

SWEP e-NEWS

12th EDITION FOR CONSUMERS

December 2024



[To use an interpreter over the telephone – Ph: 131 450](tel:131450)

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Operations Director

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Greetings

The State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) will close over the Christmas period from 3.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 23 December 2024 and re-open at 8.30 a.m. on Monday, 30 December 2024.



We wish you a safe and happy festive season!

Warmest regards and best wishes, SWEP Leadership & Staff

Welcome to the 12th Edition of SWEP e-News for Consumers

Hello everyone and welcome to the 12th Edition of our annual newsletter. On behalf of SWEP, thank you to our State funded Victorians; NDIS participants and private consumers, who we have had the privilege to support during 2024. This year, we have received more than 22,100 applications for support through our programs, with over 23,000 consumers supported.

This year has been an extremely busy one with the expiration of two of our large contracts for the supply of oxygen equipment and continence products. This resulted in an extensive tender process in accordance with Victorian Government procurement guidelines (see page 4 for more detail).

New Supplier, Air Liquide Healthcare was subsequently awarded the new contract for the oxygen program with Independence Australia retaining the contract for the continence program.

We acknowledge that the transition of 2,800 oxygen consumers from the former Supplier to the new Supplier has not been seamless and we express our sincere gratitude to those consumers who have reached out to us with valuable feedback in the early stages of the contract.

We also acknowledge that changes to the continence product catalogue have resulted in the need for prescription changes for some continence consumers and again we thank you for your patience as our team have worked with you to facilitate these changes.



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This year our programs will be closed from 25 -27 December and 01 January only. During these closures you will still be able to contact our team for emergency equipment repairs by phoning SWEP on 1300 747 937 and selecting 'Option 1'. If your query is not urgent, you can leave a message by selecting 'Option 2' and a member of our team will call you back when we return.

On behalf of the SWEP team, we hope that you have a lovely time over the festive season, in whatever traditional manner you celebrate.

Jeni Burton
Operations Director – State-wide Equipment Program

Our Programs

Safety Link Assist

The commercial arm of our business has been in operation now for over 4 years, with primary focus on providing services to NDIS participants and those consumers who are not eligible for support through the State funded programs.

The Safety Link Assist team has welcomed three new team members this year - Roshan, Lauren and Maria, to support the ever-increasing demand for the services we offer through this program (including continence products; repairs, maintenance, hire & sales of assistive technology equipment).

This year our team has supported 1,064 NDIS participants and 488 privately funded consumers. This has been supported by SWEP's many contracted suppliers.

Our State funded Programs

This year our State funded programs have supported approx. 20,180 unique consumers with provision of over 80,000 individual pieces of equipment and/or products, repairs, or home/vehicle modifications. We received more than 22,100 applications for support (approx. 426 applications per week). We have also received nearly 40,000 incoming telephone calls during the year (approx. 165 calls every day we are open, answering most calls within approx. 30 seconds).

1. Lymphoedema Compression Garments Program (LCGP)

Since January 2024, SWEP have assisted approx. 3,600 eligible people with subsidised funding towards their compression garments.

Due to increasingly high demand, we have recently added some additional staff to the team including Linda and Michelle. We have been working with the Department of Health for some time, to consider an equitable way of supporting the many people applying to this program, within the constraints of our budget.



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2. Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP)

The Domiciliary Oxygen Program has supported over 3,500 people over the year who require supplementary oxygen equipment including stationary oxygen concentrators and portable oxygen equipment. There is no wait for funding for eligible consumers to this program.

3. Laryngectomy Consumables Program (LCP)

Over the past twelve months, the LCP have provided funding assistance to approx. 200 consumers for voice aids, laryngectomy consumables, and voice prostheses. This crucial funding ensures that Victorian Laryngectomy patients can access everyday items they need. There is no wait for funding for eligible consumers to this program.

4. Continence Team (CA)

This year the Continence Program has supported more than 3,200 people in receiving continence products, placing over 14,900 purchase orders. Once accepted by the program, consumers receive ongoing support for their continence products up to a maximum \$ value each year. Unfortunately, due to budget constraints and demand for this program, new consumers applying to the program are currently experiencing a waitlist. The Continence team recently welcomed a new team member, Clare.

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 2024 the team received and processed approx. 10,800 applications and placed more than 19,500 orders.

Throughout 2024, through our repairs and re-issue partnership with Chemtronics, we have facilitated approximately 2,200 repairs for both State funded consumers and NDIS Participants, as well as supplied more than 1,200 fully refurbished items of equipment through our extensive refurbished equipment 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 check. This service has been provided to more than 1,700 consumers throughout the year, with servicing of over 1,550 pieces of equipment.

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.



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Procurement

Our Supplier contracts for continence and oxygen products expired on 30 June 2024. In line with the Victorian Government procurement guidelines, we released a new Tender for both the continence and oxygen programs in October 2023 and finalised this process in June 2024. The Tender evaluation process included the following Phases:

- Phase 1: assessed Supplier capability to meet our delivery, warranty & consumer support expectations; legislative compliance; as well as innovation and quality products.
- Phase 2: assessed the quality of the products on offer from each Supplier, by clinical experts. This ensures that our contracted produce range remains relevant to current technologies, includes the latest models, features, and ensures that our product range can meet the needs of the vast majority of people accessing our programs.
- Phase 3: assesses equipment/product pricing, to ensure the contracts provide value for money.

