

STATE WIDE EQUIPMENT PROGRAM

**LYMPHOEDEMA COMPRESSION
GARMENT PROGRAM**

**TRANSITIONAL OPERATIONAL
POLICIES**

FEBRUARY 2017

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Lymphoedema Compression Garment Program Transitional Operational Policies

1. Lymphoedema Compression Garment Program

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of these operational policies is to provide a framework for the State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) which is funded through the Department of Health and Human Services (the department) to administer the Lymphoedema Compression Garment Program (LCGP).

1.2 SWEP Overview

SWEP administers a number of programs under the Victorian Aids and Equipment Program (VA&EP) on behalf of the department to support people with disabilities and the frail aged to remain living in the community including the following:

- Aids and Equipment Program (A&EP)
- Continence Aids Program (CA)
- Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP)
- Supported Accommodation Equipment Assistance Scheme (SAEAS)
- Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme (VMSS)
- Top Up Fund for Children (TFC)

2. Program Overview

The LCGP was initiated in 1997 by the Mercy Health Lymphoedema Compression Clinic at the Mercy Hospital for Women and was funded through the department under the VA&EP.

The LCGP assists all Victorians who are diagnosed with Lymphoedema by providing financial assistance to eligible applicants for the purchase of up to 6 compression garments annually. The LCGP assistance covers between 40% and 60% of the cost of the prescribed compression garment. The remaining cost is met by the applicant/client.

In 2017, administration of the program was transferred to SWEP. Negotiation between the department, SWEP & Mercy Health agreed that at time of transition, there would be no change to current processes and that SWEP would, in the interim, adopt Mercy Health guidelines to administer the program.

2.1 Aim

The LCGP provides people who have been medically assessed as having either primary or secondary Lymphoedema with subsidised compression garments to enhance independence in their home, facilitate community participation and support families and carers in their role.

2.2 Principles

The key principles underpinning the LCGP are to improve outcomes for individuals and aim to achieve a customer focused service through:

- streamlined and timely access to an integrated and coordinated service delivery system
- transparent processing, prioritisation and equitable access
- efficient and cost effective use of resources.

2.3 Objectives

The objectives of the LCGP are to provide:

1. Subsidised Lymphoedema garments that support goals and plans of an individual at key life stages.
2. Streamlined, single point of access for individuals irrespective of their place of residence.
3. Efficiently administered program that is targeted to individuals most in need and ensures equal access throughout Victoria for people who have been medically diagnosed with either primary or secondary Lymphoedema.
4. A cost-effective garment program which maximises assistance to as many individuals as possible.
5. High quality garments that comply with relevant Australian Standards (where applicable).

2.4 Target Population and Eligibility Criteria

Subsidised garments are provided for people who meet the following criteria through the LCGP:

- must be a permanent resident of Victoria

or:

- hold a Permanent Protection Visa

And

- have been medically assessed as having either primary or secondary Lymphoedema and
- are currently receiving a Centrelink pension or assessed as being a low or medium income earner

Queries regarding eligibility should be directed to the service provider as per Appendix One.

The person is not eligible if:

They have already received a maximum of 6 subsidised garments through LCGP in a calendar year

Or

They are eligible to receive assistance from other Government-funded sources/programs, or have funds remaining from any form of compensation/legal settlements or court awards relating to their lymphoedema including:

- The Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Gold Card holders
- Residents of a Commonwealth Government funded residential aged care service.
- The Transport Accident Commission (TAC).
- Workcover Authority.
- An in-patient of a public or private hospital.
- The cost of the garment/s can be claimed through a private health insurance extras policy. Note: the LCGP will fund the gap between the cost of the garment/s and private health insurance refund.
- Within the 30 days post discharge period from a public hospital or extended care centre where the provision of compression garments is related to the hospital admission.

Note: people may be eligible for the LCGP once eligibility under another Government-funded source/program or entitlement is exhausted.

