a team dedicated to managing a range of equipment categories.

This will allow our staff to develop expertise across the broad range of equipment funded by SWEP, and improve our knowledge, application management and interactions with consumers. Rest assured that each team has a quarantined budget for the type of equipment requests that they manage to ensure equity of access to funding, including quarantined budgets for children. The only exception to this is that we still have a dedicated NDIS team.

Now when calling SWEP on PH 1300 747 937 you will hear the following options:

'Welcome to the State-wide Equipment Program. Please note as of the 1st of November our options have changed

- If you are an NDIS participant or have a query in relation to the NDIS program please press 0
- If you require repairs or maintenance to your equipment regardless of program 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
- For home and vehicle modifications please press 4
- For all other equipment enquiries please press 5 (takes you to a sub queue where you will be able to select an option that will direct your call to our equipment category specific teams)\*
- To speak with our customer service or for all other enquiries please press 6
- To hear these options again press #



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## PROGRAM UP-DATES

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

The Aids and Equipment Children's program has received 3,398 applications in the last 12 months, assisting 1,537 children in obtaining equipment.

The Top-up Fund for Children program received 220 applications for new wheelchairs (with modifications) and walkers, supporting 154 children to obtain those items.

SWEP continue to focus on budget management strategies in an effort to reduce waiting times for approx. 780 children requiring aids and equipment through both the Aids and Equipment Program and Top-Up Fund for Children.

In June 2016, The State-wide Equipment Program received independent advice that many Strollers on the Australian market may not have been compliant to mandatory Australian Standards. After working very closely with the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC), it was determined in September 2016 that SWEP would re-instate existing applications that were placed on hold and accept new applications for special-needs strollers as long as they complied with TGA requirements and meets the relevant Australian Standard, AS/NZS 3695.1:2011 (wheelchair standard) or AS/NZS 2088:2013 (pram and stroller standard) or equivalent International Standard.

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

The Aids & Equipment adults program continues to receive a steady flow of client applications. This year, to date we have processed 10,645 applications and ordered 10,157 items.

To date, the introduction of the NDIS has not reduced the number of clients we support through the State funded scheme, however we do expect to see more of our client's transition to the NDIS with the rollout out of more areas in Victoria over the next 2.5 years.

More than 65% of the Aids and Equipment clients are over the age of 65 years old. These clients are not eligible for the NDIS and will continue to access SWEP for funding.

### Supported Accommodation Assistance Scheme (SAEAS)

The SAEAS program received 907 applications for equipment and assisted over 485 clients in the last 12 months.

SWEP continue to focus on budget management strategies in an effort to reduce waiting times for approx. 175 clients.



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## PROGRAM UP-DATES continued

### Re-issue Equipment

SWEP maintains approximately 153,000 equipment 'assets' issued to clients throughout Victoria. When the equipment is no longer required, it is collected for refurbishment and reissued to other clients. All equipment is fully serviced and cleaned prior to delivery. By utilising reissue equipment, wait times for equipment is reduced and usually there isn't any out of pocket expenses for clients. Two years ago SWEP and Chemtronics contracted an Occupational Therapist to assist therapists and clients to match equipment from our reissue pool. We are now routinely custom building power and manual wheelchairs in our reissue program.

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

This year has been another very busy year for the SWEP National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Team as SWEP continues to work closely with the NDIS as the Scheme rolls-out across the State. In the last 12 months, the SWEP NDIS Team have received and processed over 3,415 applications for 967 NDIS participants and have ordered over 4,102 pieces of equipment, home or vehicle modifications for these participants.

SWEP has been working with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) since the beginning of the Scheme in 2013 and has a great understanding of how the Scheme works. SWEP have developed formal 'Working Arrangements' with the Agency and has been chosen to partner with the Agency because of their experience in providing these supports to people living in the community. We have staff co-located in both the Vic West (Geelong) and the North East Melbourne Area (NEMA) National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) offices to ensure streamlined processes are in place to manage equipment applications as those people who are eligible transition to the scheme.

As such SWEP will continue to assist in the facilitation and co-ordination of access to equipment, home or vehicle modifications for eligible participants of the Scheme. SWEP are able to provide the Agency with 'Quality Assurance' measures to ensure that NDIS participants are receiving the most suitable equipment, home or vehicle modifications and that these requests are being prescribed by suitably qualified and credentialed SWEP registered prescribers.

