

4 Report on PQ Lifestyles' data system and data collection administration for the Continence Aids Assistance Scheme (CAAS)

4.1 Introduction

In May 2001, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) was contracted by the Department of Health and Aged Care (DHAC) to undertake a project aimed at developing an application form and supporting data dictionary for the Continence Aids Assistance Scheme (CAAS). As part of this project the AIHW was required to review the data collection and data storage systems used by PQ Lifestyles, the agency contracted by the DHAC to administer CAAS. This report provides a summary of results from that review.

The CAAS has been the subject of a number of reviews since its inception. These reviews have examined issues such as the operations of the scheme, the focus of the scheme, eligibility criteria, service delivery arrangements and relationship with State programs. These issues are not the concern of this particular 'review', which is focused quite narrowly on the processes of information collection and capture for CAAS. In particular, the aim of this review is to inform DHAC about the ability of PQ Lifestyles to incorporate any changes in data collection, data definition, and reporting requirements resulting from this project. The emphasis is on client data, as opposed to financial information, although issues relating to the definition of a client impact upon the funding of PQ Lifestyles for the CAAS management.

4.2 Aim of the review

The aim of the review of data collection and data systems currently utilised by PQ Lifestyles is to provide information on:

- the intricacies of the scheme and the application process;
- how information about CAAS applicants is currently collected, stored, utilised and reported by PQ Lifestyles;
- the information requirements of PQ Lifestyles in the management of CAAS;
- the current application form and PQ Lifestyles input on how it can be improved; and
- the possible effects that changes in the application form could have on the management of the scheme.

The review included:

- examination of relevant documentation (including the current application form, the contract between PQ Lifestyles and DHAC, regular reports from PQ Lifestyles to DHAC, and a procedure manual from PQ Lifestyles);
- discussions with DHAC;

- face to face consultations with personnel from PQ Lifestyles including Emilia Seibold (CEO), Sean McCreanor (General Manager), Pam Irons (scheme administrator for PQ L), Lyndell Gaffney (Accountant);
- listening in on a number of client contact calls;
- briefly viewing PQ Lifestyles' current continence aids order system (PRONTO); and
- meeting with Dr Carol Toft, Health Services Australia, who provides an application assessment service for the scheme, to obtain her comments and input on possible changes to the CAAS application form, guides and data definitions.

4.3 Background to the scheme

The aim of CAAS is to assist people of working age with permanent incontinence resulting from a permanent disability to defray the cost of continence management. It is intended to complement the State and Territory government schemes that predate CAAS.

CAAS was first introduced by the Commonwealth Government in 1993. At that time it was administered separately by a number of independent, mostly state based non-government agencies. In December 1995, the Department of Health and Family Services called for tenders for national administration of CAAS under a single contract. The Paraplegic and Quadriplegic Association of Queensland (PQAQ), through its commercial arm, PQ Lifestyles, won the tender for the contract period of 1 January 1997 to 30 June 1999. The contract with PQ Lifestyles has since been extended in 12 month periods, and is current now until June 2002.

PQ Lifestyles initially administered CAAS through maintaining subcontracting arrangements with the previous State based providers. Since July 1999 the order processing has been centralised in the Queensland office of PQ Lifestyles and the warehousing and delivery of orders subcontracted to Fauldings Health Care.

4.4 Current administration by PQ Lifestyles

At the time of the review CAAS provided a subsidy of up to \$450 per annum per client on the purchase of continence aids. This increased to \$460 from 1 July 2001. The subsidy is not paid directly to the client but instead eligible clients can purchase up to \$460 worth of approved continence aids per year, through PQ Lifestyles. Unspent money cannot be carried over by clients into the following financial year. The amount of subsidy available to clients in their first year is calculated on a pro-rata basis depending on their date they enter the scheme (as of 1 July 2001, this is counted as from the date of receipt of a completed eligible application and associated proof documentation).

As the current service administrator, PQ Lifestyles is required to administer the program (including approving clients), supply the clients with client requested continence aids under a schedule agreed to by DHAC, maintain accurate records and report to DHAC regularly. Under current arrangements PQ Lifestyles is paid a fee (\$125) at the beginning of the financial year by DHAC for each 'client' for

administration and freight. Funds to cover the subsidy to eligible clients of CAAS are provided monthly to PQ Lifestyles.

