

Recommendations: Hear Us: Inquiry into Hearing Health in Australia			
Recommendation	Government Response	Action Taken	Lead Portfolio
<p>1 Regulate recreational noise</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing work with the appropriate agencies and authorities to devise recreational noise safety regulations for entertainment venues. Specifically, where music is expected to be louder than a recommended safe level, that the venues be required to:</p> <p>(a) post prominent notices warning patrons that the noise level at that venue may be loud enough to cause hearing damage; and</p> <p>(b) make ear plugs freely available to all patrons.</p>	<p>This is a matter for consideration by state/territory governments.</p> <p>Noise regulation is largely undertaken through state/territory environmental protection agencies which set standards, and police and local councils which enforce regulations. The Department of Health and Ageing will raise this matter with state and territory governments.</p>	<p>The Commonwealth Government raised this recommendation with states and territories at the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council 29 September 2011 meeting.</p> <p>The Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council has agreed that state and territory jurisdictions will manage as appropriate within each jurisdiction any issues around recreational noise and safety regulations for entertainment venues.</p>	Health and Ageing
<p>2 10 Year workforce strategy - FaHCSIA</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations engage with state and territory jurisdictions, and with employment and hearing loss peak bodies, to develop a 10 year strategy to better support, engage and retain hearing impaired Australians in the workforce. The strategy should be made publicly available, and detail annual performance targets and the level of resources committed to achieving them.</p>	<p>The Australian Government accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>The National Disability Strategy 2010-2020 (the Strategy), officially launched on Friday 18 March 2011, outlines a ten year national plan for improving the lives of people with disability, promoting participation, and creating a more inclusive society.</p> <p>The Strategy has been developed in partnership with state, territory and local governments and in consultation with people with disability, their families and carers, and other key stakeholders. The Strategy will guide public policy across governments and aims to bring about change in all mainstream services and programs as well as community infrastructure. This change is important to ensuring that people with disability, including those with hearing impairments, have the same opportunities as other Australians – a quality education, health care, a job where possible and access to buildings, transport and social activities.</p> <p>The Strategy identifies several areas for future action that have potential to improve employment opportunities for people with disability, including to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improve employer awareness of the benefits of employing people with disability; reduce barriers and disincentives for the employment of people with disability; encourage innovative approaches to employment for people with disability such as social enterprises, or initiatives to assist people with disability establish their own small business; and improve employment recruitment and retention of people with disability in all levels of public sector employment, and in funded organisations. <p>In the first year of the Strategy, the focus will be on the development of an implementation plan that will include mainstream policy areas identified in the Strategy. Areas for future action will be prioritized collaboratively with state and territory governments, in consultation with people with disability and other key stakeholders.</p>	<p>A first year report on the National Disability Strategy, including an implementation framework and evaluation plan will be provided to the Council of Australian Governments in 2012. Following this, a two year high level report will track progress for people with disability at a national level. The first biennial progress report will be presented to COAG in early 2014.</p> <p>As at 30 June 2012:</p> <p>The Disability Employment Services (DES) program, focuses on supporting people with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment. DES providers work with employers to understand their labour force requirements, to identify suitable jobs for people with disability, to help employers recruit and support people with disability.</p> <p>The Employment Assistance Fund financially supports people with hearing difficulty and employers by paying for workplace modifications, assistive technology, Auslan interpreting services and Deaf Awareness Training. The Fund also provides financial assistance to employers for Auslan interpreting services for job interviews.</p> <p>An Employer Engagement Strategy, to improve employer awareness of the benefits of employing people with disability, including those who are hearing impaired, has been drafted and was discussed at the Disability Employment Services Reference Group meeting in March 2012.</p> <p>This Strategy is also concentrating on busting current myths about employing people with disabilities, identifying training requirements and employer champions to promote the employment of people who have a diversity of disabilities.</p> <p>People who are hearing impaired and participating in Disability Employment Services, which are funded under Part 3 of the Disability Services Act are entitled to receive free hearing aids from Office of Hearing Australia. This is an important way to ensure people with disabilities looking for employment are provided with the equipment they need to look for and retain employment at no</p>	Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

Supplementary Estimates 2012-13

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		<p>additional cost.</p> <p>In September 2012, DEEWR provided a submission to the Australian Workforce and Productivity Agency's discussion paper, <i>Future Focus: Australia's Skills and Workforce Development Needs</i>.</p> <p>In addition, the Disability Standards for Education clarify the obligations of education and training providers and seek to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. The Standards were formulated under the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> and came into effect in August 2005.</p> <p>The Standards were recently reviewed with the Report on the Review published on 1 August 2012. One recommendation of the Review was to ensure that individual education plans are used to assist in transitions between the secondary and tertiary sectors and ensure that students with disability are given options on the same basis as all other students. The Government will be working with state and territory education authorities, and the non-government sector, to provide best practice guidance on using individual education plans to assist in transitions.</p>	
<p>3 Training for teachers - DEEWR</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations engages with state and territory education systems, higher education providers of training for teachers of children with hearing impairment, and major stakeholders (including the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children and parent representative bodies), to develop and implement an agreed national qualification standard for teachers of children with hearing impairment. This standard is to be benchmarked against international best practice.</p>	<p>This is a matter for consideration by state/territory governments and universities.</p> <p>Australian universities are self-accrediting autonomous institutions and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations does not intervene in specific curriculum development issues. Any development of an agreed national qualification standard for teachers of children with hearing impairment should be undertaken between relevant teaching peak bodies, major stakeholders and higher education providers.</p>	<p>Under the Smarter Schools - Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership the Australian Government has committed \$550 million to support reforms to improve the quality of teaching in schools. The development and implementation of reforms, including the National Professional Standards for Teachers, the National Professional Standard for Principals and nationally consistent accreditation of initial teacher education programs, is being led by the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.</p> <p>The National Professional Standard for Teachers sets out what teachers should know and be able to do across all stages of their career from graduate to proficient to highly accomplished and lead. The Standards include the expectation that all teachers should develop and implement strategies to support full participation of students with disability in accordance with relevant disability policy including the Disability Standards for Education. The new system for the accreditation of initial teacher education programs will see all courses assessed against agreed National Program Standards. Graduate teachers must demonstrate they meet the Graduate level standards as outlined in the National Professional Standards for Teachers in order to obtain provisional registration.</p> <p><i>More Support for Students with Disabilities</i> provides additional funding of \$200 million over the 2012 and 2013 school years to strengthen the capacity and expertise of Australian schools and teachers to support students with disability.</p> <p>As part of this initiative, education authorities are providing training for classroom teachers, learning support teachers, principals and assistant principals. Education authorities differ in the way they are delivering this training however all are providing or expanding access for staff in education for students with disability, including hearing loss. For example, the New South Wales Catholic Education Commission will target teachers to enroll in specialised</p>	<p>Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</p>

