

11 May 2020

MEDIA RELEASE

PPE online stores to meet needs of people with disability

The Summer Foundation has joined forces with 2 of Australia's largest providers of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - RSEA Safety and Blackwoods – to launch 2 online stores offering PPE for people with disability.

The online stores will supply reasonably priced gloves, gowns, surgical masks, face shields, hand sanitiser and disinfectant wipes, and will be accessible to NDIS participants from today.

This move follows a recent survey of more than 350 National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants which found that the majority of respondents do not have access to the PPE they need to stay safe during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey, which was conducted by the Summer Foundation in April and was designed to develop an evidence base to inform a national strategy around the distribution of PPE to NDIS participants, found that access to and the cost of PPE were the main concerns.

“We know people with disability are disproportionately vulnerable during COVID-19,” said Summer Foundation CEO Dr Di Winkler.

“Providing access to reasonably priced PPE that they and their support workers need to prevent infections is a tangible way we can support this high-risk group of people in our community.”

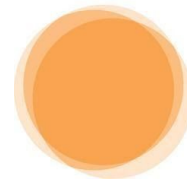
Dr Winkler said the initiative was a collaborative effort between the Summer Foundation, RSEA Safety and Blackwoods, which has also been supported by NOVEL-19.

Mr Terry Spyrides, Chief Operating Officer RSEA Safety, said the company is proud to be supporting the Summer Foundation and NDIS participants.

“The opportunity for us to supply our products beyond workplace safety and specifically for those in need, is incredibly humbling for us and we look forward to continuing our support of this great initiative.”

Mr Andrew Dyke, Blackwoods General Manager NSW and National Accounts, said Blackwoods is delighted to be able to offer a much needed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) range to NDIS participants.

“These products can be ordered via our tailored Blackwoods for NDIS participant online ordering platform, enabling clients and carers to order without leaving their homes and have them delivered to their door or another convenient location.”



The Summer Foundation PPE survey found that:

- Few NDIS participants (only 7%) had access to the PPE they needed
- NDIS participants are concerned about where to get PPE (76%), the cost of PPE (48%) and how to use PPE (19%)
- Only 22% of NDIS participants reported getting PPE from their disability support provider
- Many NDIS participants need more information about PPE and cannot access the PPE they need. Comments included:
 - “I’m rather lost with PPE. I’d like to be able to access supplies but I don’t know what I need or where to get it.”
 - “Finding PPE to buy at the moment is almost impossible.”
- Some NDIS participants are feeling vulnerable and frustrated by the lack of access to affordable PPE. Comments included:
 - “I personally need/use gloves to (for continence support) daily. I’m concerned about a possible glove shortage.”
 - “I cannot survive without (support workers), but without PPE I can no longer feel safe in my own home. It is a very vulnerable and horrible position to be in...”

The PPE online stores and PPE survey are part of the Summer Foundation’s Connect & Support COVID-19 response which provides tangible, direct support to people with disability who are likely to be at an increased risk of health complications and isolation at this time.

Connect & Support initiatives include a discharge follow-up service to ensure supports and essential services are in place for people with complex needs who are being discharged quickly from hospitals; an aligned housing service to work with hospitals to find appropriate housing for people being discharged; and a phone outreach service to check on the health and wellbeing of people with disability.

Founded in 2006, the Summer Foundation is working to resolve the issue of younger people with disability being forced to live in aged care.

How to access RSEA Safety and Blackwoods online PPE stores

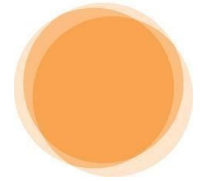
The RSEA Safety and Blackwoods stores can be accessed via the PPE Initiative page on the Summer Foundation website: www.summerfoundation.org.au/staying-safe-with-ppe/

About RSEA Safety

RSEA Safety has been dedicated to providing customers with the very best products from Australia and abroad, coupled with the service and expertise that people have come to expect from RSEA. This commitment has seen the company grow to become the largest independent safety business in Australia with over 50 superstores nationwide, and the market leader in all things safety. In 2019 RSEA Safety was ranked in the top 20 Best workplaces To Give Back for their contribution to the community.

About Blackwoods

Over the past 140 years, Blackwoods has grown from being a small marine supply business on the banks of Sydney Harbour, to where we are today, Australia’s largest provider of industrial and safety supplies. Today we support businesses, big and small, with our range of over 200,000 products from the world’s best brands. With unrivalled expertise and the ability to bring together the best of the best, we have earned our place as Australia’s first choice for industrial and safety products and services including PPE, welding and gas, power tools, hand tools, workwear and much more.



Blackwoods is proud to provide products and services that are essential to the economic growth and prosperity of our country. Every day we help more people to build a better Australia.

About NOVEL-19

NOVEL-19 is a private sector group of business leaders and philanthropists bringing an agile entrepreneurial response to COVID-19. The group has strong links with the Federal and State Governments, Medical Research Institutes and industry, and is working with a McKinsey team, financially supported by the Commonwealth Bank. NOVEL-19 is aligned to the Government, aiming to accelerate initiatives to support the Government's response to COVID-19.

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