

# HACC Fees Policy

## Introduction

This section provides a brief overview of the HACC Fees Policy. Readers must go to the HACC website to access the full fees policy and all the relevant documents.

The policy only relates to fees charged to people receiving HACC services. It does not relate to fees charged to people who, for example, are funded through Commonwealth home care packages or through TAC or other compensation funding.

The HACC Fees Policy (included in the *Commonwealth HACC program manual 2012*) provides a framework for the collection of fees in the HACC program.

The Victorian HACC Fees Policy provides more detailed guidance on the application of the Commonwealth's principles and broad guidelines. Compliance with the HACC Fees Policy is compulsory.

The HACC Fees Policy consists of:

- the fees policy itself
- information for service users including the *Income self declaration form (template)* with income ranges updated annually
- the HACC schedule of fees (updated annually).

Approval for alternative systems of fee collection may be sought from the Department of Health. Such approval will only be granted where these systems are consistent with the principles and guidelines contained in this policy.

The fees policy is an integrated approach to setting fees for people using services and service providers. It is to be implemented as a whole and not as individual components. For example, income is only one factor to be used in determining the fee. A service provider that used income as the sole factor would be in breach of the policy.

## Principles

Principles governing the fees are as follows:

- Inability to pay cannot be used as a basis for refusing a service to people who are assessed as requiring a service.
- Where fees are to be charged this should be done in accordance with of the HACC schedule of fees appropriate to the person's level of income, the amount of service used, and any changes in circumstances and ability to pay.
- It is not appropriate to charge a fee for some services, due to the nature of service provision or particular targeting policies, for example volunteer coordination, assessment, access and support.
- All agencies should charge the full cost of the service where the person is receiving, or has received, compensation payments intended to cover the cost of care.
- People with similar levels of income (after considering levels of expenditure) and service usage patterns should be charged equivalent fees for equivalent services.
- People with high and/or multiple HACC-service needs are not to be charged more than a specified maximum amount of fees in a given period, irrespective of the amounts of services used.

- Fees charged should not exceed the actual cost of service provision. A separate charge can be applied where there are additional costs for goods or materials utilised in the provision of a service such as home maintenance, or out of pocket costs related to participation in program events.
- Fee collection should be administered efficiently and attempts should be made to minimise the cost of administration.
- The revenue from fees is to be used to enhance and/or expand services.
- Procedures for the determination of fees should be clearly documented and publicly available. The onus is on the service provider to ensure all service users are aware that this information is available.
- Procedures for determination and collection of fees should take into account the situation of special needs groups.
- Assessment of a person's capacity to pay fees should be as simple and unobtrusive as possible, with due regard for their privacy. Any information obtained should be treated as confidential.
- People using HACC services have the right to access an advocate; this applies to the determination of fees.
- People using HACC services and their advocates have the right of appeal against a given fee determination.
- For the purposes of this policy, solicited donations for services are equivalent to fees and are subject to all provisions of this policy. The implementation of this policy cannot be avoided by using the terms 'payments' or 'donations' instead of fees.

## Agency fees policy

HACC organisations' procedures for the determination of fees should be publicly available as per the principles above. All people using HACC services should be informed of the fees applicable to them at the time of assessment or commencement of the service. Organisations should provide a written statement regarding the fee to be charged for any service and the payment procedures.

It is necessary to reassess fees if there is a change in circumstances, particularly in relation to the person's financial situation.

## The annual fees report

The annual fees report is a simple one-line report on the total amount of fees collected by an organisation from HACC service users in the relevant financial year.

The completed form is sent to the relevant regional office of the department by 1 October.

The department includes the statewide total as part of Victoria's annual HACC business report to the Commonwealth.

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### Links

The HACC Fees Policy including the *Income self-declaration form* and information for people  
[http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hacc/prog\\_manual/downloads/fees\\_policy.pdf](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hacc/prog_manual/downloads/fees_policy.pdf)

For current fees effective from 1 January 2012

[http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hacc/prog\\_manual/downloads/fee\\_schedule2013.pdf](http://www.health.vic.gov.au/hacc/prog_manual/downloads/fee_schedule2013.pdf)

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