

# HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE PROGRAM

## WA HACC FEES POLICY

### Fee Cap Increase & Income Assessment **Levels**

1 July 2009



*home and community care*

A JOINT COMMONWEALTH AND STATE/TERRITORY PROGRAM  
PROVIDING FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE FOR AUSTRALIANS IN NEED



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Health**

## **WA HACC Fees Policy - Fee Cap Increase**

This document outlines the new increases in the Fee Cap arrangements and its implementation date on 1 July 2009. It provides information relating to the new income assessment ranges for Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 HACC clients.

### **Fee Cap Changes**

People who receive several support services per week from one or more Service Providers are protected from paying excessive fees. This is called a 'Fee Cap'. The Fee Cap is the maximum amount that a client will pay per week.

A review of the WA HACC Fees Policy conducted in 2006 recommended the need to:

- gradually increase the current HACC WA Fees Fee Cap over a period of three years until parity is achieved with the fees charged by other Australian Government community care programs;
- review the Fee Cap six monthly in line with other Australian Government community care programs and adjust (annually) in accordance with changes in the full rate of Aged Pension.

In line with the recommendations of the review and given the rising cost of service delivery the Fee Cap will be increased to be effective 1 July 2009. This will change the current maximum client contribution. For clients in receipt of the maximum rate of age pension the Fee Cap will change from a maximum of \$35 per week to \$43 per week, ie 15% of pension rate as from July 2009. This is calculated using the maximum age pension rates for Level 1 HACC clients (see Appendix: Table 1 and Table 2).

### **Support Services covered/not covered in the Fee Cap**

The Fee Cap applies to most HACC support services including domestic assistance, home maintenance, centre based day care, respite care, allied health, nursing care, personal care and some social support.

The Fee Cap does not apply to the following support services and separate fees will be charged for each of these:

- Meals on Wheels/Group and Centre Based Meals
- Transport
- Home modification
- Podiatry

Meals provided by the HACC Program should be provided to a client at full cost recovery whether provided in the home, centre or as part of Centre Based Day Care. The subsidy from the HACC Program assists with costs associated with the delivery of the meal and is not to offset meal production costs. HACC clients have been and will continue to be expected to cover the cost of the actual meals that are provided to them.

## **Income Assessment Changes**

Income assessment will continue to determine Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 HACC assessed clients. The HACC income assessment is consistent with the income levels used to determine eligibility for Aged Pension full pension, part pension, and the Commonwealth Seniors' Card (see Appendix: Table 3).

The revised income assessment limits will apply to new and existing clients. New clients will be income assessed using the new income limits. Changes to existing clients should be minimal as most clients are likely to stay within the income range currently determined.

## **Fee Reduction**

Fees may be reduced where a client is experiencing hardship in paying fees. The aim of the fee reduction is to ensure that clients are not disadvantaged because of additional costs associated with their ongoing care or with any sudden changes in their circumstances. As part of the income assessment process, Service Providers need to check if the client needs to be considered for a fee reduction. Service Providers should make an initial assessment, in consultation with the client, about whether a long or short-term fee reduction may be necessary.

## **Update**

The WA HACC Fees Policy and related forms have been updated to reflect these changes and are available on the HACC website: [www.health.wa.gov.au/HACC/](http://www.health.wa.gov.au/HACC/)

## APPENDIX: Fee Cap & Income Assessment Tables

**Table 1. Maximum Age Pension Rates (as at March 2009)**

Status	Per Week
Single Rate	\$284.90

**Table 2. Fee Cap for 2009-2010 (effective 1 July 2009)**

Income Range	Maximum amount of Fees	Maximum amount of Fees in a 4 weekly period
Level 1	\$43 per week	\$172
Level 2	\$53 per week	\$252
Level 3	\$118 per week	\$472

Note: The fee limit applies equally for clients receiving services individually or jointly. For example, the fee limit for a single maximum rate pensioner is \$43 a week. Likewise the total fees payable or fee limit for a maximum rate pensioner couple living in the one household is also \$43 a week.

**Table 3. Income Ranges (effective 1 July 2009)**

Status	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Single	\$0 – \$41,015 <sup>1</sup>	\$41,016 to \$49,999 <sup>2</sup>	More than \$50,000
Couple Combined	\$0 – \$68,497	\$68,498 to \$79,999 <sup>2</sup>	More than \$80,000

Note: (1) Income levels calculated using maximum income for full Aged Pension, part Aged Pension and equivalent income as at 20 March 2009. Income levels are subject to changes in Commonwealth Age Pension rates, that are reviewed twice yearly - 20 March, 20 September.

(2) Income levels calculated using income limit for Commonwealth Seniors' Card.