2.5 Public Hospital responsibility

In 1995, an agreement was reached between the Disability Services and Acute Health Divisions to streamline the process for people requiring aids, equipment and home modification services on a permanent or long-term basis following discharge from public hospitals. For further information regarding Public Hospital responsibility for aids and equipment please see points 7-19 inclusive: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/feesman/fees9.htm#SectionC7>

To ensure a smooth transition for the eligible person from hospital to their home in the community, applications for the LCGP may be submitted during the 30-day period as mentioned above.

2.6 Private Hospital Patients

The LCGP will accept applications from eligible private hospital patients immediately on discharge for the available range of subsidised items.

2.7 Change In Recipient Status

Clients of the LCGP are responsible for advising the service provider of a change to their:

- contact details and/or address including if they move interstate, overseas or into an Commonwealth Government funded residential aged care service
- nominated contact person's details
- entitlement to receive compensation from any source, for their Lymphoedema related expenses, and to repay the cost of any subsidised garments and administration as itemised on the Applicant Declaration

- eligibility status to the LCGP.

Note: When a client moves interstate or overseas they can continue to use their allocated garments but the LCGP will no longer meet the cost of replacement.

2.8 What Does the LCGP Provide?

The LCGP provides:

- Subsidised garments as specified in the LCGP guidelines under availability and supply.

The LCGP does **not** provide:

- Doff n' Donners

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Health and Human Services as the funder of LCGP has responsibility for:

- Analysis of trends, emerging needs and projected demand
- Promoting the principles and objectives of the *Disability Act 2006 and /or others.*
- Allocating funding to SWEP
- Monitoring service provision to ensure service targets and performance are met.
- Monitoring quality improvement initiatives and ensuring quality of service.
- Coordinating the development of policy and guidelines for the operation of the LCGP

3.2 LCGP

LCGP provide services in accordance with Operational Guidelines

Appropriate and efficient management of the program

- Ensuring that contractual obligations are met as detailed in the Service Agreement.
- Administering the program in accordance with the LCGP guidelines and determine priorities of applications.
- Responding to enquiries from the public about LCGP.
- Manage the program budget ensuring sufficient funds are set-aside during the year within the Priority of Access Framework.

Commitment to high quality services

- Ensuring the program is administered in a manner, which promotes the principles and objectives of *the Disability Act 2006 and/or others.*
- Operating efficient and effective services in accordance with the National Disability Services Standards, the Disability Services Standards and compliance with the Quality Framework for Disability Services.
- Ensuring the rights, confidentiality, and privacy of users are protected in service policy and practice.
- Reporting any faulty garments, when notified as likely to cause serious danger, to the supplier or in the case of goods likely to cause serious injury or death that are

defective, unsafe or fail to meet prescribed construction, performance and design standards, to Consumer Affairs Victoria on 1300 558 181.

- Participating in a client satisfaction survey to seek feedback and inform continuous quality improvement of the program.

Capacity for networking

- Establishing links with other service providers and ensuring that the provision of the LCGP is coordinated and integrated.
- Providing information on where specialist assessments can be obtained or referring onto other services as appropriate.

Purchasing of Lymphoedema specific items

In purchasing Lymphoedema specific items the LCGP should exercise care in their selection and show restraint with costs while having regard to value for money. This includes:

- The quality (service and durability) of items should be balanced against cost representing value for money that includes but is not limited to: delivery and set-up, training and warranty. Although cost is a consideration, the primary consideration should be the safety and suitability of the item.
- Procurement strategies should aim to maximise the purchasing power of the LCGP service provider within the supply market.
- Garments issued should conform to Australian or International Standards where possible.
- Where possible, it is preferable to purchase Australian made garments.

3.3 Specialist Prescribers and Assessors

Medical practitioners are responsible for **initial** certification to verify the diagnosis of primary or secondary Lymphoedema. The certification should be specified as being for the LCGP.

(Ongoing prescription for the supply of aids and equipment may be provided by Lymphoedema assessors, as long as the LCGP ensures a Medical Practitioner has provided initial certification.)