Over the period of the NDIS transition, SWEP will continue to work closely with existing SWEP clients who are eligible for the NDIS to make their transition to the Scheme as smooth and simple as possible.

### Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme (VMSS)

Since the beginning of the 2016 financial year, SWEP have assisted 77 people with funding towards their vehicle modifications. The modifications range from minor modifications such as hand controls, through to major modifications such as lowered floor conversions, hoists and permanent ramps.



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## PROGRAM UP-DATES continued

### Home Modifications

We are very close to implementing a new service delivery model for home modifications, following withdrawal of access to Archicentre services.

The new model has been revised to include:

- SWEP Operational Procedures for Home Modifications.
- SWEP Home Modification Consumer Information Booklet.
- New Online Prescription Form.
- Registration and Credentialing Framework for Builders/Tradespeople.
- Updated Home Modification Prescriber Manual.

For more information and details regarding the above resources, please refer to the SWEP website [here](#)

### Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP)

This is a very exciting time for the Domiciliary Oxygen Program. SWEP is currently in the process of evaluating the responses to our tender for the oxygen program, and we are hoping that we may be able to offer some exciting new innovations within this oxygen program as a result of this. We'll advise you of the outcome of the tender evaluation in the New Year.

Once the announcement has been made in the near future, if you have any questions about this please feel free to ask anyone in the Oxygen team.

You will have noticed that the team are ensuring that you have been receiving regular information to confirm that you are aware of and attend your annual reviews.

Thank you for your prompt attention to these requests for review, it definitely make our jobs so much easier.

### Contenance Program (CA)

During the last 12 months the Contenance Program has processed 9,914 applications and assisted 5,952 clients in receiving continence products. There is currently no waitlist for child applicants however, there is approximately 1,200 clients waiting for assistance from the adult program.

In May 2016, the Contenance Program announced a new Contenance Supplier after the State-wide Equipment Program went back to market in the form of an Open Tender for the provision of all Contenance Products including SWEP, (non-disposable products) and the National Disability Scheme (for disposable products).

This process has seen a reduction in the waitlist by 15% compared to this time last year whilst ensuring the provision of quality products for both existing and new clients, but has been offset by a much higher demand for assistance in the Contenance Program over the last 12 months.

6



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## SWEP STAFF TRAINING/INSERVICES

The SWEP Leadership team are committed to providing our staff with ongoing training opportunities to broaden equipment knowledge and enhance our client focus.

In May 2016 a number of our staff attended the Annual ATSA (Assistive Technology Suppliers Australasia) Independent Living Expo conducted over a three day period in Melbourne. Staff attended a wide variety of information sessions and were able to view and trial the broad range of Assistive Technology equipment on display.

In the same month the SWEP Team welcomed a visit from Iain Donaldson. Iain and his mum provided real insight for our team into the difference the provision of our equipment makes to both his and his family's life.



In July members of the SWEP Management Team presented to the Bi-annual ARATA (Australian Rehabilitation Assistive Technology Association) Conference held on the Gold Coast. These presentations outlined SWEP's development of 'best practice' service delivery models in Victoria, including Home Modifications and Re-issue/Repairs.

In November SWEP welcomed a visit from the Disability Services Commissioner, Laurie Harkin AM. The purpose of Laurie's visit was to discuss expectations of how SWEP should respond to concerns of people with a disability who receive our services. The Disability Services Commission have also offered additional training for our staff, which we hope to facilitate next year.



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## SWEP COMPLIMENTS



The following feedback was recently received regarding the Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme

'Dear XX

'I'd like to thank you both for enabling XX to have the modifications completed so quickly. When I saw him today he was absolutely ecstatic about being able to get out independently for the first time in over two years; really makes the job worthwhile when you see someone like that.

Occupational Therapy Driving Assessor'



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

'I wanted to pass on some positive feedback from today.

This morning, I was faced with a broken wheelchair brake and I was quite stressed because the student lives out of town, 45 minutes away from school. This meant that if her wheelchair wasn't safe for her to travel in this afternoon then it was going to make things very tricky for her mum!

I called SWEP as quickly as possible to request a repair. I have memorised the SWEP repair number because I call it that often and I appreciate the friendly, helpful service. XX was no exception this morning – she was extremely helpful, understood the urgency of the repair and assured me she would lodge a priority request as quickly as possible. Thanks!