PQ Lifestyles also administer the DVA Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP) for Queensland. Under the guidelines RAP clients are not eligible for the CAAS subsidy as all continence needs are met under that scheme. PQ Lifestyles also have general clients; that is, clients who purchase from PQ Lifestyles who are not in either CAAS or RAP. A CAAS client may also be a general client in which case they will have two accounts—a CAAS account and a general account. He or she may purchase from PQ Lifestyles using either account until their CAAS funds are exhausted. Products available under CAAS are approved by DHAC but include most aids considered necessary for the management of permanent incontinence. Products obtained under CAAS are GST free while those purchased by 'general' clients are subject to GST (where GST normally applies).

PQ Lifestyles have a quarterly newsletter which they send out to clients. This newsletter has been utilised to remind clients that funds have to be spent by the end of the financial year, or they will be forgone. It is also used in updating information on clients if the newsletter is returned (for example, with a notation that client has died, or with information relating to change of address). PQ Lifestyles also provide incentives for bulk orders (to cut overall freight costs incurred by PQ L), early bird incentives (to encourage clients to purchase early in the financial year rather than all at the end of the year), and a senior's club for those clients aged over 65 (to encourage those who are no longer eligible for CAAS to remain as general clients).

As part of CAAS PQ Lifestyles are also required to provide a telephone helpline for CAAS.

4.5 PQ Lifestyles information requirements

PQ Lifestyles is required to collect particular information from applicants, for the purposes of managing and administering CAAS and reporting to DHAC. The application form and supporting documentation (Disability Support Pension card or letter from Centrelink regarding eligibility for the Disability Support Pension (DSP) or Mobility Allowance, the health assessment from a health professional and in less clear cases an assessment from Health Services Australia) are main sources of information. PQ Lifestyles contact applicants and health professionals where the information provided is incomplete or requires clarification or where relevant supporting documentation has not been provided (roughly 50% of applications received do not include supporting documentation).

Other than client information, PQ Lifestyles is also required to collect information relating to client orders (type and amount), client 'expenditure' against their subsidy allocation, dispatch information, complaints, number of phone calls through the telephone help line (which is the same as order line) and financial information.

PQ Lifestyles are required to report regularly (monthly, quarterly and annually) to the DHAC, providing both client information and financial statements.

PQ Lifestyles are also interested in undertaking more analysis of the data in the future than has been the case to date. This will be facilitated by the change in data

systems from two separate systems to one integrated system (see below). They are particularly interested in examining purchasing patterns of clients and ways to make the program more efficient. For example, one of the issues raised by PQ Lifestyles was that of the minimum order amount (\$20) and the relative cost of freight to some clients. Trends in products purchased was another area of potential interest.

Discussion with PQ Lifestyles also suggested that it would be useful for both them and DHAC to undertake some analysis of the percentage of allowance expended by clients (for example, which clients spend the full allowance and which spend only part).

4.6 PQ Lifestyles Databases for managing CAAS

CAAS information is currently entered and stored on two databases-an Access database, and another called 'Pronto'. However PQ Lifestyles are moving to a single database system called Symphosys in September 2001. This will incorporate the functions of both the Access database and Pronto as well as give greater flexibility in data management and reporting.

4.6.1 Access database

Currently, CAAS client information is entered onto an Access database.

Data items collected and stored in the Access database include:

Client ID

Client active or inactive

Reason for inactive (e.g. died)

Date inactive

Client name

Postal address

Suburb

State

Postcode

Sex

Date of birth

Age (calculated from DOB)

DSS payment (benefit type)

Currently employed

Hours worked

English as a second language (yes/no)

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander (yes/no)

Continence management used

Where did you find out about CAAS (text box)

Application date

Disability type

Level of injury (e.g. L3)

If under 16 or 65 years and over-(yes-tick a box for Paid employment, Receiving an income, Meet impairment criteria)

Currently the data entry window for the Access database does not match the application form for CAAS, as it is based on the previous application form. As a result the current Access database includes items that are no longer collected (such as 'Is English a second language', 'Continence management used', 'Where did you find out about CAAS' and 'Disability level'). These are currently left blank as information is not collected on these data items.

In addition, some data items in the current Access database include categories which are not relevant (such as 'Rehabilitation allowance', 'Supported wage supplement' as categories for DSS payments and 'Unpaid voluntary work' under 'Are you currently employed?'). These are not used by PQ Lifestyles as they are not applicable to CAAS.

The development of the new system and new application form will provide the opportunity to address the inconsistencies between the data items that are in the database and the information actually collected from the applicant.