Approved prescribers provide assessments in the relevant categories of aids and equipment. Prescribers must:

- Confirm the person does not have compensation funds available to be used for the purchase of garments associated with their Lymphoedema, prior to submitting a prescription form.
- Undertake assessments of a person and in conjunction with the person, prescribe the most appropriate item/s available through the LCGP to meet the applicant's needs.
- Provide a completed prescription form/report, with specifications, recommendations and justification as to the most appropriate and cost effective item, recommended supplier, and details of customisation to the LCGP.
- Provide information on the applicant's urgency of need and implications of non-provision.
- Establish that the applicant and/or their carer have the cognitive, physical and psychological ability to use the garment prescribed safely and effectively.

- Where a prescription of a Lymphoedema garment is made, the prescriber is required to seek a quotation for the item/s from the preferred suppliers list.
- Be available to discuss the assessment report and recommendations with a Clinical Advisor and amend the recommendations where appropriate.
- Ensure training is provided to clients/carers in the appropriate safe use of their garment.

3.4 Clients

A client is an individual who has submitted an application, has been deemed eligible for, and has received assistance with the supply of a Lymphoedema garment through the LCGP.

Clients of the LCGP are responsible for:

- The general upkeep, care and cleaning of their garments.
- Refraining from making inappropriate use of or modification to, items supplied.
- Paying the cost of assessment where a prescriber charges a fee for service for undertaking an assessment of their Lymphoedema needs.
- Contributing a non-refundable contribution to the cost of the garment/s.
- Advising their prescriber if they have available compensation funds that may impact on their eligibility for LCGP assistance, or no longer meet the eligibility criteria for the LCGP.

4. Application and Supply Process

4.1 Application

4.1.1 The applicant and/or carer:

- Completes the LCGP Eligibility Form the first time they access LCGP
- Completes Confirmation of Gap Form
- Pays the gap to the supplier prior to delivery of the garment/s
- Confirm with prescriber payment for assessment

4.1.2 The Medical Practitioner:

- Certifies the applicant's medical diagnosis

4.1.3 The Prescriber:

- Undertake assessment with client to determine appropriate garment
- Completes the LCGP prescription form
- Obtains quotation from supplier
- Submit all documentation to SWEP where eligibility is assumed
- Confirm with applicant and/or carer payment for assessment

4.1.4 The LCGP:

- Confirms the applicant's eligibility
- Confirms applications are submitted in accordance with the prescriber's approved level of credentialing, validated and, if required, forwarded to a relevant Clinical Advisor for approval and/or advice/ follow up action
- Prioritises applications based on Priority of Access Framework
- Acknowledges all applications in writing to the applicant within 10 working days, the receipt of their application
- Coordinates the provision of garments between all parties, ensuring that the client is kept informed of the progress of their application
- Pay supplier on receipt of proof of delivery

4.2 Supply and Monitoring

If garments cannot be supplied immediately following receipt of an application by the LCGP, the application will be waitlisted and the LCGP informs both the applicant and prescriber in writing of the status of the application.

- In the event that an application is waitlisted it will be processed in consideration of the priority of the application.
- Waiting timeframes will vary as all applications are triaged using the Priority of Access framework relevant to LCGP. It is noted that if an applicant's circumstances change after the application is lodged, and the provision of the garment becomes more urgent, the prescriber is able to escalate the urgency of need with the LCGP at any stage.
- The LCGP is required to organise the delivery of the garment as per the prescriber's instructions.
- The LCGP requires confirmation of delivery of garments prior to payment being made to the supplier.

4.3 Priority of Access to the LCGP

To ensure applicants most in need are assisted, once a person has been deemed eligible for the LCGP, their application should be prioritised based on the following categories:

Lymphoedema garments will be supplied immediately following the processing and approval of the application where applications are:

- triaged as requiring immediate order
- for first time garment users
- received for children <18 years of age

If the criteria above does not apply to applications received by the LCGP then an application will be ordered based on the priority of access framework and availability of funds allocated to the program. An example of these applications would include requests for replacement garments.

