

SWEP e-NEWS

8th EDITION FOR CONSUMERS

December 2020



To use an interpreter over the telephone – Ph: 131 450

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Operations Director

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The State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) will close over the Christmas period from 3.00 p.m. on Thursday, 24 December, 2020 until 8.30 a.m. on Tuesday, 29 December 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 8th Edition of SWEP e-News for Consumers

Hello everyone and welcome to the 8th Edition of our Annual newsletter. This year we are excited to celebrate our 10th Anniversary of operation as the State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP).

On behalf of SWEP, thank you to the tens of thousands of State funded Victorians; and NDIS Participants (now supported by our new Empower Care team); who we have had the privilege to support during 2020.

2020 has been a challenging time for us all, as we braced ourselves for the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic. With continuity of services to consumers across the State being at the forefront, we quickly evolved our service and IT systems to facilitate an offsite workforce. Despite some initial interruption to service, through careful planning and up-grading of our IT systems, our team is now meeting all pre-Covid service targets, ensuring ongoing continuity of services to support you.

We thank you for your support and patience throughout 2020 as our service model has evolved to facilitate a workforce predominantly working from home.



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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 funding (due to health related conditions).

In September we were excited to introduce our new specialised team, Empower Care, to Support NDIS Participants and privately funded consumers (ineligible for State funding). More information regarding our new team and how we can support Participants as 'your NDIS provider of choice' can be found in our program up-dates section.

As we continue to evolve our service into new markets, this year we are excited to announce the following initiatives that will be rolled out in 2021:-

- Working with our acute services to pilot hire models to support a bariatric equipment library for public hospital in-patients; provision of AT for an 'at home' patient care model; access to AT required to enable discharge for a period of 30 days;
- CPAP provision;
- Introduction of a Consumer Reference Group in 2021 to provide a unique consumer perspective to all aspects of our service delivery model.

2020 has been a challenging year, nothing seems to be done the way it used to be. Christmas is no different, we can't wait to celebrate it but need to think a little differently about how we bring and share joy.

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

Jeni Burton

Operations Director - State-wide Equipment Program

SWEP Restructure

Throughout the year we have farewelled several staff from our Leadership team, requiring a Leadership restructure and changes to portfolio responsibilities, outlined below.

SWEP's Leadership Team Structure

Portfolio Responsibilities	Name	Email	Phone
Executive Director	Craig Wilding	Craig.Wilding@bhs.org.au	
Operations Director	Jeni Burton	Jeni.Burton@bhs.org.au	5333 8101
Quality & Leadership Support Officer - Customer Support/Feedback - Quality/Corporate Communications/Partnering with Consumers	Dianne Sealey	Dianne.Sealey@bhs.org.au	5333 8126
Operations Manager - Tender Supplier Contracts - Procurement - Practitioner Registration and Credentialing - Clinical Advisor Liaison - Stakeholder Relationships - Community Engagement and Marketing	Sue Vincent	Sue.Vincent@bhs.org.au	5333 8136



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Team Leader - Finance - Customer Service - Empower Care (for services to NDIS Participants and Privately funded consumers/stakeholders) Team	Hana Hey	Hana.Hey@bhs.org.au	5333 8153
Team Leader - Oxygen - Laryngectomy Consumables - Lymphoedema Compression Garment Program - Continence Team	Narelle Harrison	Narelle.Harrison@bhs.org.au	5333 8115
Team Leaders - Assistive Technology Team - Asset Management Team	Kerry Etchell Paul Baird	Kerry.Etchell@bhs.org.au Paul.Baird@bhs.org.au	5333 8116 5333 8107

A brief glance at our Programs

Empower Care (for NDIS Participants or privately funded consumers)

This year saw the creation of our 'Empower Care' team.

Empowers Care's sole purpose is to focus on NDIS Participants and those consumers who are not eligible for support through the State funded Programs. This includes access to continence products, repairs to their assistive technology, purchase of assistive technology and equipment hire.

The team consists of dedicated and experienced staff in providing the above supports. We welcome your call to discuss how Empower Care can support you and your daily living. The team has had extensive training in the expectations of Providers in providing NDIS Participant supports, recognising their choice and control over all elements of their daily living and equipment/product requirements. We have also had significant interest in leveraging from many 'value add' elements of our model from private consumers and other funding agencies.

The team has a 24-hour response time frame, which means they strive to ensure an order or enquiry is responded to within 24 hours from receipt. The Empower Care Team since its implementation in September, have been able to develop important relationships with internal and external stakeholders to develop a business model of mutual consumer and stakeholder success.

