

Submission
No 76

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

Organisation: Coles Orthotics Pty Ltd
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14 September 2008

Mr Ian Cohen MLC
Parliament House
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Dear Mr. Cohen

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

We have only just become aware of the above inquiry and realise that submissions have now closed. However we have taken the liberty of writing to you because your name was mentioned in an article regarding the inquiry that was published in the Sydney Morning Herald on 13 September.

Our company is a provider of all types of custom-made orthotic appliances ranging from skull helmets to spinal braces to leg calipers to in-shoe orthotics. Many of our patients make use of the PADP facility.

Obtaining payment from the various PADP offices for appliances supplied has always been a problem but of late the situation has deteriorated to the extent that we are being told that funds for small suppliers are not available. What funds there are have been reserved to pay large suppliers who are threatening to withhold further supplies. In total we are owed \$30,209 dating back as far as 9 May 2008 - copies of the invoices we have submitted to various PADP offices are enclosed (patient names have been deleted).

Notwithstanding these delays, as responsible people we realise that disabled patients desperately need support and we are faced with having to realise on personal assets (and pay Capital Gains Tax) to fund our continued operation. **INCREASED PADP FUNDING IS DESPERATELY NEEDED.**

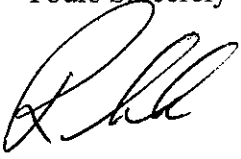
A further complication is the centralized administration of payments. It used to be that the PADP office that issued the order number was responsible for payment. Now that payment has been centralized there is a lack of liaison between the order issuing office and the paying office. Payment has rarely been made without our having to follow up unpaid invoices and virtually beg for payment.

On a different note, on Monday we were informed by the Liverpool PADP office that they will only place future orders for patients who attend their own orthotic clinic and are serviced by their own orthotic supplier (**who is not a qualified orthotist**).

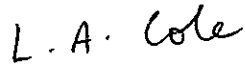
In this regard we have been conducting orthotic clinics at Campbelltown Hospital and in private rooms at Bowral for a number of years. People in these areas now generally come under the centralized PADP office in Liverpool. Because of the stance of the Liverpool office we will have to consider the future of those clinics and, if they are discontinued, disabled patients from those areas will have to travel to Liverpool. Even if we continue the clinics it would mean that we would have to refuse to see patients seeking PADP funding and tell them to go to Liverpool.

We see no reason why the previous system whereby patients had freedom of supplier choice but were funded by the PADP office serving their area should not continue.

Yours Sincerely



R. J. COLE



L. A. COLE

c.c. The Premier
Minister for Health
Mr. Paul McLeay MLA