4.4 Grievance Procedures and Dispute Resolution

The right of a client to lodge a complaint about a service is fundamental to the promotion of individual rights. Written information regarding grievance / complaints or dispute resolution processes should be made available to applicants and clients by the LCGP.

If an applicant or client has a complaint about any aspect of the LCGP, he / she should raise the matter with the LCGP in the first instance, and attempt to resolve the issue by mediation or negotiation.

If the matter cannot be resolved the client may wish to pursue the issue following the process as outlined in the auspice agency's Grievance / Complaint procedures and Dispute resolution.

If the issue remains unresolved between the client and the LCGP, it should be directed to the Disability Services Commissioner

4.5 Client Records and Privacy Principles

The Public Records Office Victoria (PROV) advise that LCGP records can be treated as financial records and may be destroyed after 7 years *refer to PROS 07/01 General Retention & Disposal Authority for Records of Common Administrative Functions 2013 class 5.11*. The Health Records Act 2001 establishes privacy standards for the handling of health information (including disability) and regulates the handling of health information including collection, use, disclosure and access. The Act will give individuals a legally enforceable right of access to their own health information, which is contained in records held in the private sector (public sector access continues via Freedom of Information). The Act, which commenced on 1 July 2002, applies to all Victorian organisations - profit and non-profit, public and private sector, and people who handle health information. Under the Act, health information that is collected, held or used by organisations must be handled in accordance with the Health Privacy Principles in Schedule 1. The Principles cover many different aspects of information handling. They are binding and a contravention of the principles is "an interference with the privacy of an individual". *For further information refer <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/privacy.htm#principles> or www.health.vic.gov.au/hsc*

5. General Conditions of Supply

Whilst a person may be eligible for assistance from the LCGP, it does not guarantee that a particular item will be provided. This depends on the priority of the application and the availability of funds.

The LCGP will purchase and supply only those items listed in the '*LCGP availability and supply*' to applicants and/or their carers who have the cognitive, physical and psychological ability to use the garment safely and effectively.

Applicant means testing is applied to determine eligibility.

There are limitations for the number of garments supplied per calendar year.

5.1 Retrospective or Reimbursement of Funding

The LCGP will not reimburse or fund any costs associated with any garments that a person may have committed to, either before or after their application to the LCGP has been submitted, regardless of their eligibility to this program.

The LCGP must approve all applications for garments prior to supply. The LCGP will not provide funds retrospectively.

6. Availability and Supply

Available Items	Maximum Subsidy	Prescriber Qualification
Lymphoedema Compression Garments		
-Up to 6 Compression garments per year	*Is dependent on assessable income	Medical practitioner Lymphoedema Therapist eligible for membership as a Category 1 practitioner with the Australasian Lymphology Association.

Up to 6 compression garments are available to people who meet all of the following:

- people who have been medically assessed as having either primary or secondary Lymphoedema.
- meet the eligibility criteria for the VA&EP.
- are currently receiving a Centrelink pension or assessed as being a low or medium income earner

Subject to the completion of an:

- Application for financial assistance
- Declaration of income for LCGP funding

Clients who are assessed as eligible may apply for funding as outlined below. Clients must pay for postage of the garment/s to the designated delivery address.