Since September, our team has supported 489 participants with supply across the above-mentioned supports. This has been supported by SWEP's many contracted suppliers (offering quality products at competitive contract prices) and friendly/highly qualified repair technicians via our partnership with Chemtronics.

If you have any questions regarding Empower Care and how we can help you, please call 1300 747 937 and ask to speak to a member of our team.



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Our State funded Programs (for eligible consumers over 65 years of age who have a disability of a permanent nature or are frail aged and living at home - this may include consumers under 65 years of age who meet our eligibility criteria and are unable to access alternative funding)

This year our State funded programs have supported approx. 18,700 consumers with provision of over 60,000 individual pieces of equipment and/or products, repairs or home/vehicle modifications. We received more than 13,900 applications for support (approx. 258 applications per week). We also received more than 47,600 incoming telephone calls during the year (approx. 176 calls every day we are open, answering most calls within approx. 20 seconds).

1. Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP)

The Domiciliary Oxygen Program currently support over 3,500 people each year who require supplementary oxygen equipment. The program provides Assistive Technology (AT) items for consumers of all ages who qualify under the Thoracic Society Guidelines (TSANZ) and the Victorian Aids & Equipment Program Guidelines.

The type of equipment that can be supplied include:

- Stationary oxygen concentrators
- Portable oxygen cylinders with an oxygen-conserving device or
- Standard regulator
- Portable oxygen concentrators
- Tubing and nasal cannula
- Oxygen cylinder trolleys and carry bags

If you have any questions about the above information, please call your Specialist or our team on 1300 747 937 (Option 3), regarding how we can support you.

2. Lymphoedema Compression Garments Program (LCGP)

Since January 2020, SWEP have assisted 362 eligible consumers with financial assistance to cover between 40-60% of the cost of their prescribed compression garments (up to six compression garments per year).

Changes to this program including eligibility criteria, expansion of available products and budget are coming soon and we look forward to sharing those changes with you very shortly.

If you have any questions regarding any of this information, please contact your Practitioner or SWEP on 1300 747 937 (Option 3), regarding how we can support you.



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3. Laryngectomy Consumables Program (LCP)

The LCP provides funding for laryngectomy consumables to eligible consumers. This program ensures crucial funding is available to help Victorian laryngectomy patients access everyday items they need to assist with breathing and the prevention of infections.

Over the past twelve months, the LCP have provided funding assistance to 125 consumers for electrolarynx voice aids, laryngectomy consumables, and voice prostheses (standard and specialised).

Our dedicated team are happy to discuss the different products that can be funded under LCP. If you have any questions regarding LCP, please speak to your Practitioner or SWEP on 1300 747 937 (Option 3), regarding how we can support you.

4. Continence Team (CA)

This year the Continence Program has supported more than 4,300 people in receiving continence products, placing over 6,800 purchase orders.

Consumers accessing continence products from SWEP may also be able to access supports from other programs such as the Commonwealth Government's Continence Aids Payment Scheme (CAPS) that can assist you with your disposable continence supplies. For further information visit the [Australian Government Continence Aids Payment Scheme website](#)

If you have any questions regarding any of this information, please contact your Practitioner or SWEP on 1300 747 937 (Option 2), regarding how we can support you.

5. Assistive Technology and Asset Management teams (AT)

The AT team continue to process a large volume of applications for an extensive range of equipment items, home and vehicle modifications. In 2020 the team received and processed approx. 8,100 applications and placed more than 8,500 orders.

The Asset Management Team continue to support our consumers in the community by processing requests for repairs with our contracted supplier Chemtronics, who are located in Thomastown Victoria. Their highly qualified technicians are located and/or travel right across Victoria. Throughout 2020 SWEP and Chemonics have facilitated approximately 5,780 repairs for both State funded consumers and NDIS Participants.

Our Preventative Maintenance Program continues to provide ongoing maintenance to equipment, the goal being to improve reliability of equipment and consumer and/or carer safety, through annual servicing in the following categories:



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- 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 scooter

This service has been provided to 1,048 consumers throughout the year, with servicing of over 3,340 pieces of equipment.

If you have any questions regarding any of this information, please contact your Practitioner or SWEP on 1300 747 937 (Option 4), regarding how we can support you.

Procurement

Our tender evaluation process is a robust and transparent way of ensuring 'value for money' can be demonstrated through contracts we develop with Suppliers. While pricing is important evaluation includes assessment of Supplier capability, legislative compliance, capability to meet our delivery and support KPI's, innovation and quality products. We currently have 18 Supplier contracts across our full range of services and products.

