

Managing Limited Resources For Community Care Support



**When Demand Exceeds Supply
There is a Way to Maximise Resources**

A DAELIBS Discussion Paper Extract

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'The Challenge'

Community Care programs are faced with the situation of the growth of the populations of people who are aged, and younger with disabilities, continually outstripping the ability of government to supply resources to feed the demand for care and personal support services. **Managing the balance of demand and supply is the constant challenge faced by service providers and governments.**

Since the 1994 Commonwealth Morris Committee *Home But Not Alone* Report on community care, there have been other government reports into community care. A repeated finding is, there is no effective data collection process that can provide a clear picture of the unit costs of delivering community based care services.

Minimum Data Set reporting processes have been developed that seek to ascertain the types of services and the numbers of individuals receiving support from Home and Community Care funding.

However, as a basic requirement in the unit cost reporting, a record gathering methodology that identifies four identified and integral service delivery cost components for home based care has not been established.

DAELIBS (Data Analysis Electronically Logged Information Based System) has the potential to cost effectively gather service attendance data. Data that will assist in the policy planning and understanding of the expenditure the Home and Community Care, Community Aged Care packages, DVA Home Care and DVA Nursing Care funding resources.

These are four central cost factors in delivering care at home in the community:

- 1. Service recipient contact time - actual service delivery time**
- 2. Travel time to and between clients**
- 3. Administration time.**
- 4. Non-Allocated or time resources available but not applied.**

Being able to identify and manage these four cost factors is essential, if the maximum service outcomes are to be achieved with Home and Community Care funding.

DAELIBS SeeknFind Solution

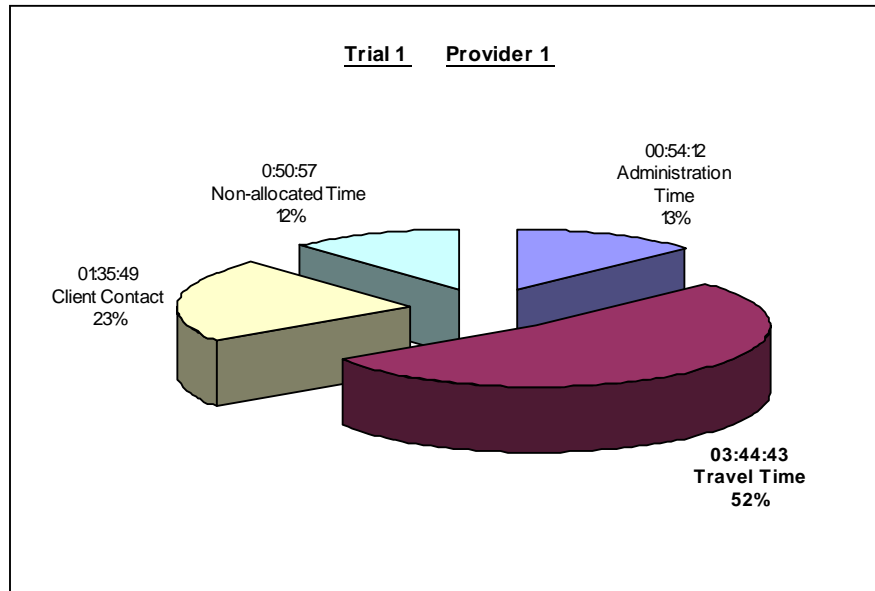
Managing community care funding resources is essentially a time management process. This is a viewpoint confirmed by the 2000 Review of the Domiciliary Care Services.

“to develop the unit cost for services, a common base is necessary. It was decided that the only reasonable base is time”. (Sept 2000, Vol 3 Page 13).

Recording time expenditure for service delivery can be a confronting management process to implement. That may explain why the introduction of the concept has not been widely adopted. Where DAELIBS has been introduced, significant increases in service outcomes have been achieved. Early research I conducted in 1993 revealed time is an important factor to manage in community care services.

In a pilot study, in 1995, eighty one percent was the highest client contact time achieved. Is the eighty one percent contact a benchmark goal for the community care industry?

This graph is an illustration of how the DAELIBS (Data Analysis Electronically Logged Information Based System) data can present management information that can directly affect the planning of service delivery and increase the client contact time. This illustration was one worst case studies from the **1995** research project. The worst service contact time outcome was eight percent, the best eighty one percent.



Based on a charge out rate of \$35.00 per hour and a labour cost of \$25.00 per hour will purchase the following time usage fractions will deliver a **NETT result of:-**

23% Client contact Hours	52% Travel Hours	13% Admin Hours	12% Non allocated Hours	Total Hours
920 hours	2,080 hours	520 hours	480 hours	4,000 hours
\$32,200	\$52,000	\$13,000	\$12,000	-\$44,800.00

