Client Contribution Policy

1. Purpose

This policy outlines how St George Community (SGC) determines, administers and reviews client contributions for services delivered under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP).

SGC is committed to administering fees fairly, transparently and without discrimination, in accordance with:

- The Aged Care Statement of Rights (2025)
- The National CHSP Client Contribution Framework
- The Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards (2025)
- Grant Agreement obligations
- Standard 8: Organisational Governance

This policy ensures that clients who have capacity to contribute to the cost of their care do so, while protecting those who are financially vulnerable.

2. Policy Statement

Client contributions charged by SGC are:

- Determined and approved by the Governance Body
- Consistent with the National CHSP Client Contribution Framework
- Reviewed annually or as funding arrangements change
- Not exceeding the actual cost of service provision

Revenue from client contributions is used to support sustainable service delivery and expand the services SGC is funded to provide.

3. Guiding Principles

SGC administers client contributions in accordance with the following principles:

3.1 Consistency and Fairness

- All clients who can afford to contribute to the cost of their care are expected to do so.
- Contributions will not exceed the cost of delivering the service.
- SGC will consider the client's individual capacity to contribute.
- Fees will not be administered in a way that restricts access to services based on inability to pay.

3.2 Transparency

- Client contribution information is provided in accessible formats.
- The current fee schedule is publicly available on the SGC website.
- Fees are explained to all new and existing clients at intake and upon review.
- Clients are informed of any changes to fees in advance.

3.3 Financial Hardship

- SGC recognises that some clients may experience financial hardship.
- Clients are encouraged to notify SGC if they are unable to pay.
- A formal hardship process is available via the Request for Financial Assistance Form (doc148).
- Fees may be reduced or waived where financial hardship is demonstrated.
- No client will be refused essential CHSP services due to financial hardship.

3.4 Reporting and Accountability

- SGC will report client contribution income in accordance with grant agreement obligations.
- Records of contributions and hardship determinations will be maintained in line with financial management and audit requirements.
- Oversight of contribution policy implementation rests with Management and the Governance Body.

3.5 Sustainability

- Client contribution revenue supports:
  - Ongoing service delivery
  - Service improvement initiatives
  - Expansion of funded services where appropriate
- Contributions form part of SGC's broader financial sustainability framework.

4. Governance

The Governance Body:

- Approves the fee schedule
- Reviews the policy annually
- Ensures alignment with legislative and regulatory requirements
- Monitors financial sustainability and equity of application

Management is responsible for operational implementation and ensuring staff understand and apply this policy consistently.

5. Related Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- doc_007 Financial Management Policy
- doc_138 Service User Rights and Responsibilities Policy
- doc_136 Service User Fees Procedure
- doc148 Request for Financial Assistance Form

6. Relevant Standards

Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards (2025):

- Standard 1 – The Person
- Standard 2 – The Organisation
- Standard 3 – The Care and Services
- Standard 8 – Organisational Governance

National Disability Standards

- Standard 2 – Provider Governance and Operational Management