In July 2024 new contracts were awarded to the successful tenderer for Oxygen, Air Liquide Healthcare and the successful tenderer (and former Supplier) for Continence, Independence Australia.

We acknowledge that there has been a period of disruption for our oxygen and continence consumers and sincerely thank you for your feedback and patience as we work closely with you and our Suppliers on any necessary package and product changes.

Consumer Survey Results

2024 Consumer satisfaction with SWEP

Annually we ask consumers, after they have received and used their Assistive Technology, to tell us how satisfied they are overall with their SWEP experience. We have again exceeded our target of 90%, set by the Department of Health and achieved an overall satisfaction rate of 97%.

Thank-you SWEP AT Practitioners for helping to make this happen.

405 responses to 1,940 consumer experience surveys <small>Responses in all assistive technology categories</small>	97% overall satisfaction with the SWEP experience <small>That includes SWEP staff, AT practitioners, suppliers, repair agents and service</small>	96% overall satisfaction with SWEP staff in communications <small>We are timely, helpful, respectful, understood consumer needs and gave clear information</small>	97% overall satisfaction with AT Practitioners <small>You are understanding consumer needs, providing options to meet needs, and informing consumers about the process to access SWEP support</small>	97% overall satisfaction with the equipment and suppliers	97% overall satisfaction with the equipment, service or modification having helped consumers achieve their goals

Recommendations

- Marketing of SWEP – Improved promotion of SWEP
- Oxygen – review of delivery timeframes for ongoing consumers and of oxygen trolleys
- Online platform was used this year – need to consider how to mandate response boxes to ensure all are filled in.

Thank you to those people who were randomly selected to participate in our 2024 Annual Consumer Survey.

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



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SWEP Out and About – Community Engagement Activities



SWEP remains committed to contributing/participating in engagement with external stakeholders and community groups, both in person and online.

Our Operations Manager, Hana Hey with the support of Team Leaders, Kerry Etchell and Karolina Wilanowska are responsible for our community engagement activities/expos.

Our leadership team are also involved in SWEP education sessions for community groups and prescribing practitioners/organisations.

This year Hana, Kerry, and Karolina represented SWEP at several events including:

- Geelong Disability Expo – 23-24 February 2024**
- Melbourne Disability Connection Expo – 18 -19 October 2024**
- Melbourne Disability Expo – 22-23 November 2024**

If you would like us to attend a community group or online forum you are connected to, please do not hesitate to contact us by phone (1300 747 937) or email swep@gh.org.au





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Celebrating our People



The State-wide Equipment Program currently employs 35 people, in either a full-time or part-time capacity. Although our admin teams are extremely busy processing applications across the various program streams, on occasion we 'take a breath' to acknowledge the efforts/achievements of our team, along with the occasional morning tea to celebrate milestone birthdays.

In November this year we celebrated nine staff members, who had achieved either 10, 15, 20 or 30 years of service to SWEP and Grampians Health. Whilst two staff members were absent from the presentation/morning tea our Operations Director mentioned that the group had worked a combined total of 125 years for our health service.

Did you know about our Consumer Partners Program?

As part of our commitment to providing a consumer centred approach to all elements of our service, SWEP introduced a SWEP Consumer Reference Group in 2021, currently comprising of the SWEP Operations Manager, SWEP Quality & Leadership Support Officer and five current or former consumers of the SWEP program.

Our community partners bring a vast wealth of knowledge, experience and provide valuable insight to the challenges faced by members of our community living with disability, chronic illness and frailty.

The group meet on a quarterly basis to discuss various elements of our service delivery as well as providing ad hoc input throughout the year to key projects, communications, processes, procurement and org-wide Accreditation.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our Consumer Partners for generously volunteering their time, experience and guidance to our service.



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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 2024 (de-identified).

*"This week your service supplied me with a ROHO cushion and pump. My O/T has now set up the cushion and I am using it to support my posture and mobility. In addition to preventing pressure sores, the cushion supports my posture and, by increasing the height of all seating, enables me to sit and stand safely. I am very grateful for the provision of this piece of equipment and for the services provided by SWEP. I would like to thank your team for the support you have given me and for the difference it makes to my day to day living.
Warmest Regards,"*

"Thank you for arranging the replaced catheters that I needed, and for doing so in such a prompt way. The delivery arrived today.

I appreciate so much all your help with this somewhat life-changing transition to ISC."

*"On Tuesday I received a phone call from the Chemtronics repair person asking me if they could attend within about 20 minutes to take a look at my mobility scooter. I was home so accepted and welcomed him to attend.
The repairer attended and I had my scooter out ready for him to work on. He changed out the batteries and went over the scooter, checking the tyre pressure, tightening some loose parts, ensuring that everything worked correctly, then tag and testing the charger. It was suggested that I charge up the new batteries for some time and ensure I regularly check the tyre pressure to 40 psi. The repairer was then on his way in time for lunch. I was extremely happy with the service he provided and would like to pass on this positive feedback. Thank you to SWEP and Chemtronics for providing and maintaining this mobility scooter for me, giving me more freedom and access to the community."*



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Season's Greetings from the SWEP Team