4.6.2 Pronto database

The database currently used to enter, manage and report on client's orders and expenditure by PQ Lifestyles is Pronto. It includes no client information apart from client ID, name, address and phone number. PQ Lifestyles stated that while a good order management tool, Pronto is not flexible in terms of information extraction and manipulation.

Currently it is used to collect and store information on client's current and previous orders, inquiries, balance of funds, warehouse that should provide the goods and notes relating to orders or inquiries.

The PQ Lifestyles call-centre, which receives orders for products and answers client's queries, can only access Pronto. They have no access to the personal details of clients on the Access database.

4.6.3 Symphosys

This new system is to be implemented by PQ Lifestyles by September 2001, to replace the Access and Pronto databases. All client information and order information will be on this one system rather than two as is the current situation.

Symphosys is an object-oriented system written in Delphi. It is a custom designed system and so, according to PQ Lifestyles, it will be able to produce significantly better reporting and a much greater range of performance measures than the existing Pronto system.

Portability of data is an important consideration in the event that another organisation is contracted to administer CAAS in the future. According to PQ Lifestyles, portability of data to other systems should be straight forward from Symphosys, given it is object-oriented software. Transfer of data from Symphosys will be less difficult than under the current dual system (as PQ Lifestyles would currently need to extract and convert data from Pronto, and then marry the data together with the Access data to facilitate a full data transfer).

The introduction of this new data management system provides a very good opportunity for the incorporation of changes to data requirements and the associated updated application form. The data entry window in the new system can be developed to reflect the new application form. This should facilitate more direct data entry and therefore less time involved in transcribing from the application form to a checklist and therefore less chance of error.

It will also be timely to review the information reported by PQ Lifestyles to DHAC in the regular reports given that there will be changes to the client data collected and that the new system is supposedly more flexible in terms of data analysis.

Changes to the data collection, the application form or reporting requirements should be provided to PQ Lifestyles as soon as possible to facilitate the incorporation of these into the new Symphosis system.

4.7 CAAS-processes for information collection

Client information for CAAS is obtained primarily from the application form and supporting documents. This is updated if information comes to PQ Lifestyles' attention, such as if mail is returned or if clients notify PQ Lifestyles of changes in circumstances.

PQ Lifestyles informed us that they receive about 10-15 applications for CAAS per day. Roughly one of these will be ineligible, while some 50% have to be followed up due to inadequate information, lack of clarity regarding eligibility or failure to provide supporting documentation.

PQ Lifestyles have developed a procedure manual that details the steps involved in processing new applications and starting a client on the data system. This includes the steps from when the application is received to when the new client has an account opened (and money made available). It also includes procedures for those applications lacking proof documentation, those that are ineligible and those that are forwarded to Health Services Australia. The processes are outlined below:

4.7.1 Assessment of criteria

For every application received by PQ Lifestyles a **CAAS Checklist** is filled out by hand and attached to the application. This includes a checklist of the basic eligibility criteria (age, health condition, pension status) and ensures that supporting documentation is viewed and checked by PQ Lifestyles. It also ensures that appropriate follow up action is taken (e.g. to obtain missing supporting documentation or to forward the application to Health Services Australia for assessment of health condition).

Where the eligibility of the health condition is not clear PQ Lifestyles refer to the *list of eligible conditions* or look the condition up in a medical reference book. In some cases they contact the health professional who has signed the assessment form to obtain more information to enable them to judge eligibility. If these sources provide no clarification then the application is referred to Health Services Australia, who are then responsible for assessing whether the condition of the applicant meets the criteria for CAAS. This involves Health Services Australia contacting relevant health professionals who are treating or providing a service to the applicant.

Supporting documentation is usually in the form of a copy of an applicants Disability Support Pension card, or less often a statement from Centrelink regarding eligibility for the Disability Support Pension or the Mobility Allowance. For those aged 65 years and over and working, the supporting documentation is usually in the form of a statutory declaration or a payslip.

4.7.2 Search for existing client account

A search of the Pronto database is also carried out at this stage to check for an existing CAAS account under the applicant's name. This is important as a number of clients are unaware that they do not have to apply each year. Those applicants with an existing CAAS account are advised and no new account is opened until clarification is received.

While a client may have only one CAAS account they may also have a general account with PQ L. This is quite valid as a client may purchase items not approved under CAAS, or may purchase items from a general account once their CAAS allowance is expended.

