

SWEP e-NEWS

9th EDITION FOR CONSUMERS

December 2021



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 Friday 24 December, 2021 and will re-open at 8.30 a.m. on Wednesday, 29 December 2021.

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 Leadership & Staff

Welcome to the 9th Edition of SWEP e-News for Consumers

Hello everyone and welcome to the 9th Edition of our Annual newsletter.

On behalf of SWEP, thank you to the tens of thousands of State funded Victorians; and NDIS Participants (now supported by our Empower Care Options team); who we have had the privilege to support during 2021.

2021 has continued to present new challenges, as we negotiated continued Covid lockdowns, and the associated social and economic impacts. With continuity of services to our consumers across the State being our key focus, we have endeavored to adapt our processes to ensure that the delivery of services has been as seamless as possible for our consumers, during these trying times.

In recent months we have worked closely with the Department of Health to implement a new program, for Covid patients requiring supplementary oxygen. This program, managed by our Empower Care Options team, went live in early November and we are very pleased to support the Covid response efforts across Victoria, with the unique opportunity to expand our services to support vulnerable Victorians, in their recovery from Covid-19.





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This year we were also excited to finally establish our first Consumer Reference Group made up of five community members and two SWEP Leadership members.

The SWEP Consumer Reference Group meets quarterly, and provides opportunities for our community members to have a say in the development, delivery, planning and evaluation of our services. Our community members bring valuable experience and unique insight to our services and provide an important balance to the views of healthcare professionals by participating and contributing. We recognise that consumer, carer and community participation is a key enabling strategy in working with and meeting the needs of our consumers, and we have really enjoyed working with our community members in their first membership term.

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

Jeni Burton
Operations Director - State-wide Equipment Program

A brief glance at our Programs

Empower Care Options

The Empower Care Options team has been in operation now for over 12 months, with primary focus on managing the commercial arm of our business, providing services to 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.

This year, our team has supported 1862 people with supply across the range of supports available. This has been supported by SWEP's many contracted suppliers.

In addition, Empower Care Options recently assumed management for two of our State funded programs including the Lymphoedema Compression Garment Program, as well as the newly established Covid Positive Oxygen Program.

Our State funded Programs

This year our State funded programs have supported approx. 20,175 consumers with provision of over 75,000 individual pieces of equipment and/or products, repairs or home/vehicle modifications. We received more than 20,600 applications for support (approx. 396 applications per week). We also received more than 41,400 incoming telephone calls during the year (approx. 157 calls every day we are open, answering most calls within approx. 20 seconds). In addition we have continued to provide a 24/7 after hours emergency repair service.



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1. Lymphoedema Compression Garments Program (LCGP)

Since January 2021, SWEP have assisted 1,967 eligible consumers with subsidised funding towards their compression garments.

Changes to this program this year have included: eligibility criteria, expansion of available products and increased budget, allowing us to support an increased number of consumers.

2. Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP)

The Domiciliary Oxygen Program currently supports over 3,760 people each year who require supplementary oxygen equipment. This does not include those consumers who are eligible for supplementary oxygen under our Covid Oxygen Program.

3. Laryngectomy Consumables Program (LCP)

Over the past twelve months, the LCP have provided funding assistance to 227 eligible consumers for electrolarynx voice aids, laryngectomy consumables, and voice prostheses (standard and specialised). This crucial funding ensures that Victorian Laryngectomy patients can access everyday items they need to assist with breathing and the prevention of infections.

4. Continence Team (CA)

This year the Continence Program has supported more than 4,000 people in receiving continence products, placing over 6,900 purchase orders.

December sees the retirement of one of our long standing Continence team members, Vicky. We would like to acknowledge Vicky's support and commitment to our team and Continence consumers from across Victoria over many years, and extend our congratulations and best wishes to her, for the next exciting phase of her life. The team have now welcomed their newest team member, Tanya, who is a welcome addition to the Oxygen and Continence teams.

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 2021 the team received and processed approx. 10,970 applications and placed more than 8,000 orders. The number of consumers supported increased significantly from last year following two additional non-recurrent funding grants from the Department of Health, in recognition of continued demand on this program.

