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The State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) will close over the Christmas period from 5.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 24 December, 2019 until 8.30 a.m. on Thursday, 2 January 2020.

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

Hello everyone and welcome to the 7th Edition of our annual newsletter.

This year we celebrate our 9th year of operation as the State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP).

On behalf of SWEP, thank you to the tens of thousands of State and NDIS funded Victorians who we have had the privilege to support during 2019.

2019 has been a year of significant change for SWEP as the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) moved away from formal Working Arrangements with SWEP in place since 2016. This resulted in a full restructure of our admin and leadership teams.

Despite these changes, SWEP continues to offer support to NDIS Participants, who can select SWEP as their provider of choice. In doing so, Participants are able to access our tender contract prices for equipment repairs, continence products, assistive technology equipment and hire of equipment.



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Through our State funded budgets, we continue to support eligible Victorian consumers over 65 years of age, along with consumers under 65 who are ineligible for NDIS (due to health related conditions) with a range of assistive technology equipment, home & vehicle modifications, continence products & domiciliary oxygen and access to 24/7 repair services.

As we continue to evolve our service into new markets, this year we are excited to announce the following initiatives:-

- In October we announced that the Transport Accident Commission (TAC) have chosen to partner with SWEP to leverage from our registration & credentialing framework for Occupational Therapists (OT's) currently providing AT services to the TAC. The TAC recognise the best practice approach SWEP takes towards registration and credentialing of AT practitioners, in order to ensure high quality services which supports the needs, goals and aspirations of consumers.
- Our Clinical Advisors have provided support and advice about grant applications for equipment in schools for the Department of Education & Training.
- SWEP will shortly commence a 6-month equipment hire pilot with a Transition Care Program provider, for consumers transitioning from hospital to home.
- SWEP is also working on a proposal with our acute services to pilot a bariatric equipment library for public hospital in-patients.

Given the significant changes in the Policy and funding environment SWEP operates within we are currently reviewing opportunities that may support better consumer experience and outcomes in relation to assistive technology provision.

Best wishes for the festive season to all our consumers, their families and carers for a safe and happy Christmas.

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

## SWEP Restructure

In June we again restructured our leadership and administrative teams, which resulted in further changes to our email addresses and phone queues, enabling you to make direct contact with a member of the relevant team.

|   |  | <b>Phone 1300 747 937</b> |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| If you require repairs or maintenance to your equipment | <a href="mailto:sweprepairs@bhs.org.au">sweprepairs@bhs.org.au</a> | <b>Press 1</b>            |
| If you are calling in regards to Continence products    | <a href="mailto:swepcont@bhs.org.au">swepcont@bhs.org.au</a>       | <b>Press 2</b>            |
| If you are calling in regards to Oxygen                 | <a href="mailto:swepoxy@bhs.org.au">swepoxy@bhs.org.au</a>         | <b>Press 3</b>            |
| For all other equipment enquiries                       | <a href="mailto:swepat@bhs.org.au">swepat@bhs.org.au</a>           | <b>Press 4</b>            |
| For IT support in relation to the SWEP Portal           | <a href="mailto:swepimt@bhs.org.au">swepimt@bhs.org.au</a>         | <b>Press 5</b>            |
| To speak with customer service or finance team          |  | <b>Press 6</b>            |
| To hear the options again                               |  | <b>Press #</b>            |

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! For further contact information including direct contacts for our Leadership Team visit our website [here](#)



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## A brief glance at some of our programs

This year we were able to support approx. 23,000 consumers with provision of over 76,600 individual pieces of equipment and/or products, repairs or home/vehicle modifications. We received more than 25,000 applications for support (approximately 480 applications per week). We also received more than 73,000 incoming telephone calls during the year (approx. 280 calls every day we are open).

### ➤ Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP)

Following a robust tendering process that commenced in November 2018, SWEP has contracted Supagas as the successful contractor to provide home oxygen for the Domiciliary Oxygen Program.

The type of equipment that can be supplied include:

- Portable cylinders & oxygen conserving device/regulator (for intermittent usage only)
- Stationary concentrator (that can be used up to 24 hours per day)
- Portable concentrator (for intermittent usage only)
- Nasal cannula and tubing

We currently support over 3,500 people each year who require oxygen equipment to remain at home. On average, we supply nearly 5,500 cylinder refills each month and nearly two thirds of our oxygen consumers are using oxygen concentrators.

### ➤ Continence

This year the Continence Program has supported more than 4,400 people in receiving continence products. While no children are waiting for support in this program, due to budget constraints there is a waitlist for adults wishing to access the program. The team are actively working to ensure wait times are minimised within budget availability.

### ➤ Assistive Technology (AT) Team

In June this year we again restructured our workforce and now have one dedicated team managing all of your assistive technology needs. Being the largest of our SWEP Teams, staff in the AT team are kept extremely busy managing applications for a broad range of equipment items, orthotics, lymphoedema compression garments and home & vehicle modifications. In this year alone the team have received and processed over 12,800 applications.



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## ➤ Asset Management Team

The Asset Management Team are responsible for ensuring timely repairs to equipment in conjunction with our contracted Supplier, Chemtronics. Chemtronics has a large warehouse located in Thomastown Melbourne and highly qualified technicians located throughout the State. We also offer an emergency after-hours service allowing us to provide support 24/7, 365 days per year. Throughout 2019 SWEP and Chemtronics have facilitated approximately 4,825 repairs for both State funded consumers and NDIS Participants.

Our Preventative Maintenance Program is now available across Victoria for all State funded consumers. This program was implemented with a view to improving reliability of equipment and consumer and/or carer safety, through annual servicing in the following categories:

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

Throughout 2019 we have arranged preventative maintenance servicing of over 2,255 items of equipment. 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.

