



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

Issue date: 13 September 2017

Still waiting to be heard: Hearing Health Report Presented to Parliament

The Australian Parliament's Health, Aged Care and Sport Committee today presented its [report](#) on the hearing health and wellbeing of Australia entitled *Still waiting to be heard...* The Inquiry examined the effects of hearing loss and balance disorders and access to treatment.

The Chair of the Committee, Mr Trent Zimmerman MP, stated that 'Hearing loss is estimated to cost the Australian economy \$33 billion per year, but for those who experience hearing loss the most profound impact can be the effect on their everyday lives and relationships with family, friends, and work colleagues.'

'In many ways Australia is a leader in supporting those with hearing loss. From Cochlear implants to vouchers for pensioners, we have been pioneers. However, the inquiry found there is much more that should be done to support those with hearing loss.'

'Tragically, the level of hearing loss among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children is at a crisis. Among working age Australians hearing loss can make it difficult to find or retain a job, and among older people hearing loss may lead to social isolation and has been linked to an increased risk of cognitive decline and dementia', Mr Zimmerman said.

The report made 22 recommendations, including:

- The development of a national strategy to address hearing health in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island communities and a significant increase in the provision of hearing services to remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.
- Increased support to hearing impaired Australians of working age who are unemployed or earning a low income.
- A prohibition on the use of sales commissions in hearing aid clinics taking part in the Australian Government's Hearing Services Program.
- Australian Hearing's continued role as the sole provider of audiological services to young children following the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
- The implementation of a universal hearing screening program for children in their first year of school.
- Hearing health becoming a National Health Priority Area.

The Report is available at:

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Health_Aged_Care_and_Sport/HearingHealth/Report_1

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