



Equipment Program Newsletter

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Photo courtesy of Novita Children's Services

The Department for Communities and Social Inclusion (DCSI) State-wide Equipment Program services the equipment and home modification needs of clients of Disability SA, Disability and Domiciliary Care Services, Novita Children's Services and Minda Inc. Assessment and prescription is undertaken within the specialist areas of Disability Services, Domiciliary Care and Novita. Domiciliary Equipment Service (DES) then manages the supply and maintenance of all equipment and home modifications.

Equipment Program Activity

During 2014-15, overall demand for equipment and home modification services remains high from clients using the Equipment Program. To assist in managing the ongoing demand for equipment and home modifications, lower priority needs may be subject to delays as they wait for resources to become available. If this occurs, clients will be notified by their clinician who is working with them and a letter will be sent to the client advising that the request cannot be supplied at the current time.

As at 31 March 2015, (not counting the provision of consumable items) a comprehensive range of stock items continued to meet 91% of equipment needs for clients. Of 15,222 equipment items supplied to clients, 11,946 (78%) were reissued items. The refurbishment levels have risen slightly in 2014-15 and have provided an estimated net benefit of \$4m to the program thus far in 2014-15.

The average supply times for items delivered thus far in 2014-15 (once a prescription was received at DES) were 6 days for stock items, 73 days for customised items, with customised wheelchairs (the most complex items) averaging 119 days. Compared with 2013-14, supply times for stock items in 2014-15 are averaging two days longer due to stock shortages, customised items three days longer, but customised wheelchairs (the most complex items) are averaging 10 days less to supply.

NDIS Transition Update

DCSI and Novita continue to work closely with children who are transitioning to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). As at 31 March 2015, DES was providing services to 661 children now registered with the NDIS. Many of these children have not received equipment services previously, and DES will continue providing these services to NDIS participants during the three year trial.

Contact details

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Feedback from Felicity

Felicity is a 31 year old woman with Athetoid Cerebral Palsy. Specialist clinicians and technicians at the DES Wheelchair and Seating Service based at Woodville have recently been working with Felicity to provide her with her first power wheelchair, and new customised seating. To assist Felicity, the wheelchair incorporates several complex assistive technologies that are integrated to maximise Felicity's independence. These include mounting her communication device on the power wheelchair, and an independent, alternative driving system (in addition to attendant control) is also being considered. Felicity wrote the following paragraph on her communication device herself.

"I love my power chair. I am now able to do a lot of things that I could never do. I have been to Morialta Falls and finally went all the way to the top. Going to the Garden of Unearthly Delights is so much easier now, and a whole lot more fun. I am looking forward to a lot more adventures."



report even near misses so that we can work with you to improve our systems.

An analysis of incidents over four years showed that the incident rate is very low compared to volume of items supplied, and the risk of significant harm when things go wrong is also low. However, when things go wrong, mobility devices are most likely involved, with the rate of scooter incidents about three times higher than wheelchairs (whether manual or powered).

Older people are also experiencing more significant injuries, more often. The causes of incidents are evenly split between the quality or safety of an item, and the way the actual item itself is used.

Using a Scooter or Power Wheelchair Safely

Anyone using a scooter or power wheelchair in the community is classified as a pedestrian under the Australian Road Rules. This means users must:

- Only carry one person (yourself!)
- Keep your speed below 10kmh, but keep speed down particularly in crowded areas
- Stick to a footpath except where that is not available due to repairs or it is damaged

Some simple common sense things can make a difference, and ensure that you are able to get out and about safely.

- Watch out particularly for cars reversing out of driveways
- Always assume that other pedestrians or motorist have not seen you, particularly at intersections
- Always use pedestrian crossings or if none is available, cross where you can be easily seen

Incidents Involving Equipment

DCSI tracks all client incidents, including those involving equipment. Data is recorded about the significance of the incident and injuries, the nature of the equipment, as well as the actions taken by all parties. Please ensure that you