



Equipment Program Newsletter

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Garry Porker, Disability SA

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter for the Equipment Program. Please keep providing us feedback for future editions.

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.

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Equipment Program Activity

Record levels of equipment services have been supplied to people during 2012-13 with more than 23,000 equipment items provided to the end of May. Average equipment supply times (once a prescription was received) were 4.3 days for stock items, 60 days for customised items, with customised wheelchairs (the most complex items) averaging 136 days.

DES has a number of strategies that have helped to prevent the need for funding waiting lists in recent years.

Best practice systems are used to refurbish equipment, and as a result 74% of items supplied have been reissued during 2012-13, saving \$7.1m. Technicians and warehouse staff use the latest technology to ensure items are clean, safe and fit for purpose. This also has a benefit for the environment, with DES salvaging all metal for recycling, and also stripping parts to reduce the cost of repairs.

DES purchases equipment in bulk throughout the year where possible. A range of stock items have been identified as representing the best value items (not always the cheapest as wear and tear and parts supply are also key factors). The savings made are then used to offset the high cost of those needs that can only be met by a customised item. While procurement strategies and public tenders are opposed by some suppliers, it gives all suppliers a chance to tender a product for evaluation. Successful suppliers then have more certainty of supply and delays for clients are less frequent.

Launch of DisabilityCare Australia in SA

DisabilityCare Australia (DCA) will launch the National Disability Insurance Scheme in South Australia for eligible children age five and under from 01 July, 2013.

DCA and the SA Government have agreed that for now, children will continue accessing the systems that are in place

for equipment and home modifications for clients of the DCSI Equipment Program. This will include the use of DES for all purchasing and supply of equipment and home modifications.

DCA planners will meet with children and their families to determine reasonable and necessary needs for assistive technology (AT) including areas such as recreation and a broader range of vehicle modifications that have not been previously in scope for people in SA.

Clinicians will be expected to be trained and experienced in prescription of particular AT before they will be prescribing the items for DCA children and their families. Additional funding for assessment should reduce the waiting times for accessing these services. Further details will become available over coming months.

Keeping Your Device Rolling!

For people who are using a power wheelchair or scooter, please ensure you do some regular things prior to use and remember to call DES for all repairs on: **1300 130 302**

- Check the tyres have adequate pressure and reinflate when necessary.
- Check all leads and wiring for moisture and wipe these dry, especially with wet days ahead.
- Check the controller and casing for splits.
- Leave your device charging whenever it is not in use, the charger will cut out when the item is fully charged, and the current drawn after this time is negligible.

Essential Medical Equipment Payment

People covered by a Commonwealth concession card who have additional home energy costs

because they rely on essential medical equipment provided by the Equipment Program, may be eligible to receive extra assistance if they use either or both of the following items:

- Alternating pressure mattress
- Power wheelchair

Other items of equipment are identified but these are not provided by the Equipment Program. Service Coordinators or Accommodation Managers will verify that these equipment items have been prescribed by an approved therapist and provided by the DCSI Equipment Program, and will need to contact DES for this. DES will then provide a letter for each person to confirm that the prescription process has been met for that equipment item. Further information: <http://www.cleanenergyfuture.gov.au/household-assistanceessential>

Consumer Advisory Committee member -Bev Freeling



Bev is the mother of Darren a 46 year old born with multiple disabilities. Bev and her late husband cared for Darren at home until he moved into

Community Housing at age 27.

Bev has campaigned for disability and aged services for the past 45 years, including attending, participating and presenting at conferences and helping create several services.

Bev is also a member of the Dom Care Consumer Advisory Group that meets at Woodville. Members of the Equipment Program Consumer Advisory Committee assist in the development and improvement of equipment services provided by the Department, and we are very grateful for their time and input.