In recent months SWEP have been able to introduce a process which has facilitated the purchasing of 'low cost' items (under \$250) that meet the criteria for SWEP funding immediately. The process has decreased wait times for consumers and processing time for our staff and the need for follow-up by Practitioners. This has also had a positive impact on the current waitlist, in that our staff have been able to dedicate more time to following up on outstanding applications and information required, meaning our consumers are getting the equipment, home or vehicle modification that they require to remain active in their community.



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Throughout 2021, through our repairs and re-issue partnership with Chemtronics, we have facilitated approx. 5,100 repairs for both State funded consumers and NDIS Participants, as well as supplied approx. 1,850 fully refurbished items of equipment through our expensive re-issue pool.

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: Multifunction electric beds; change tables; floor and ceiling patient lifters and slings (excluding ceiling hoist tracking); mobile shower commodes; pressure relieving cushions and mattresses; electric lift/recline chairs; specialised seating and manual and power wheelchairs and scooters.

This service has been provided to 1,710 consumers throughout the year, with servicing of over 2,570 pieces of equipment.

December also sees the retirement of another of our long standing team members, Alley. Whilst Alley has worked across several SWEP teams, more recently she has been a valuable member of our AT team. We wish to extend our congratulations and best wishes to Alley in the next exciting phase of her life, whilst her AT team mates eagerly await the arrival of two new team members.

If you have any questions regarding any of the services we provide, please contact SWEP on 1300 747 937 or your Practitioner, regarding how we can support you.

Procurement

The current supplier contracts for Assistive Technology are now in the final extension period which ends in December 2022. We will go out to tender again next year for this range of equipment. This will ensure our contracted equipment is relevant, that they have the latest models and features, value for money and ensure the equipment meets the needs of our consumers.

While pricing is important our evaluation process provides an assessment of supplier capability, legislative compliance, capability to meet our delivery and support KPI's, innovation and quality products.

Community Engagement Activities

Covid-19 restrictions has resulted in an inability to attend as many community engagement activities as we would like. Whilst face-to-face activities have been widely discouraged this year we hope to see a significant change in 2022 as restrictions ease and we begin to travel freely around the State.

SWEP remain committed to contributing/participating in engagement with external stakeholders and community groups, both in person or online. 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 2-2).



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In May members of our team were fortunate to attend the ATSA (Assistive Technology Suppliers Australia) Independent Living Expo in Melbourne, where we not only promoted our services, but received 'hands-on' experience with the many innovative AT solutions on display.



ATSA MELBOURNE 2021





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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 2021 (de-identified).

"X installed the bannister rail on Tuesday, 13 July. I am very grateful to SWEP for funding this. I am now using it and I feel that much safer when climbing the steps up to our front veranda. Thank you for your work in managing this application. Yours sincerely"

"I would like to make comment about the services provided by SWEP. From the outset of receiving support from your group, having to cope with IPF, I have found that 'we' are fortunate to have you there. Your whole attention to our needs is dealt with care, and consideration. Thank You

We often hear the comment "We live in a lucky country ". Be assured that this comes about not just through fiscal based support but through the compassionate level of assistance offered by the staff such as at SWEP. "

*"Hello SWEP team,
I recently received my new wig in the mail, through the SWEP grant and via the Melbourne supplier. You processed my request quickly, taking into account that it was 6 months overdue. I am extremely grateful for this speedy action, as I was starting to look like a walking haystack! There's nothing like that New Wig feeling!
Thank you again for supporting me in this very helpful way.
Kind regards"*







"Hi, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for arranging for my vehicle to have hand controls installed. My independence has been restored. Warmest Regards"



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Thank you to those people who were randomly selected to participate in our 2021 Annual Consumer Survey. Please see below a snapshot of our results.

Your feedback (whether positive or negative) is extremely valuable and allows us to strive for continual service improvements, to enhance the consumer experience.

					
401 responses to 1,660 consumer experience surveys sent Responses in all assistive technology categories	94% overall satisfaction with the SWEP experience That includes SWEP staff, AT practitioners, suppliers, repair agents and service	98% overall satisfaction with SWEP staff in communications We are timely, helpful, respectful, understood consumer needs and gave clear information	95% overall satisfaction with AT practitioners You are: understanding of consumer needs;; provide informed equipment options and advice to consumers about the process to access SWEP support	93% overall satisfaction with the equipment and suppliers	96% overall satisfaction with the equipment, service or modification having helped consumers achieve their goals

Merry Christmas from the SWEP Team

