

## THE PROGRAM OF APPLIANCES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE (PADP)

**Organisation:** Specialised Wheelchair Company  
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## Specialised Wheelchair Company

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1 September 2008

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 Parliamentary Enquiry into **The Program of Appliances for Disabled People (PADP)** (Inquiry)

### **Our Background:**

Specialised Wheelchair Company is a Small Business with a focus on Persons with a Disability requiring Specialist Products. We provide Pressure Care and Postural Positioning Solutions, Powered and Manual Wheelchairs, Specialty Wheelchair Control Systems, Environment Control Systems and General Daily Living Products.

We have been servicing the Disability Community for over 36 years. PADP is a major client of ours.

### **PADP Concerns:**

Our concerns with the system in place are the delay's our clients face from the day we provide an assessment of their needs (and quotation) to the day they receive their essential equipment. This delay averages out from 4 months to 18 months on the last 100 orders we received from PADP. We have one sample which is more than 2 years delay from quotation to order. On top of this delay some equipment can take 6 to 8 weeks to be prepared for delivery.

Because of the delay in ordering equipment we are required to reassess the client to check if any change in needs has occurred. This reassessment process not only inconveniences the Person with a Disability but costs the PADP scheme (therapist's time) and businesses extra time and money (refer PWC Report – note this report does include the cost to businesses).

Another concern is the delay in payments from when we deliver and invoice the goods. We have regular occurrences outside the NSW Department of Health Guidelines of 45 days. We as small businesses are required to pay our suppliers in 30 days. Delay in payment from PADP is constantly affecting many small businesses cash flow and it is not uncommon to see payments up to 120 days.

A major concern is if PADP goes down the path of a "preferred supplier" effectively wiping out many small businesses. Our industry is very "Service Orientated" and requires multiple small businesses to assist in delivering and servicing equipment across NSW. A sole supplier situation would create an anti competitive environment and has proven not to work in other States.

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September 1, 2008

**Solutions / Outcomes:**

**What we see as a possible solution is a "Pre Approval System" in place.**

- Once PADP funds are available suppliers are called to assess the person needs the quotations are presented and an order is placed within a reasonable time frame. Nepean Area Health used a pre approval model in the past and feed back from Clients and Suppliers was very positive at how good the system worked.

**This would mean:**

- The client gets their equipment quickly and prevents other issues arising from being left to sit or lie on inappropriate equipment (eg Pressure Sores, Poor Postural Positions causing Secondary Health Issues)
- The funds are in PADP's account so suppliers get paid within their trading terms and can continue to do what they do best.
- Costs to PADP would be significantly reduced. The Therapist involved in the initial assessment and trial can follow through the process instead of months down the track a new Therapist has to go through the process to get familiar with the clients needs.
- Another outcome we would like to see is Consultation with Suppliers as we are a major stake holder in the system and were not consulted when the PWC Audit was being performed or the review process was being done with the formation of Enable NSW. Our association – Independent Rehabilitation Suppliers Association (IRSA) will be more than happy to assist.
- Instead of a "Preferred Supplier" we would at least like to see a Preferred Suppliers List where suppliers meet a certain criteria and Therapists select from this list (a similar system was presented in a tender in ACT). This would ensure a Competitive Market and help keep and improve service levels to not only PADP but the key people in this whole process – the Person with a Disability.

Thank you for the opportunity to have input into a process which will hopefully make a significant positive change to assist people with a disability.

Best regards,

**Iain Hogg  
Managing Director**