XX from Chemtronics was already here at XX busy busy busy fixing other wheelchairs when he got the message about the broken brake. XX quickly found me (whilst still working on his other jobs) to work out what the problem was and what repairs needed to be completed. He then assured me that he would get the job completed by the end of the day and he quickly worked to complete his other tasks and then took the wheelchair brake component back to the workshop to weld it. XX double checked what time I needed the wheelchair to be repaired by to get the student home and he ensured that the wheelchair was repaired and ready so that the student could get on the school bus this afternoon. I can't thank XX enough for his expertise and quality of work! Sometimes I get told that parts need to be ordered and we will have to wait weeks, but XX understands the urgency of these repairs and always finds a suitable solution. This isn't the first time XX has 'saved the day' for us here and I'm sure it won't be the last! I really appreciate his 'can-do' approach and problem-solving skills.'

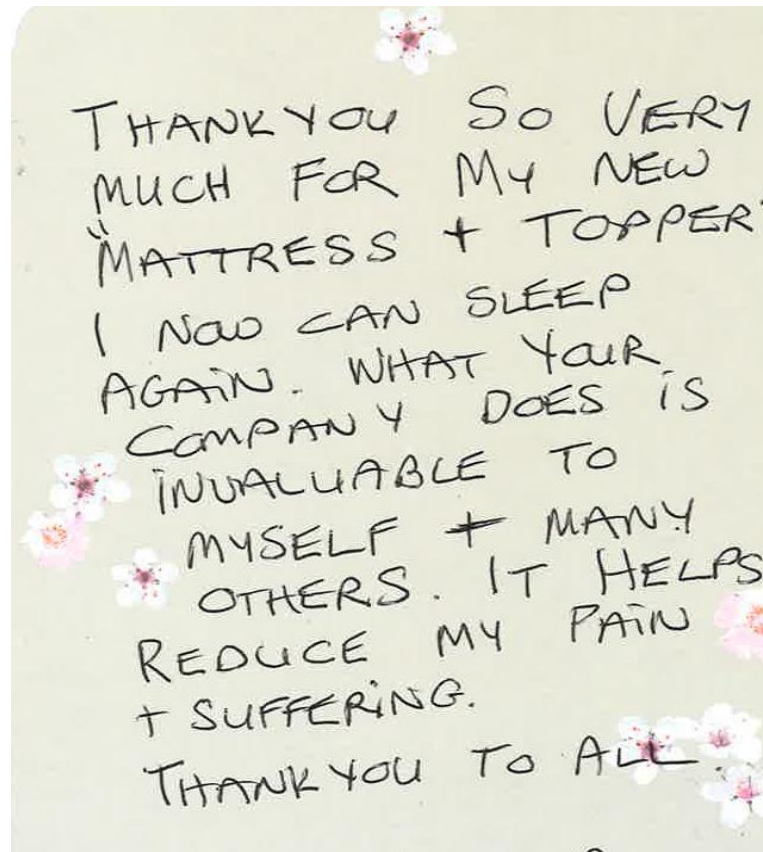




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The following feedback was received from Judith regarding the Aids & Equipment Program



## 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.

The aims of the survey are to identify whether the aid or equipment provided through the program:

- has met the person's individual clinical and functional needs;
- has assisted the person to remain in the community and/or enhanced their independent functioning in the community;
- was provided in a timely, efficient and professional manner;
- And to determine the overall level of satisfaction with the aids and equipment service system.



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2016 survey results confirmed an overall customer satisfaction of 88% over a range of services, the same result as reported in 2015. The final report will be used to assist the planning of future customer service initiatives and service improvements by the State-wide Equipment Program.

## Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights

The Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights describes the rights of people using the Australian healthcare system.

Your healthcare provider is the person or organisation that has assessed your needs and made an application for equipment to SWEP. Your healthcare provider must discuss your rights and responsibilities under the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights with you. You can download a summary of the Charter using the links below. This summary outlines what this charter means if you are seeking or receiving care from a Victorian healthcare service. It tells you what you can expect from services, and what to do if you have a question or concern. You can find out more about the Charter at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/about/participation-and-communication/australian-charter-healthcare-rights/about-the-charter>.

Please contact your healthcare provider if you do not understand your rights under the Charter.

You can download information about your rights under the *Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights* from the link above, including an 'Easy English' version. Go to the Downloads section of the page.