## Procurement

After an extensive tender and procurement process, we announced in May that Supagas has been contracted to supply oxygen for our Domiciliary Oxygen Program from 01 July, 2019.

Our transition planning was based around minimal interruption for consumers and working with our suppliers to ensure that new equipment was installed before removal of equipment from the former Supplier.

Although our transition planning has not been without its challenges and delays, we were pleased to confirm full transition of services in November (apart from a small number of consumers who have been uncontactable).

Below is some information about our new Supplier Supagas that will help you have confidence in their ability to maintain the service level set by the previous Supplier moving forward:

*'Supagas is a leading supplier of Medical, industrial gases and LPG in Australia. We are a nation-wide company rapidly building a reputation for high levels of patient care through our exceptional 'YES WE CAN' customer service offering. We help patients everyday with products to use for many respiratory conditions, we offer a personalised service and our local team will set up and train you in your home, ensuring your safety is at the forefront.'*



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*Today, Supagas has multiple distribution centres nation-wide and continue to grow, we provide a safe and reliable delivery service to our patients and a personal response to queries from our local customer service team, ensuring we provide a quality service every time.'*

In October SWEP released a Request for Tender for the Contenance program via the Vic Tenders website. The tender Evaluation Process is underway and SWEP looks forward to announcing the successful tenderer for the supply of Contenance products by April next year.

## Community Engagement Activities

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:

- Valid 'Having a Say' Conference
- 'My Special Child' Expo
- Source Kids Disability Expo
- Valid Disability Expo Bendigo
- ICreate Conference Canberra
- International Day of Disability Expo
- Valid Expo Horsham
- BADAC-NAIDOC Open Day
- Ballarat Community Expo
- East Gippsland Disability Expo
- Melbourne Seniors and Disability Expo
- Social Support Maribyrnong
- Chinese Community Social Services Centre Inc. Wellness Festival



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 consumer outcomes.

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 Consumer Advisory Committee

In September SWEP advertised for like-minded organisations and service users to join a SWEP Consumer Advisory Committee. We still have vacancies on our Committee so if you are interested please respond to the following advertisement:



*The State-Wide Equipment Program (SWEP) is seeking volunteers to share their voice in shaping our services. SWEP wants to hear what you think - your voice helps to make sure that our services are right for the community.*

*The State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) is a sub-division of Ballarat Health Services (BHS), which oversees a number of different assistive technology programs. SWEP provides Victorian people who either have a permanent or long-term disability or are frail aged with subsidised assistive technology (AT) items, home and vehicle modifications to enhance their independence and facilitate*

*community participation. BHS and SWEP is also registered with the National Disability Insurance Scheme as a provider of a broad range of Assistive Technology and Equipment Repairs. For further information about our services please refer to website <https://swep.bhs.org.au/for-individuals.php>*

*The voice of consumers (including service users and representatives from 'like-minded' organisations and advocacy groups) helps SWEP to be more responsive and shape our service delivery model. We have developed a draft Terms of Reference for this group for discussion at the first meeting.*

*By joining our Consumer Representative group you can help in many ways which could include:*

- *expressing your views on particular issues that SWEP wants to find out more about*
- *taking part in short focus groups about an issue or services - this is like a roundtable discussion*
- *being a member of a working group related to projects and service expansions*
- *learning how we respond to consumer feedback and sharing your ideas for improvement*
- *sharing your ideas and experiences as a consumer/carer*
- *helping us to develop consumer information and tools in language that is easily understood by our target audience*

*SWEP understands that you will choose how you wish to contribute - you may not wish to contribute to all projects. Sometimes your participation might be via email and other times it might be an ongoing commitment to be part of a SWEP Committee, or attending a meeting either in person or via tele/video conference.*

*Your participation as a Member of the SWEP Consumer Advisory Committee is a voluntary commitment however, you will **be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses such as transport/parking for participation in activities.***

*If you are interested in becoming a member of our Consumer Advisory Committee, we look forward to hearing from you.*

*Please contact Hana Hey, SWEP Marketing and Communications Co-ordinator to express your interest - ph: 5333 8153 or email [Hana.Hey@bhs.org.au](mailto:Hana.Hey@bhs.org.au)*



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## SWEP Compliments/Positive Stories



*'Yesterday, we took Stephanie to the Werribee Open Plains Zoo. She had a wonderful time and did a lot of driving in her new power wheelchair. She is much better supported now that the lateral supports have been fitted and seems to have adjusted well to driving with her right hand after the controls were swapped sides last week.*

*Her favourite part was the ride in the safari bus, where she saw so many different animals, some of them up quite close. I've attached a couple of photos of her in the wheelchair on the safari bus. You can see how valuable it was to have the new chair. Being able to put her in such an elevated position enabled her to see over the bus side-wall and railings, just like the adults. (In her old chair, she would have been looking straight into the side panel of the bus and we would have had to get her out and hold her on one of our laps for her to see anything. Even from our laps, she would not have had a very good view and she would not have been nearly so well supported.) The headband stopped her head from jolting around and she was very happy to have it on.*

*It's great to see Stephanie able to enjoy an outing like this so much. (She is still talking all about her trip to the zoo.) Thanks so much for your roles in providing Stephanie this wheelchair, her therapy and the opportunities she has as a result.*

*Kind regards'*



*'I wish to thank SWEP staff for the excellent service my husband received from you. The staff were helpful & very efficient, the whole process for equipment was handled with minimum of fuss & very promptly. He received a chair & a stair lift which are great aids & helped my husband tremendously. He wishes to thank you'*