PQ Lifestyles assured us that a check is made to ensure that a CAAS applicant is not an existing DVA Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP) client registered with PQ Lifestyles. However, as PQ Lifestyles currently only administer RAP for Queensland this check would only identify clients with an account in that State.

4.7.3 Sorting applications

Once the checklist is completed applications are sorted into the following groups:

- Eligible for CAAS-ready to open new account. New account opened and clients are notified.
- Not eligible for CAAS. These applicants are notified.
- Require proof of pension. These applicants are contacted. Application is further processed accordingly when proof is received.
- Require more information regarding condition. These applicants are contacted and health professional also contacted. Application is further processed accordingly when proof and information is received.
- Require proof of pension and more information re condition. These applicants are contacted. Application is further processed accordingly when proof is received.

- To be sent to Health Services Australia for assessment. Application faxed to Health Services Australia. On receipt of reply the application is processed accordingly.

4.7.4 Opening account and recording information on new clients

Eligible applicants (new clients) have a record opened on both the Pronto system and the Access database. Client information (such as name, address, health condition, benefit type) are recorded and stored in an Access database, while order information is recorded on Pronto. No information on ineligible applicants is recorded.

Applications from ineligible applicants are kept in hard copy on file.

Once a new client is entered onto the Pronto system they have access to the CAAS subsidy (ie a pro rata proportion of \$460 is 'banked' into their account). New clients are notified by mail of their eligibility, their account details and also provided with a catalogue of PQ Lifestyles products. This catalogue denotes which products are unavailable through CAAS and DVA Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP). Where the need for assistance is urgent PQ Lifestyles will notify new clients by phone.

4.7.5 Information on ineligible applicants

Currently information on ineligible applicants is not entered into a database. It could however be useful to record some information on the characteristics of unsuccessful applicants, particularly in regard to health condition. Who is applying but missing out, and why? It may also be a useful way to monitor whether the information provided in the application forms and guidelines are clearly conveyed so that ineligible people are discouraged from applying in the first place.

4.8 Suggested improvements to clarify definitions in CAAS

During discussions with PQ Lifestyles and Health Services Australia it became clear that there were a number of difficulties encountered in determining the eligibility of applicants. In particular, eligible health conditions were raised as an issue. PQ Lifestyles and Health Services Australia were both very keen to see improvements made to make the eligibility criteria clearer for potential applicants, health professionals and themselves. This does not involve changing the criteria for the program, which is beyond this project, but rather more clearly defining the existing criteria. In addition, PQ Lifestyles were also keen to adopt standard definitions and coding frameworks for data items relating to client characteristics. These changes will be incorporated in the new draft application form and guidelines for CAAS and the associated draft data dictionary.

4.8.1 Eligible health condition

The *list of eligible conditions*, which is used by PQ Lifestyles to check the eligibility of the health condition of applicants, is actually derived from conditions previously encountered and listed in CAAS client data. The list expands as new eligible conditions appear and become known. The list as it currently stands is not a

structured list of health conditions or disabilities, but rather a list of previous conditions that have been accepted as eligible. As such, it should not be used to define eligibility for CAAS, but rather as examples of eligible conditions.

PQ Lifestyles commented that the current list did not provide sufficient guidance and could be improved. It was also not clear from the documentation that it is a list of examples or previously encountered conditions, rather than a prescriptive list of eligible conditions. Health Services Australia also commented that the list was problematic and that the guidelines for CAAS regarding health condition were not clearly stated in the current CAAS documentation.

Both PQ Lifestyles and Health Services Australia agreed that a more clearly defined and structured list of eligible health conditions could make the assessment process clearer for them, and hopefully lead to a reduction in the number of applications referred to Health Services Australia. Dr Toft from Health Services Australia has agreed to assist the AIHW in developing a structured list of eligible health conditions, based on a code list developed by the AIHW for the ACAP data dictionary. This is based on ICD-10-AM classification and is comparable to the ABS 4 digit code used in the Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers.

The purpose of this list is as a guide to health professionals and Health Services Australia to the types of conditions that could be expected to result in a permanent disability and resultant permanent incontinence. This list will not appear on the application form itself. Instead, the eligible conditions will be grouped into 7–8 broad categories of the most commonly encountered health conditions (such as already exists on the current application form). It is recommended that data on health condition be collected and reported only at this broad level.

