



# PARLIAMENT of AUSTRALIA

## MEDIA RELEASE

### House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport *Inquiry into the Hearing Health and Wellbeing of Australia*

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Issue date: 30 May 2017

## Reducing Ear Diseases to be Discussed in Darwin

On Wednesday, 7 June 2017 the Australian Parliament's Health, Aged Care and Sport Committee will be holding a public hearing in Darwin as part of its *Inquiry into the Hearing Health and Wellbeing of Australia*.

Hearing loss and ear diseases are three times more prevalent among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people than the general population. In particular, the incidence of otitis media (middle ear infection) is very high among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The Committee will be discussing these issues with hearing experts including Dr Damien Howard, a psychologist and educator with over thirty years' experience working in the field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hearing health issues.

The Committee Chair, Mr Trent Zimmerman MP, stated that 'hearing loss among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has been described as a 'wedge' preventing the closing of the gap. Persistent ear infections can result in delayed language development, impact on a student's ability to learn in the classroom, and even lead to permanent hearing loss. The Committee will be discussing with experts in Darwin how the prevalence of hearing loss can be reduced among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.'

#### **PUBLIC HEARING DETAILS:**

**8.00 am – 11.10 am, Wednesday, 7 June 2017**

**Ballroom A, Hilton Darwin, 32 Mitchell Street, DARWIN.**

**Live Remote Captioning is available for this hearing. For more details please see:**

[http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary\\_Business/Committees/House/Health\\_Aged\\_Care\\_and\\_Sport/HearingHealth/Public\\_Hearings](http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Health_Aged_Care_and_Sport/HearingHealth/Public_Hearings). The hearing will also be broadcast live at [aph.gov.au/live](http://aph.gov.au/live).

#### **Media enquiries:**

Please contact Luke Barnes, Media Advisor from the office of Mr Trent Zimmerman MP, Chair, on 0422 726 621. [Luke.Barnes@aph.gov.au](mailto:Luke.Barnes@aph.gov.au)

#### **For background information:**

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