



# Home Care Packages: access to \$2,500 for urgent goods, equipment, and assistive technology

Home Care Package (HCP) care recipients who urgently need Goods, Equipment and Assistive Technology (GEAT), such as mobility aids, can now access up to \$2,500 for equipment through the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP).

## What is GEAT?

GEAT refers to items that help older Australians to manage a range of health conditions, reduce risk of falls, assist with daily activities that may pose a challenge and minimise reliance on family or formal carers. These items include bendable cutlery, walking sticks, raised toilet seats, as well as more costly supports such as mobility scooters, specialised chairs, wheelchairs, and modified beds.

There are three categories for GEAT items:

1. **Low-risk:** Simple and relatively low-cost daily living aids such as a long-handled duster or a jar opener. These usually do not need clinical instructions on usage.
2. **Under-advice:** items where written or professional advice is encouraged to ensure they are installed and used correctly. Examples include body system monitors, wheeled walking frames and personal alarms.
3. **Prescribed:** These are usually more costly and complex items that are specifically adjusted or designed to meet the support needs of an individual such as scooters, powered wheelchairs, patient hoists, and adjustable beds.

GEAT is recommended for older Australians when:

- The item will minimise the risk of serious injury to the care recipient, carer or provider.
- The care recipient would be compromised when completing daily activities without the equipment.
- The equipment will help improve functional capacity.
- The equipment will reduce progression of functional and/or postural deterioration.

## How can HCP recipients access equipment under the CHSP?

There is a growing need for aids and equipment for home care recipients. That's why the Australian Government has funded an additional \$25 million for GEAT under CHSP and expanded access to eligible HCP care recipients who urgently need equipment.

Existing and approved HCP care recipients are eligible to access GEAT through the CHSP program if they meet the following criteria:

- an Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) has assessed the care recipient as having an urgent or immediate need for equipment; and
- they have insufficient funds in their HCP budget for GEAT to meet short term needs.

From mid-November, CHSP national equipment provider geat2GO will support eligible HCP care recipients with an urgent need.

HCP providers should advise HCP care recipients on what funding is available in their package budget, how much to allocate for GEAT and discuss options if urgent needs arise.

Depending on how much package funding is available, their options include:

- If a recipient has enough funds in their package to pay for new equipment, they will not have access to emergency GEAT under CHSP.
- If a recipient has limited unspent funds, they should consider renting or lease to buy options. All costs related to these arrangements must be agreed in a contract between a provider and care recipient and included in the home care agreement.
- If a recipient has spent their allocated funds but requires urgent GEAT, their HCP provider can arrange a referral to an ACAT to have their circumstances assessed.
  - **HCP providers should advise the HCP care recipient that a client contribution (gap) payment is applicable for items that cost greater than \$2,500.**

## What is an urgent need and who makes the decision?

Urgent circumstances are when the persons immediate health and safety may be at risk if they do not receive the necessary assistive equipment.

Some examples of urgent circumstances include:

- A care recipient is on the waiting list for a package but requires urgent GEAT.
- An existing care recipient sustains an injury and requires urgent GEAT but has insufficient funds in their package to cover the purchase.
- An existing care recipient uses most of their package each month. They were just reassessed and require urgent equipment, but with no increase to their package.
- An existing care recipient is receiving a lower-level package while waiting for assessment or allocation of a higher-level package, but they require urgent GEAT beyond what their current package allows.

An ACAT will use their experience and clinical judgement to review a care recipient's situation and determine whether they are eligible to access GEAT under CHSP.

For example, a HCP care recipient's mobility has declined, and they cannot get to a seated position or get off their bed without assistance. They have a high risk of falling from the bed without a hoist, which risks serious injury or hospitalisation.

Referrals from an ACAT can look like the following:

- ACAT's can make urgent referrals for specific equipment directly to geat2GO without the need for a referral for a high priority allied health assessment.
- During an assessment, the ACAT can contact geat2GO directly to discuss a care recipient's circumstance and urgent equipment needs.
- ACAT can make urgent referral for an allied health assessment for equipment that requires written or professional advice (Under-advice) to ensure they are installed and used correctly; or for items that are specifically adjusted or designed (Prescribed) to meet the support needs of an individual is encouraged.
- In non-emergency situations, the ACAT can make a referral for an allied health assessment in the same way this is currently done.

Note: **Regional Assessment Services (RAS)** cannot make a referral for an HCP care recipient for urgent GEAT items.

## Costs associated with urgent GEAT

Eligible HCP care recipients and those on the waiting list for an HCP package can access up to \$2,500 per year for equipment and assistive technology through the CHSP program.

If the cost of the urgent item/s exceed \$2,500, HCP recipients will need to pay the gap amount to geat2GO with their private funds. A recipient may not use any unspent funds from their package towards the cost of the urgent GEAT item.

Alternatively, if a HCP care recipient cannot pay the gap, the home care provider should assist the HCP care recipient to look at other ways to source equipment such as hire, lease to buy, or second-hand purchases.

Note: *HCP provider* should discuss any additional costs with their care recipient before referring them to the ACAT to have their circumstances assessed.



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