**The Stoma Appliance Scheme – seeking ostomates views on services and supply**

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**PURPOSE OF THE PAPER**

The Department of Health is seeking feedback from ostomates and other stakeholders on access to products under the Stoma Appliance Scheme (the Scheme). The feedback provided will support potential improvements to ensure ostomates continue to have access to the products and the support services they need to manage their stoma.

**Background**

The Scheme was established in 1975 and assists people with stomas to manage their condition by providing subsidised access to a range of different stoma-related products.

A stoma is a temporary or permanent body opening, either natural or surgically created, which connects a portion of the body cavity to the outside environment to allow bodily waste to leave the body. The point of exit or stoma, needs to be covered with a removable pouching system (adhesive or mechanical) to collect and contain the output for later disposal.

People with stomas access Scheme products through stoma associations after payment of an annual fee to the stoma association. Products supplied under the Scheme assist people affected with stomas to manage their condition, and support greater participation in the workforce and society.

Products are provided to ostomates through 21 regional Stoma Associations across Australia. Stoma Associations are non-government organisations which purchase stoma-related products from suppliers and distribute to their members as required.

The choice of products which a person uses is often guided by a Stomal Therapy Nurse (STN). STNs generally work in public and private hospitals and community settings and are specifically trained to advise on the use of products needed following a colostomy, ileostomy or urostomy. The STN will select and discuss products they feel are appropriate, taking into consideration an ostomate’s clinical needs and lifestyle.

In 2017-18, over 45,000 people with a stoma accessed the Scheme at a total cost of more than $94 million. There are currently around 3,500 products (including variants within each product) on the Scheme’s Schedule. New products are evaluated by the Stoma Product Assessment Panel (SPAP) and must demonstrate cost effectiveness before being approved for inclusion. The cost of the Scheme has been rising over time, and there is a need to ensure the sustainability of the Scheme into the future while ensuring ostomates get the support and products they need.

**Issues**

The Department of Health is seeking feedback on access to products under the Scheme. The following questions are provided as a guide to assist individuals and organisations to provide feedback.

Your individual response will only be used for the purposes of this consultation and will not be provided to anyone outside the Department.

Please provide your views by email to stoma@health.gov.au by 11:59pm 20 September 2019.

Following a review of the responses received, the Department will publish outcomes of the consultations and next steps on the Stoma Appliance Scheme website at health.gov.au/stoma

**About you**

What is your name?

What is your email address?

What is your organisation?

Are you an ostomate, health professional or other stakeholder?

If you are an ostomate, do you have a single or multiple stomas? Are your stoma/s permanent or temporary?

Which state or territory do you live in? Are you in a capital city or regional area?

**Ostomate support, services and use of products**

Are you getting the products and support you need?

How often do you see (or, how often should ostomates see) their healthcare professional eg Stomal Therapy Nurse (STN) or GP?

What are the factors that influence your decision on the choice and use of products?

Is there other support or services that would help you manage your stoma?

**Product access and range**

How do you find access to your Stoma Association for collection or placing of orders?

How does your Stoma Association support your needs?

Is the Scheme Schedule easy to use?

What are your views on the Schedule and range of products available?

**Overall**

Are there any other comments you would like to make about the Stoma Appliance Scheme, Schedule of products, distribution to ostomates or other aspects?