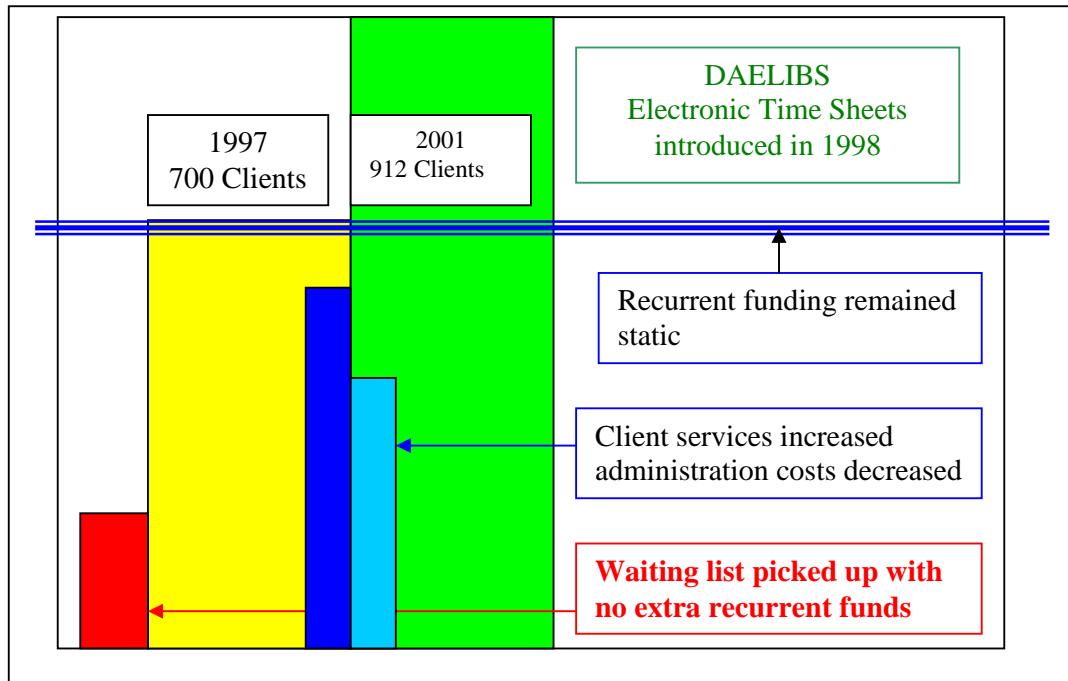
Managers who have access to this information have the potential to increase the service outcomes within the same gross expenditure allocation. **DAELIBS can be a powerful cost management tool.** Having knowledge of time expenditure associated with these four cost components enables a manager to work on adjusting the service structure and by re-organise the delivery system to achieve increase productivity from within the same financial resources.

Compare the above outcome to an eighty one percent chargeable contact time.

81% Client contact Hours	11% Travel Hours	3% Admin Hours	5% Non allocated Hours	Total Hours
3,240 hours	440 hours	120 hours	200 hours	4,000 hours
\$113,400	\$25,000	\$3,000	\$5000	\$94,400.00

Ion 1997 Cardinia Care at Pakenham introduced DAELIBS to increase their service efficiency within the available financial resources. After six months of piloting the use of DAELIBS there was a decrease in cash outflows that was reapplied to increase service outcomes. (A report on the Cardinia pilot phase is available).

Cardinia's findings, was not to be a one off experience. Other organisations using DAELIBS are also achieving service efficiency outcomes.



Tracel Devereux, the manager at the time, commented *“the implementation of DAELIBS is providing service management information not previously available to us for planning and service coordination”*.

It has been proven by more than one service provider that DAELIBS electronically recorded information can increase productivity and save administration overheads. The electronic data from the Loggers replaced the paper timesheets and delivered a reduction in administration hours for both payroll and client invoice data processing.

Remote workers at the Yarriambiak Shire in Victoria are delivering their fortnightly time sheets from their DAELIBS Loggers by data transfer over a modem. This process has saved, the Community Care Coordinator, an estimated 10 hours a fortnight of administration time.

Two Levels of Benefit

DAELIBS SeeknFind can immediately deliver two levels of administration benefits in the funding of care in the community.

At the local service provision level DAELIBS can replace the need for paper timesheets. This has a direct impact on the amount of time spent transferring paper time sheet records for payroll and client invoices into a computer. Savings in this area can be converted to hands-on client contact service outcomes. By introducing DAELIBS one site had a 30% increase in client contact outcomes with reduced administration hours.

At the macro policy level if enough community care service providers could aggregate a pool of data that detailed the actual time spent in travelling to deliver community care, then there could be an opportunity to argue a case for more equitable funding to cover this cost. The significance of the time related travel cost factor is yet to be fully realised.

The year 2000 Review of Domiciliary Care Services (S.A.) Working Draft Report states:-.

(DHS, Metropolitan Division, Sept 2000, Vol 3).

- **“The data provided demonstrated the lack of an overall financial management framework and financial data system. The current system ensures little accountability.**
- The error rate in data collection ranged from about 10% to some 650%” (Vol 3 Page 4)
- “Where data was available, it was invariably incomplete and generally inaccurate
- Where data has been provided to DHS on a monthly basis, there have still been large gaps, either due to non-collection, inaccurate recording or errors in processing.
- **To develop the unit cost for services, a common base is necessary. It was decided that the only reasonable base is time” (Vol 3 Page 13).**
- The need to effectively account for taxpayers money was considered to be vital (Vol 3, Page 3).

Over a five year period, at more than one location, it has been proven DAELIBS can assist to deliver increased service outcomes from within existing resources.

The ACT Home Help Service was provided with an interest free loan from ACT HACC to purchase a DAELIBS installation. The loan was to be repaid over a term of four years. From efficiency gains the loan was paid out in three years.

DKTOB can assist agencies wanting to more effectively manage the sparse funding resources and to build empirical time expenditure data resources that will assist to identify benchmarks of service cost and time resource expenditure.

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