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## Aids and equipment at home

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### Summary

- Aids and equipment such as wheelchairs, walking frames, ramps, shower chairs, splints, braces and home oxygen services can help you live at home and participate in the community.
  - Subsidised aids and equipment may be available for eligible Victorians through the State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) and the Electronic Communication Devices Scheme (ECDS).
  - The programs do not reimburse the cost of aids and equipment already purchased.
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The Victorian Government provides eligible people with subsidised aids and equipment to enhance independence in the home, facilitate community participation and support families and carers in their role.

### Eligibility for Victorian Government aids and equipment programs (VA&EP)

From 1 July 2019, the Victorian State Government will provide subsidised aids and equipment for people:

- of all ages where their needs relates to a health condition or where they do not meet **National Disability Insurance Scheme** (NDIS) access requirements
- aged over 65 years with age or disability related aids or equipment needs
- permanent residents of Victoria or holders of a permanent protection visa.

A number of VA&EP sub-programs such as domiciliary oxygen and lymphoedema compression garments program have additional eligibility criteria.

### Assistance is not available in some situations for example:

A person is not eligible to access supports from the VA&EP if:

- the cost of the aid or equipment can be claimed through their private health insurance
- they have any form of compensation or court award for aids and equipment related to their disability
- they are a public or private hospital in-patient
- they are eligible to receive aids and equipment from the following programs:
  - The NDIS, however NDIS participants with health-related AT needs may be able to access supports from the VA&EP.
  - The Transport Accident Commission or Worksafe Victoria.

### The following criteria also apply:

- Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA) Gold Card holders who do not have a DVA 'approved disability' can apply for VA&EP subsidies for a mobility scooter, powered wheelchair, and vehicle modification.
- Commonwealth Government residential aged care residents can only apply for an electronic communication device.
- Commonwealth Government Levels 1 to 4 Home Care Package recipients can apply for all VA&EP AT items except domiciliary oxygen, which should be part of their package.
- Commonwealth Government Levels 3 & 4 Home Care Package recipients can only apply for VA&EP subsidies for a mobility scooter, powered wheelchair, home modification, and electronic communication devices.

### Victorian Government aids and equipment programs

The aids and equipment programs funded through the **Department of Health & Human Services** are administered by six service providers.

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## **The State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) at Ballarat Health Services**

The **State-wide Equipment Program (SWEP) at Ballarat Health Services** delivers the following sub-programs:

- Aids and Equipment
- Supported Accommodation Equipment Assistance Scheme
- Domiciliary Oxygen Program
- Continence Aids Program
- Vehicle and home modification subsidy scheme
- Lymphoedema compression garments program

The SWEP provides subsidised aids and equipment such as:

- walking frames and other mobility aids such as scooters and wheelchairs
- ramps for walking and wheelchair access
- equipment such as shower chairs and hoists
- continence aids for bowel or bladder control problems (such as reusable pants and pads)
- a contribution to the cost of home or vehicle modifications.

### **Motor Neurone Disease Association**

The Motor Neurone Disease Association administers the **Equipment Library** which loans equipment such as wheelchairs, to meet the needs of people with **motor neurone disease**.

### **Solve Disability Solutions**

**Solve Disability Solutions** provides individual equipment or modification solutions.

### **Expression Australia (formerly Vicdeaf)**

Expression Australia provides subsidised **Smoke Alarms** for people who are deaf or have significant hearing loss.

### **Vision Australia**

**Vision Australia** provides low cost vision aids for older Victorians who are visually impaired.

### **Yooralla**

Yooralla administers the **Electronic Communication Devices Scheme**, which provides subsidised electronic communications, switching and mounting devices, and software communication apps.

### **Conditions apply for aids and equipment programs**

For aids and equipment supplied by the State-wide Equipment Program and Electronic Communication Devices Scheme, you may be provided with a second-hand (or 'reissue') item if one is available.

If a reissue item and funds are not immediately available, your application will be put on a waiting list. You may need to make a non-refundable contribution for the difference between the subsidy amount and the full cost of a new aid or equipment item.

Aids and equipment items are provided on loan for as long as you need them. The State-wide Equipment Program, Electronic Communication Devices Scheme and Equipment Library Program retain ownership of all equipment, except for any personal use items (for example, shoes) and where you have contributed more than 50 per cent of the total cost of the aid or equipment.

The programs do not reimburse the cost of equipment already purchased.

### **How to apply for aids and equipment**

To apply for subsidised aid or equipment under the VA&EP you will need to:

- get an appropriate healthcare professional to assess your needs and discuss the type of aid or equipment that will best suit you from the items that are available under the VA&EP.

- complete an eligibility and submit the completed eligibility form.

### **Where to get help**

- State-wide Equipment Program (all programs and schemes administered) – call 1300 747 937 or (03) 5333 8100
- Yooralla Electronic Communication Devices Scheme – call (03) 9362 6154
- Motor Neurone Disease Association – call (03) 9830 2122 or 1800 806 632
- Solve Disability Solutions – call (03) 9853 8655 or 1300 663 243
- Express Solutions – call TTY (03) 9473 1199 or (03) 9473 1111
- Vision Australia – call 1300 847 466

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

Department of Health and Human Services

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