

**Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS)**

# **Application Guidelines for Speech Generating Devices**

Version 2.02 February 2017

## Medical Aids Subsidy Scheme (MASS) – Application Guidelines for Speech Generating Devices

## Speech Generating Devices

Speech Generating Devices subsidised	Maximum MASS subsidy	May be subsidised when
Static Display device Dynamic Display device Spelling based device	\$7,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Severely restricted or non-verbal communication</li> <li>Device meets language, communication and access needs</li> <li>Device has capacity to meet developing/changing needs</li> </ul> <p>Exclusions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding not provided for mobile internet devices e.g. iPad</li> </ul>
Static Display device Dynamic Display device Spelling based device	\$7,000	<p>Client meets criteria above AND is determined by MASS to have “high needs”:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clients with complex physical impairment/s who require very specific and adjustable access options e.g. switch/scanning; head pointing, eye gaze, etc. This group may include those clients with deteriorating, progressive conditions</li> <li>Clients with sensory impairment/s, who need options such as large displays/keyboards, zoom magnification, audio prompts, auditory scanning, etc</li> <li>Clients who have (or show potential to develop) high level language skills that require sophisticated vocabulary sets/storage to be able to generate spontaneous, novel and grammatically accurate messages.</li> </ul>
Basic Accessories for Speech Generating Devices	Maximum MASS subsidy	May be subsidised when the purpose is
Carry case	Fully funded	Protection of device
Moisture guard	Fully funded	Protection of device from spillage, saliva etc
Basic accessing devices/switches x 2 (max)	\$160 each	To allow alternative access to a device via a scanning display
Keyguard	Fully funded	To improve accuracy of direct access to device

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Specialised Accessories for Speech Generating Devices	Maximum MASS subsidy	May be subsidised when the purpose is
<b>NB: This equipment requires assessment and clinical justification from an Occupational Therapist</b>		
Mounting system	\$1,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To mount a speech generating device onto a wheelchair. Funding can also be for a table mount or floorstand (only one mount can be chosen)</li> </ul>
Switch mounting system	\$350	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To mount a switch that operates a scanning display on a speech generating device</li> </ul>
Specialised switches (non mechanical)	\$500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To access a scanning array on a speech generating device where a mechanical switch is not effective</li> </ul>
Head operated accessing devices	\$1,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To access a communication display on a speech generating device where switch access or other means are not effective</li> </ul>
Eye gaze access devices	\$4,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To access a communication display on a speech generating device where switch access, head operated access or other means are not effective</li> </ul>
Joystick, for control of SGD	\$500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To access a communication display on a speech generating device where switch access, head operated access or other means are not effective</li> </ul>
Integrated wheelchair controller	\$2,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To capitalise on a single access method and controller to operate a speech generating device and a wheelchair</li> <li>Funding for this item is also offered in the Mobility Aids area of the scheme and will only be provided for one application</li> </ul>

NB: Eligible clients may only apply for one type of communication aid within a five year period. If the client is applying for a Speech Generating Device, they can not also apply for an Artificial Larynx, Voice Amplification Aid or Communication Software.

## Co-payment

Where a speech generating device and any accessories exceeds the maximum subsidy funding, a co-payment arrangement may be entered into with MASS. For further details, refer to the following section of the MASS General Guidelines:

- SUBSIDY FUNDING

## Permanent Loan, Repairs and Maintenance, Ownership

Speech Generating Devices are most often provided on permanent loan, with repairs and maintenance funded by MASS. For further details, refer to the following sections of the MASS General Guidelines:

- PERMANENT LOAN AIDS
- PERMANENT LOANS – REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE
- CHANGES TO OWNERSHIP OF AN AID: this section includes information and the implications where equipment is either transferred from MASS to the client, or MASS takes over the ownership of equipment (e.g. similar equipment provided by interstate agencies)

NB: All permanent loan aids are expected to be serviceable for at least 5 years.

## How to Apply

Consult with an eligible prescriber/s to assist with assessment and selection of appropriate device and any required accessories. The prescriber/s will complete MASS 21 App SGD Speech Generating Device Application Form Appendix and any extra documentation required; then submit the complete application to MASS – please refer to the list of application forms and documents required below.

## Trial and follow up requirements

In addition to the information in the MASS General Guidelines (section, Prescriber Role), the following guidelines are provided specifically in relation to the funding of speech generating devices:

- Prescribers should ensure a team approach to assessment including the applicant, family/carer, speech pathologist prescriber and occupational therapist.
- Trials of devices need to gather information that will demonstrate that the speech generating device will accommodate the person's body structure and function, activities, participation, environmental and personal needs and can be adapted to suit their current life stage and future needs.
- Prescribers should adequately trial several speech generating devices and any accessing equipment in the home environment, or it must be demonstrated that the device and accessories will be used functionally in the home. The minimum requirements are to trial two devices and any accessing equipment for two weeks each.
- Specialised accessories must be trialled with an occupational therapist who will provide clinical justification for this category of equipment.

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- A MASS Communication Aids Trials Information and Proforma is available on the MASS website to assist and guide prescribers with documentation of the trial objectives / outcomes.
- A post delivery check to ensure all items are delivered as quoted.
- A post delivery follow up visit is to be provided by the prescriber, or this is referred on to another health professional, to ensure the client and carer are familiar with the operation and effective use of the equipment; assist with initial set up and customisation of the vocabulary; provide information to assist the client pre-plan for occasions when they might be without their communication aid; and ensure they are aware of maintenance and repair processes.

## Allocation of aids

- Prescribers and applicants will be notified of the outcome of the application.
- If approved, and the conditions for co-payment are met (e.g. statutory declaration is signed and returned to MASS) an order will be placed with the supplier/manufacturer for supply directly to the prescribing speech pathologist, OR
- If a suitable aid is held in MASS stock, it will be delivered directly to the prescribing speech pathologist.

## Eligible prescribers

Applicants wishing to apply must consult a:

- Speech Pathologist
- Occupational Therapist for Specialised Accessories

## Application Forms and Documents required

Speech Generating Device (and any accessories)

- *MASS 21 Communication Aids Application Form*
- *MASS 21 App SGD Speech Generating Device Application Form Appendix*
- *Signed MASS 84 Proxy Access to Centrelink Information form or photocopy of both sides of the applicant's concession card*
- *Quote for device and any accessories*
- *MASS Communication Aids Trials Information and Proforma (optional)*