SWEP also develop formal working arrangements with our Clinical Advisors and Subject Matter Experts. This Panel provides advice and support to our team, and external stakeholders, including our AT Practitioners.

Community Engagement Activities

At the beginning of 2020 we attended the following Community Engagement Events:

24-25 February –Valid 'Having a Say' Conference in Geelong.

12 March –Melton Senior Citizens Group Meeting.

Covid-19 restrictions throughout 2020, resulted in cancellation of many community engagement activities. Whilst face-to-face contact is discouraged/difficult in the current environment, SWEP remain available to contribute/participate in engagement with external stakeholders and community groups via online forums. If you would like us to attend a community group or online forum you are connected to please do not hesitate to contact us on 1300 747 937 (Option 6).



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SWEP Consumer Reference Group

We are very excited regarding the recent appointment of four consumer representatives to our newly established Consumer Reference Group. Working in partnership with our consumers, and placing a 'consumer lens' on our service, is a key enabling strategy in working with and meeting the need of our consumers.

Our focus on diversity and inclusion proactively ensures that the SWEP service delivery model meets the needs of our consumers, where experiences are valued and perspectives can be shared and considered.

If you are interested in becoming a future member of our Consumer Reference Group, we look forward to hearing from you. Please contact Dianne Sealey, SWEP Quality and Leadership Support Officer, to express your interest - Ph: 5333 8126 or email Dianne.Sealey@bhs.org.au

SWEP Feedback

As one of our consumers, clients or NDIS Participants, you are the focus of our efforts. Your feedback helps us know what we are doing well and where we need to improve. If you have any compliments, suggestions or concerns about any aspect of our service please visit our website <https://swep.bhs.org.au/providing-feedback.php>

We would like to share with you a few positive stories received by our team throughout 2020.

'Hello team,

I really wanted to share with you how appreciative my mother and I were of the excellent customer service support that we had received from one of your Administration Officers. I had emailed my initial query to yourselves regarding my mother's Continence support funding, following advice from your phone line that there was high demand and that your staff (like myself) are working from home at the moment. Karolina responded promptly to my email queries and was exceptionally helpful. I know that on most occasions, people provide negative feedback to organisations but I feel that it's also important to acknowledge great customer service. Many thanks. We really appreciate the work you have done and most likely continue to do for our vulnerable community. Thank-you again! '

' Greetings at SWEP.

Thank you so much for your email.

SWEP has been so great to us. Helping us out at a very difficult time in our lives.

We are forever grateful for this amazing service. When everything was going wrong for us, we were in a very dark place. Everything happening at the same time. SWEP was one of those lights at the end of the tunnel. Helping us out when we needed it most and more than that making us realise we can get through a very difficult time.

We still continue to struggle along but we are more equipped now to deal with my Dad's stroke. He will forever need assistance but we manage much better now.



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'Just a note, forwarding my appreciation for your involvement in supplying a mobility scooter, which was delivered on Wednesday 25/03/2020. I cannot say how much a little bit of independence means to me, and cannot thank you enough, I am actually embarrassed by your efforts and your understanding ... kindest regards'

HAPPY 10TH ANNIVERSARY SWEP



Wow what a long way we have come since our inception in December 2010, not to mention some very younger looking versions of our former selves! Many faces from our original staff group are no longer working with us but we still have approx. 12 staff who formed part of our original team.

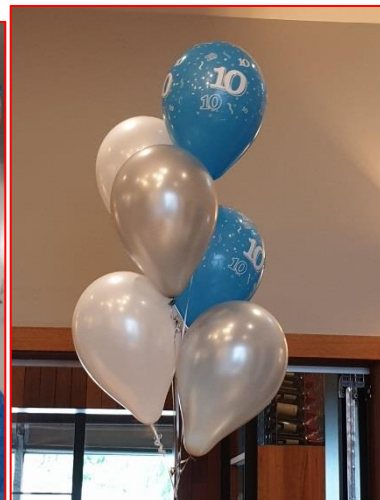
We are so proud to have been part of the journey in supporting 10,000's of Victorian people, requiring aids and equipment, home & vehicle modifications, oxygen and continence products, to remain active in our community/living at home, over the past decade.

We were also privileged to be part of the evolution of disability services in Victoria, working alongside the NDIS for many years to support people under 65, transitioning to the Scheme. We are delighted that we can continue to work in that space as a registered NDIS Provider.

Unfortunately we are unable to celebrate as a full team as we would have liked but would like to take this opportunity to recognise and thank our team, AT Practitioners, consumers and our Suppliers for supporting us in our 10 year journey.



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