4.8.2 Primary health condition

One of the issues raised during the discussion of health condition and the reporting of the data currently collected was that many applicants have multiple conditions, not just one. As a result, applications often have more than one health condition ticked by the assessing health professional. Current data entry and reporting requirements allow for one health condition per client. As a result PQ Lifestyles are required to make a decision as to which health condition to enter into the database for clients with multiple conditions. For example, an applicant may well have paraplegia and an intellectual disability and, as a result, both categories are ticked by the health professional filling out the CAAS assessment form. In entering the data onto their client database PQ Lifestyles currently make a decision and enter one of these conditions.

From discussions it appears that intellectual disability is often coded into the database in these cases. This may help explain the relatively large proportion of CAAS clients reported as having an 'intellectual disability'. This graph is of particular interest as Health Services Australia reported that intellectual impairment in isolation would be unlikely to result in permanent incontinence (except in severe and uncommon circumstances). In many cases it does have an effect on the *management* of incontinence but it appears it does not often directly *cause* the incontinence.

It is therefore recommended that the application form and guidelines clearly specify that health assessors should report the applicant's **primary** health condition that most directly leads to or results in permanent incontinence. The application form should also clearly state that only one box should be ticked. Both PQ Lifestyles and Health Services Australia agreed that this should lead to an improvement in data quality.

Another alternative is to record and report on multiple conditions of applicants. This adds complexity to data collection and reporting, and was generally considered unnecessary in terms of information needs.

4.8.3 Benefit type

There is some ambiguity about the benefit type that is eligible. One example that was raised was that of an applicant aged between 16 and 64 on a job search allowance. Where there is doubt about the criteria PQ Lifestyles contact DHAC for advice. This could be minimised if the criteria were more clearly articulated to both PQ Lifestyles and to prospective applicants.

The proof provided for benefit type is often a health care card. The information on this is insufficient to prove that the applicant is eligible for part or full benefit. Therefore, to obtain greater detail on the level of benefit, the question on pension/benefit status will include a full and part pension split (and no benefit as an option). An additional question on receipt of mobility allowance or relevant tax exemption will also be added to collect information on the number of clients in receipt of mobility allowance only.

4.8.4 Supporting documentation

Supporting documentation is often not provided along with the initial application and, consequently, requires follow up. PQ Lifestyles estimate that 50% of applications don't have supporting documentation provided at the time of application and require follow up. This is time consuming. This time may be reduced if it is made clearer on the application form that supporting documentation is required to be attached.

The other question that needs to be considered is whether the health care card provides sufficient proof of eligibility for DSP, given that applications are accompanied by a health professional's assessment that the client has permanent incontinence as a result of a permanent disability?

4.8.5 Definition of client-when is a client no longer a client?

There was considerable discussion about the 'Statement of consumers' provided monthly to DHAC by PQ Lifestyles. Ways to make this clearer and more meaningful were discussed and some changes agreed. Part of this discussion centred on the terms currently used in that statement and possible changes to make them more meaningful. In addition the issue regarding when a client is deemed to no longer be a client for accounting and funding purposes was discussed and some changes

suggested. While these are project management issues they are also definitional issues and hence discussed below.

Ineligible, suspended and reactivated clients

Currently client's accounts are 'closed' when they become ineligible for CAAS. The reasons for this include:

- reached 65 years of age (and are not working in paid employment for at least 8 hours per week),
- PQ Lifestyles have received notification that the client has died
- PQ Lifestyles have received notification that the client has moved to high care residential; or
- PQ Lifestyles are notified that the client is no longer eligible for some other reason (for example they are no longer eligible for DSP due to an insurance payout).

These clients will be termed '*ineligible clients*' in the new monthly reports. For funding purposes these are not included in client numbers at the beginning of the financial year. Their details are, however, still held on the system. Currently the system holds up to 3 years worth of client information.

If these clients reapply for CAAS (under the same name) their name will come up during a database search and, providing that they meet the criteria for CAAS, they will be reactivated again. They are currently not considered new clients.

Under new arrangements that were agreed to by PQ Lifestyles, the database will be cleaned and archived regularly and hold a maximum of 2 years worth of client data. Ineligible clients will be deleted from the client database during cleaning. As a result a name search will only identify those '*ineligible*' clients who are still on the system (i.e. those that have become '*ineligible*' since the last data cleaning and archive). If a previous client reapplies and is eligible and their name is not on the database they will be a '*new client*' and receive a new client ID.

Clients can also be '*suspended*' if their mail is returned to PQ Lifestyles or if the phone number is wrong (when contacted by PQ Lifestyles). This suspension serves to highlight to the call centre that some information on the clients is inaccurate and in need of updating if the client does contact PQ Lifestyles to order products or for advice.

