

INQUIRY INTO THE PROGRAM OF APPLIANCES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE (PADP)

Organisation: SDL (Seating Dynamics)
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The Director
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

Lodged Electronically

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing regards the current inquiry in the NSW PADP. Since a motor vehicle accident in January of 1980 I have been a wheelchair user. I have complete paraplegia at T5 level. I am also the Managing Director of SDL, a distributor of rehab and pressure care equipment through a network of over 40 dealers throughout Australia.

Through my personal and business experiences I have become aware of a number of issues relating to the PADP scheme. I am asking that, as part of your review, the following be considered for action/consideration:

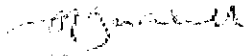
- The current assessment & reassessment processes costs the government (according to the PWC report released this year) approximately \$21 million. The cost of re-assessments is approximately \$2 million. Up until the release of an additional \$11 million into the PADP scheme, this represented an amount about equal to the entire PADP budget. The cost to individuals (travel, time of work etc) and to the suppliers (at least equal to government costs) is not included in the PWC figure of \$21 million. I believe that there are better ways to do the assessment and re-assessment processes. At the very least, the dollar figures should indicate this is worth looking into.
- Demands for unrealistic service levels with equipment trials & after sales service. There is a tension within the funding system that cannot be sustained. That is, a constant downward pressure on price with an increasing demand for service levels, equipment trials and after sales service. Any PADP scheme needs to recognise the business realities of equipment provision, trials and service and have reasonable funding to cover the costs.
- Our dealers often report on the pressure placed on their cash flow requirements due to slow payments from PADP. The payments are often outside invoice terms
- The negative effect the current system has on the ability of the therapists to make clinical decisions. It has become increasingly apparent that therapists are taking on the role of

"gate keepers" to an under funded scheme. Decisions on equipment provision are being made on an "available funds" consideration, rather than clinical necessity. This often results in inappropriate equipment provision, leading to longer term problems such as pressure sores (average cost to heal at \$61,230 – ref Young 1997), shoulder damage, scoliosis and other skeletal deformities.

- We continue to hear anecdotal evidence of people in need of equipment waiting unreasonable periods of time for provision due to inadequate funding in the PADP system. Often the equipment is urgent. Delays not only cause unreasonable distress and inconvenience for those requiring the equipment, but also have an affect on the ability of individuals to live productive lives. The cost to the economy of the inadequate provision of equipment, resulting in an inability for individuals to work, could be extremely high.
- I remain concerned at the lack of consultation with suppliers regards the PADP scheme. While Enable has made significant efforts in the past few months to remedy this, there continues to be a "us versus them" mentality. I know that suppliers within our industry are dedicated to working with government to ensure NSW has a fair and workable PADP scheme. If we are to be continually locked out of review committees due to a perceived conflict of interest I firmly believe the PADP scheme will not be as efficient and as cost effective as it could be. Working with an organisation such as IRSA which represents a good number of suppliers in NSW would only cause improvements.

I thank you for the opportunity to make submissions, and would be glad to provide more information is required.

Best Regards



Malcolm Turnbull