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Royal Society for
the Blind of SA Inc.



15 November 2006

The Secretary
Senate Community Affairs References Committee
PO Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee Members

**RE: COMMONWEALTH STATE/TERRITORY DISABILITY AGREEMENT
(CSTDA) HEARING – GLENELG, FRIDAY 6 OCTOBER 2006**

Following on from my appearance at the above Hearing, Senator McLucas asked me to provide further information on access to Equipment Programs in States other than South Australia.

Whilst this was not an easy task, the Programs within each State varying considerably and managed by different Departments, the overall outcome is that people who are blind or vision impaired are either not provided for at all or have limited access.

The following summarises the information obtained:

<u>State</u>	<u>Access to Equipment</u>
Australian Capital Territory	No (The Department of Health, ACT has an Equipment Scheme, however it does not include provision of Adaptive Technology equipment for persons with a vision impairment).
New South Wales	No

Northern Territory	No
Queensland	No
South Australia	No
Tasmania	Persons under the age of 26 undertaking education are covered by the Royal Guide Dogs Association of Tasmania and the Department of Education, the latter funded by the Department of Disability for persons aged 18–26 covered by the Supporting Individual Pathways Program.
Victoria	No (The Victorian Aids and Equipment Program does not include the provision of Adaptive Technology equipment for persons with a vision impairment).
Western Australia	Yes (The Lotterywest Disability Equipment Grant program managed by the Independent Living Centre provides grants up to \$5,000 for Adaptive Technology equipment. The program is means tested with people becoming ineligible when individual income exceeds \$37,000 or family income exceeds \$62,000).

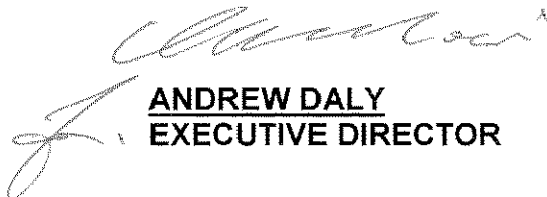
Based on the information obtained, it is apparent that the needs of people who are blind or vision impaired are not being fully catered for, particularly in the provision of Adaptive Technology equipment, and therefore there exists a significant area of unmet need under the current CSTDA.

I therefore encourage the Committee to recommend that the provision of Adaptive Technology Equipment for blind and vision impaired persons be included in the next CSTDA.

The inclusion of this provision will go a long way towards enabling those who are blind or vision impaired to participate in every day activities and live a life of quality. It will also ensure that equity of access and opportunity is afforded to persons with a vision impairment.

I trust the above is of assistance and thank you for the opportunity to provide information to the Committee. Should you require any further information please let me know.

Yours sincerely



ANDREW DALY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Cc Senator McLucas
Senator Humphries