Suspended clients can be '*reactivated*' when contact is made to PQ Lifestyles and information updated accordingly.

Clients who have not spent any of their allocation under CAAS

Currently, clients become '*ineligible*' and therefore not counted as clients any longer when PQ Lifestyles receives evidence that they no longer meet the criteria for CAAS or they have died. However, there is no strategic approach to dealing with those clients who, for some reason, have not spent their allocation of funds for a whole 12 month period (ie the client has \$460 of unspent allocation which they have not utilised at all in the year). At 1 June 2001 there were 1,078 CAAS clients who still had their full allocation remaining. While some of these may well spend some or all

of their allocation in the period 1 June to 30 June, it is highly likely that a large percentage will not.

These clients may have died, become ineligible for some other reason, or they may have changed carers and the new carer is unaware that the person is a CAAS client. Therefore some of these should no longer be counted as clients as they are in fact 'ineligible'. This has implications for funding as DHAC fund PQ Lifestyles on a per client basis. Others could be missing out on accessing their entitlements which has implications in terms of meeting clients' needs. It may also distort the figures on CAAS expenditure per client.

The current contract does not include any guidelines as to how PQ Lifestyles should deal with these clients. As a result they all continue to be counted as clients at the beginning of the financial year. Under the current arrangements they will continue to be counted as clients until such time as there is evidence that they are 'ineligible'.

A possible solution that was put forward by PQ Lifestyles during discussions (and taking into account the need to minimise distress to clients), is to attempt in early June to contact all those whose total 12 month allocation is unspent at that time. For this first year the contact would have to be made in July or as soon as practicable. Basically this contact would remind the client that they have \$450 in their account to spend, that it has to be spent by 30 June as it cannot be rolled over, and that unless they contact PQ Lifestyles in some manner (i.e. by purchasing or notifying in some way) that their account will be closed. They will be told that if this happens and they choose to re-enter the scheme they can reapply.

Those clients who do not contact PQ Lifestyles will be considered 'ineligible'. However, the database cannot be updated with this information before 1 July, due to practicalities of timing. Therefore at 1 July they will be still be counted as 'clients' and included in the count of clients for which PQ Lifestyles are funded by DHAC. An adjustment will then need to be made in the following months to ensure that DHAC recoup the funding for those clients who were in fact ineligible.

4.9 PQ Lifestyles' ability and willingness to adapt to changes in data collection and application form for CAAS

From discussions PQ Lifestyles seemed very positive about the proposed changes to the application form, accompanying guidelines, data definitions and data collection. They are currently well placed to adapt to changes in the data collection for CAAS due to the introduction of the new data system by September 2001. Symphosys will provide a better data management tool and will integrate client information and order information on one system. The new system can more closely reflect the data collected from the application form than is currently the case. The introduction of Symphosys will also provide PQ Lifestyles with greater flexibility in terms of analysis and reporting of data collected on CAAS.

The development of a new application form is also timely in that PQ Lifestyles are keen to move to an on line application form with links to other services, product range etc. This should be considered by DHAC when moving from the draft application form to the printed version to ensure that it will also be amenable to

loading on the web. Consultation with PQ Lifestyles in finalising the format and layout of the application form prior to printing would be beneficial to both organisations.

PQ Lifestyles and Health Services Australia were both very keen to see the eligibility criteria for potential applicants, health professionals and themselves more clearly defined. In addition, PQ Lifestyles were also keen to adopt standard definitions and coding frameworks for data items relating to client characteristics.

4.10 Summary

PQ Lifestyles and Health Services Australia were very supportive of possible changes in the CAAS application form and associated clarification of the guidelines for CAAS. They were particularly keen to see changes to the form that would make it clearer to applicants that they were ineligible before they actually applied, and to get clearer guidelines around eligible 'health condition'. Health Services Australia agreed to assist AIHW in developing a clearer list of possible 'eligible health conditions' than is currently utilised.

PQ Lifestyles is currently developing a new integrated client and order data system, called Symphosys, and so are well placed to incorporate changes to the CAAS application form and data definitions for some data items. This new system will also provide greater flexibility in reporting and so it may be timely that DHAC consider their reporting requirements for CAAS.

PQ Lifestyles hope to have Symphosys in place by September 2001. To facilitate the incorporation of changes in the application form and associated data collection into the new system, it would be advantageous if PQ Lifestyles could be provided with drafts of these as soon as possible.

