

Aids and Equipment Program Top-up Fund for Children

Guidelines: September 2013

For further information about the Top-up fund for children or to receive this document in an alternative format please phone the State-wide equipment program (SWEP) on 1300 74 7937 or visit our website at: www.dhs.vic.gov.au.

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Authorised by the Victorian Government, 50 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, May 2012

Introduction

The Top-up Fund for Children was established by the Victorian Government in May 2012 to assist families and children with the cost of aids and equipment. The Top-up Fund for Children is available for manual and powered wheelchairs and associated initial customisation and pressure cushions and walking aids for eligible children less than 18 years of age. The fund will cover the full amount of funding required to meet the difference between the maximum aids and equipment subsidy and the total cost of eligible items. Ballarat Health Services State-wide equipment program (SWEP) will manage the fund.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide the framework for the operation of the fund.

Victorian Aids and Equipment Program

The Commonwealth Government established the Program of Aids for Disabled People (PADP) in 1981, the International Year of the Disabled. In 1987 the Commonwealth transferred funding and program administration responsibility for the PADP to the States and Territories. Since the initial transfer, the PADP has expanded significantly and become the key platform for the provision of aids, equipment, vehicle and home modification services in Victoria. In June 2001, the name was changed to the Victorian Aids and Equipment Program.

Program overview

The Department of Human Services funds a range of aids and equipment programs to provide support to people with a disability as well as the frail aged.

The Aids and Equipment Program operates from two state-wide services.

The State-wide equipment program (SWEP)

The State-wide equipment program is responsible for the administration of the:

- Aids and Equipment Program
- Continence Aids Program
- Domiciliary Oxygen Program
- Supported Accommodation Equipment Assistance Scheme
- Vehicle Modification Subsidy Scheme
- Top-up Fund for Children.

Yooralla

Yooralla is responsible for the administration of the:

- Electronic Communication Devices Scheme.

Aim of the Aids and Equipment Program

The Aids and Equipment Program provides people with a permanent or long-term disability with subsidised aids and equipment to enhance independence in their home, facilitate community participation and support families and carers.

The Aids and Equipment Program is a subsidy program with maximum subsidies existing for all aids and equipment. A full list of the items and the applicable subsidy level available is outlined in the Aids and Equipment Program guidelines available at: <http://swep.bhs.org.au>.

Aim of the Top-up Fund for Children

The fund supports families and children with the cost of the following items:

- manual wheelchairs and associated initial customisation
- powered wheelchairs and associated initial customisation
- pressure cushions
- walking aids.

The fund will fully cover the gap amount between the maximum subsidy provided by the Aids and Equipment Program and the total cost of the equipment.

Objectives of the Aids and Equipment Program Top-up Fund for Children

- Assist families and children less than 18 years of age with a permanent or long-term disability with the costs of eligible equipment.
- Improve the timely provision of aids and equipment for children.
- Reduce the amount of time families, case managers and therapists spend seeking additional funding for aids and equipment.
- Provide a central point of access to additional funding to address the gap between the subsidy available through the Aids and Equipment Program and the actual cost of children's equipment.
- Ensure the allocation of funds is undertaken in an equitable and transparent manner.

Eligibility & funded equipment

Eligibility criteria

In addition to applicants meeting the general eligibility criteria for the Aids and Equipment Program the eligibility criteria for the fund is as follows:

- be less than 18 years of age when the Aids and Equipment Program application is received
- have an approved Aids and Equipment application for available equipment
- be listed on a Health Care Card or hold a Pension Concession Card.

Reissue equipment

Where suitable reissue equipment is available, top up funding will not be provided. However if a reissue wheelchair is available and requires customisation to suit the child's needs top up funds will be used where there is a gap between the maximum subsidy and the total cost of the customisation.

Funded equipment

Equipment item category	Funded equipment
Manual wheelchairs and initial customisations* * Where the prescription for customisation is submitted at the same time as that for a wheelchair	Manual (basic chair) (15 kilograms or more) Manual (light weight) based on medical or assessed need (less than 15 kilograms) Wheelchair customising of non standardised items and features required because of the persons disability or disabling condition.
Powered wheelchairs and initial customisations* * Where the prescription for customisation is submitted at the same time as that for a wheelchair	Wheelchair customising of non standardised items and features required because of the persons disability or disabling condition.
Pressure cushions	Cushions
Walking aids	Walking frames, specialised walking aids as well as the initial cost of the walker.

Please note that funding does not cover assessment, therapy, or customisation for walking aids.

Maintenance, repairs and future customisations

The Top-up Fund for Children covers the base cost for the equipment and the associated initial customisation of wheelchairs. Ongoing maintenance or repairs of walking aids and wheelchairs will be funded from the Aids and Equipment Program maintenance and repairs budget. Funding for future customisation of wheelchairs will be subsidised through the Aids and Equipment Program.

Equipment ownership

Items of aids and equipment purchased through with the fund will remain the property of the Aids and Equipment Program.

Application Process

Assessment and prescription

Consistent with the Aids and Equipment Program guidelines, assessment of the child's needs and prescription for the equipment is required by the fund to ensure that the proposed equipment is the most appropriate to meet the child's needs.

The guidelines are available at: <http://swep.bhs.org.au>

Application Process

There are two ways that an application can be made to the fund:

1. Submit a completed Aids and Equipment Program application together with a completed Top-up Fund for Children application form to the State-wide equipment program (SWEP).

Or

2. Submit a completed Aids and Equipment Program application to the State-wide equipment program (SWEP) who will identify if the child may be eligible to apply to the fund and forward a Top-up Fund for Children application form to the child's family.

The State-wide equipment program (SWEP) will advise the child's family and the prescriber in writing of the outcome of the funding application.

Please note that application forms for both the Aids and Equipment Program and Aids and Equipment Program Top-up Fund for Children are available at: <http://swep.bhs.org.au>

Post or email completed forms to:

Postal address

Top-up Fund for Children
State-wide equipment fund (SWEP)
PO Box 1993
Bakery Hill VIC 3354

Email

swep@bhs.org.au

Approval Process

- Top-up funding will be approved subject to meeting the eligibility criteria for the fund.
- If there are insufficient funds available, the urgency of the child's equipment needs will be assessed and the application will be waitlisted in line with SWEP's Priority of Access Guidelines that are available on the website <http://swep.bhs.org.au>.
- Once funding is available, the application will progress to the Aids and Equipment Program and the equipment will be ordered according to funding availability.

Retrospective or reimbursement of funding

The Top-up Fund for Children will not reimburse or provide funds for any costs associated with any items of aids or equipment that a person, family or organisation may have already purchased, either before or after their application to the fund has been lodged, regardless of their eligibility for this program.

The State-wide equipment program (SWEP) must approve all applications to the Top-up Fund for Children, prior to the provision of equipment. The Victorian Aids and Equipment Program will not provide funds retrospectively.

State-wide equipment program contact details

Postal address

PO Box 1993
Bakery Hill VIC 3354

Telephone 1300 747 937 **Facsimile** 03 5333 8111

Email swep@bhs.org.au

Website <http://swep.bhs.org.au>



Department of
Human Services