The LCGP subsidy covers between 40% and 60% of the cost of the prescribed compression garment as per the table below:

Income Level	Under \$200	Between \$200 and \$400	\$400 and above
Medium	40%	40%	40%
Low	40%	50%	60%

- Replacement garments will be supplied at intervals of 2 garments per 3 - 4 months, or as agreed by the Lymphoedema prescriber

Appendix 1: LCGP Service Provider Details

Service Provider	Program Name	Contact	Telephone	Fax	E-mail Address	Address
Ballarat Health Services	State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) Incorporates the following programs/schemes:	Director: Jeni Burton	5333 8101 1300 74 7937 1300 PH SWEP	5333 8111	jeni.burton@bhs.org.au sweplcgp@bhs.org.au	State-wide Equipment Program PO Box 1993 Bakery Hill VIC 3354
Ballarat Health Services	Lymphoedema Compression Garment Program (LCGP)	Deputy Director: Fiona Wakeling	5333 8104 1300 74 7937 1300 PH SWEP	5333 8111	fiona.wakeling@bhs.org.au	State-wide Equipment Program PO Box 1993 Bakery Hill VIC 3354
Ballarat Health Services	Lymphoedema Compression Garment Program (LCGP)	Team Leader: Lauren Lennecke	5333 8150 1300 74 7937 1300 PH SWEP	5333 8111	lauren.lennecke@bhs.org.au	State-wide Equipment Program PO Box 1993 Bakery Hill VIC 3354

Appendix 2: How to Apply for Assistance

How to apply for assistance through the State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP):

Link to location of LCGP eligibility form used by Ballarat Health Services State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP):

<http://swep.bhs.org.au/other-relevant-documents>

Link to prescription forms and manuals used by Ballarat Health Services State-wide equipment program (SWEP):

<http://swep.bhs.org.au/prescribers/prescription-forms-and-manuals>

Appendix 4: Aids or Equipment Programs in Australia

Victoria

Safeguarding and Disability Supports, Department of Health and Human Services, Level 10 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne VIC 3000. Phone: 1800 783 783 Internet: <http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-individuals/disability/aids-and-equipment>

New South Wales

EnableNSW, Enable NSW Health Support, Locked Bag 5270, Parramatta NSW 2124. Phone: 1800 362 253 or SMS 1800enable Internet: <http://www.enable.health.nsw.gov.au/home>

Australian Capital Territory

ACT Equipment Scheme, ACT Health Village Creek Centre, PO Box 11, Woden ACT 2606. Phone: 02 6207 0658 Internet: <http://www.health.act.gov.au/our-services/rehabilitation-aged-and-community-care/oxygen-and-equipment-services>

Tasmania

Community Equipment Scheme, Repatriation Centre, 90 Davey St, Hobart TAS 7000 Phone: 03 6222 7226 Internet: http://www.concessions.tas.gov.au/concessions/health/community_equipment_schemes

Queensland

Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme, General enquiries Phone: 07 3136 3636 or 1300 443 570. Internet: <https://www.health.qld.gov.au/mass/>

Northern Territory

Disability Equipment Program, Department of Health and Community Services, PO Box 40596, Casuarina NT 0811. Phone: 08 8922 7244 Internet: http://www.health.nt.gov.au/Aged_and_Disability/Office_of_Disability/Services_for_People_with_Disability/Disability_Equipment_Program_DEP/index.aspx

Seating Equipment Assessment and Technical (SEAT) Service: Top End Phone: 08 8922 8228, Central Australia Phone: (08) 8951 7559 Internet: http://health.nt.gov.au/Aged_and_Disability/Office_of_Disability/Services_for_People_with_Disability/Seating_Equipment_Assessment_and_Technical_Service/index.aspx

Western Australia

Community Aids and Equipment Program, Disability Services Commission, 146-160 Colin Street, West Perth WA 6005. Phone: 08 9426 9200 Free call 1800 998 214 Internet: <http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/services-support-and-eligibility/services-supports-and-eligibility-new/services/services-provided-by-the-commission/equipment-and-technology/community-aids-and-equipment-program-caep/>

South Australia

Domiciliary Equipment Service Building 4, 300 Richmond Road, Netley SA 5037 Phone: 08 8193 1232 or 1300 295 786 Internet: www.des.sa.gov.au

Appendix 5: Guideline Abbreviations

LCGP	Lymphodema Compression Garment Program
SWEP	State-Wide Equipment Program
DVA	Department of Veterans' Affairs