

NSW State Election 2007 Fact Sheet

Provision of Aids and Appliances for People with Disabilities

Western Sydney Community Forum is a peak regional community-based organisation committed to social justice principles, meeting the needs of community groups and other relevant local and regional organisations for resourcing and representation to enable them to improve and maintain the quality of life for the residents of Western Sydney

The NSW state election will be held on 24th March 2007. These policy proposals were developed by Western Sydney Community Forum in association with the New South Wales Council of Social Services and our member organisations to improve outcomes for residents of Western Sydney.

Background

The Provision of Aids and Appliances for People with Disabilities (PADP) assists people with a permanent or long-term disability to live and participate in their community by providing appropriate equipment, aids and appliances.

People on low income and children and young people under the age of 16 are eligible for the full range of equipment provided by PADP. People on higher income may qualify for equipment, aids and appliances which cost in excess of \$800. People who receive assistance through PADP are asked to make a payment of \$100 towards the cost of items they have received. They will be required to make one payment of \$100 in any financial year. Some higher income earners are required to make a payment of 20% of the cost of the item.

Equipment provided includes wheelchairs, walking frames and sticks, pressure care mattresses and cushions, beds, communication devices, continence items and personal assistance items (shower commodes, bath seats). The PADP budget is currently \$22 million. 48% of expenditure is provided to assist a person's mobility and 20% of expenditure assists in providing items for continence management.

The Physical Disability Council of NSW says that "failure to provide aids and equipment in a timely manner means that people with disabilities experience greater difficulty or may not be able to go about their daily activities such as work, school, leisure, and shopping." The Provision of Aids and Appliances for People with Disabilities (PADP) program requires an urgent increase in funding to adequately meet the demands of unmet and escalating needs for equipment.

Continence Foundation Australia tells us that in Western Sydney there are 70 to 80 adults on the waiting list, who will wait up to 2 years for a service. Additionally there are 7 to 10 children on the waiting list who will also wait for up to 2 years. Continence Foundation Australia claims the waiting lists for PADP have been this long for at least 4 years. It is widely thought that these waiting lists are not actually a true indication of need, as a lot of people enquire about PADP but when they find out the waiting period they don't bother to join the queue.

In A Fairer NSW: bold solutions and real results, NCOSS claims that PADP "urgently requires a significant increase in funding to cope with both unmet and escalating needs for equipment for people with disabilities. NCOSS asks for an increase of \$15.5 million in the first year and then increases until waiting lists and unmet need is addressed." (2006, p15)

Policy proposal

WSCF recommends that the PADP budget is increased to \$37.5 million (an increase of \$15.5 million) with increases over the next 4 years to address waiting lists and unmet need.

What you can do

There are many ways you can help promote these issues. Use this fact sheet to:

- Write about the issue in your group's newsletter.
- Write a letter about the issue to your local paper.
- Set up a letter writing stall and ask local people to write their own letters to local candidates supporting the issue.
- Organise a public meeting and invite local political candidates to speak.
- Contact Noel Hiffernan at the Forum to discuss how your group can work with us to promote your issue. Phone: 0411644600 or email noelh@wscf.org.au