

## Independent living - aids and equipment

The State Government of Victoria funds a range of aids and equipment programs to support people with a disability and the frail aged to remain living in the community. The equipment programs, which are currently funded through Disability Services Division of the Department of Human Services, include:

- Aids and Equipment (A&E)
- Supported Accommodation Equipment Assistance Scheme (SAEAS)
- Domiciliary Oxygen Program (DOP)
- Continence Aids (CA)
- Vehicle Modifications Subsidy Scheme (VMSS)
- Electronic Communication Devices Scheme (ECDS).

The programs or schemes are currently administered through two statewide centres. The Statewide Equipment Program (SWEP) at Ballarat Health Services administers all of the above equipment programs, except for ECDS which is administered through Yooralla.

Similar programs exist in all Australian States and Territories.

### People may need aids or equipment for many reasons

People with a disability may need assistance with:

- Walking and moving about
- Personal care, including showering and going to the toilet
- Managing daily living activities themselves.

### A variety of aids and equipment may be provided

SWEP may be able to subsidise the purchase of:

- Wheelchairs, both manual and power
- Walking frames and other aids to help you move about
- Ramps for walking and wheelchair access
- Equipment, such as shower chairs and hoists
- Equipment for people with bowel or bladder control problems (such as reusable pants and pads)
- Home modifications that do not require structural changes to the home.
- Splint
- Home oxygen service
- Voice prostheses (such as electrolarynx)
- Vehicle modifications.

The ECDS may be able to subsidise the purchase of:

- Electronic communications aids.

### Eligibility for SWEP and ECDS

SWEP and ECDS provide aids to:

- Children and adults with a permanent or long-term disability or frailty.
- Children and adults who require aids and equipment, vehicle or home modifications on a permanent or long-term basis.
- Permanent residents of Victoria
- Holders of a permanent protection visa
- Asylum seekers.

## Assistance is not available in some situations

The equipment programs are not available to people who:

- Have received compensation relating to their disability
- Live in a Commonwealth-funded aged care facility (except for electronic communication devices)
- Receive aids and equipment through other government-funded programs such as Workcover, Transport Accident Commission (TAC) or the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVA)
- Can claim the cost of equipment through private health insurance
- Are an inpatient of a public or private hospital
- Have been discharged from a public hospital or extended care centre within the past 30 days.

## Some conditions apply

Conditions apply to aids and equipment supplied by SWEP and ECDS. These include:

- Once eligibility is confirmed, where possible a reissue item may be provided – or if funding is available, a new aid or equipment may be ordered
- If a reissue item and funds are not immediately available, an application is prioritised and placed on the waitlist
- A non-refundable contribution for the difference between the subsidy amount through the programs and the full cost of a new aid or equipment purchased may be required
- Equipment is provided as an ongoing loan for as long as it is required
- The programs retain ownership of all equipment, except personal use items (for example shoes) and some items where the client has contributed more than 50 per cent of the total cost of the aid or equipment
- The program does not reimburse the cost of equipment already purchased.

## How to apply for aids and equipment

To apply for aids and equipment through SWEP or ECDS, you will need to:

- Get an appropriate health professional's assessment to determine the type of aid or equipment you need
- Complete an application form (available on the websites listed below) which requires your doctor to confirm that your disability is permanent or long term.

## Where to get help

- SWEP (Statewide Equipment Program) at Ballarat Health Services Tel. 1300 747 937 or (03) 5333 8100
- Aids and Equipment Program (Electronic Communication Devices Scheme) at Yooralla Tel. (03) 9362 6154
- Yooralla Independent Living Centre.
- Your regional office of the Department of Human Services, -Tel. 1300 650 172 to get your regional office telephone number.

## Things to remember

- Aids and equipment can help you live independently.
- Subsidy assistance in purchasing aids and equipment may be available for Victorians through SWEPE and ECDS.
- The programs do not reimburse the cost of aids and equipment already purchased.

**This page has been produced in consultation with, and approved by:**

DHS - Disability Services Division

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