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		training on hearing difficulties. The Victorian government will be providing a small cohort of teaching staff with additional specialised qualifications in the form of scholarships in educating students with hearing impairments.	
<p>4 Extend HSP to all on means test basis</p> <p>The Committee recommends that eligibility for the Australian Government Hearing Services Program be extended to include all Australians, subject to eligibility and a means test.</p>	<p>The Australian Government accepts in principle these recommendations. In the 2011-12 Budget, the Government announced a number of measures, totalling \$47.7 million, which address some of these issues, including an extension to eligibility and improved service access for eligible clients under the Hearing Services Program (HSP).</p>	<p>Options to address this issue will continue to be the subject of policy consideration by the Government.</p>	<p>Health and Ageing</p>
<p>5 Extend services to young people to 25 years</p> <p>The Committee recommends that former child clients of Australian Hearing remain eligible for Australian Hearing support until the age of 25. This eligibility is to be subject to a means test. Former child clients of Australian Hearing who do not meet the means test are to have the option to access Australian Hearing support on a fee-for-service basis until the age of 25.</p>	<p>The Australian Government accepts in principle these recommendations. From 1 January 2012, eligibility for hearing services provided by the Australian Government provider Australian Hearing, under the Community Service Obligations (CSO) component of the HSP, will be extended to young adults aged 21 up to 26 years of age (21 to 25 years inclusive).</p> <p>This measure will allow hearing impaired young Australians continued access to free support, including hearing aid upgrades or replacements and maintenance, in line with the current policy for young adults under 21 years of age. It also includes an extension of access to those under 26 years of age for assistance with replacement of damaged, lost or obsolete cochlear implant speech processors. This will allow this group of young adults to complete their education or establish themselves in the workforce with a view to maintaining self-reliance in the longer term.</p> <p>Funding will be provided to enable increasing numbers of children and young people, eligible Indigenous people and adults with complex hearing to access services provided under the CSO. It is expected that over 39,600 children and young adults with hearing impairments, 11,500 Indigenous people and 18,400 adults with complex needs will receive services over the next four years.</p>	<p>Improved access for young hearing impaired people up to the age of 26 years to the Community Services Obligations (CSO) component of the Hearing Services Program was announced as part of the 2011-12 Budget. This measure was implemented on 1 January 2012.</p> <p>Note: Access for these young people is not means tested.</p>	<p>Health and Ageing</p>

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<p>6 Expand Patient Assisted Travel - States</p> <p>The Committee recommends that state and territory governments expand eligibility for Patient Assisted Travel Schemes to include support for accessing audiological services.</p>	<p>This is a matter for consideration by state/territory governments.</p> <p>While responsibility for the funding and administration for the accommodation and assistance schemes rests with state and territory governments, the Australian Government is working with them on the development of key policy principles and models for a nationally consistent scheme.</p>	<p>The Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council considered patient assisted travel schemes at its 29 September 2011 meeting. Members noted the policy principles for the administration of Patient Assisted Travel Schemes and that these principles will provide a basis for work should the Council of Australian Governments identify a need for nationally consistent patient assisted travel schemes.</p>	Health and Ageing
<p>7 e-Technology programs for children - FaHCSIA</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government provide funding to expand services for hearing impaired children in rural and remote areas through e-technology based programs such as that developed by the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children.</p>	<p>This is also a matter for consideration by state/territory governments.</p> <p>While responsibility for home based education and therapy support resides with state and territory governments, the <i>Better Start for Children with a Disability initiative</i>, which was implemented on 1 July 2011, complements existing state and territory services for children diagnosed with visual or hearing impairment, cerebral palsy, Down Syndrome and Fragile X syndrome. Financial support is provided to enable parents to access early intervention therapies and treatment. Eligible children receive access to up to \$12,000 for therapy services, including speech pathology and audiology services, and an additional one off payment of \$2,000 for families living in outer regional and remote areas where access to services is limited to assist with travel, home visits and similar expenses.</p> <p>The Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs also currently provides funding to the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) to assist them to provide the RIDBC Teleschool program. Over the period 2004-05 to 2008-09 a total of \$2,469,944 was provided for the Teleschool. Funding of \$1,127,810 has been provided in 2009-11 under the Family Support Program's Invest to Grow Activity. Funding will continue to be provided at this level.</p> <p>This funding has enabled RIDBC to expand its services throughout Australia.</p>	<p>Under the National Disability Agreement, all state and territory governments have responsibility for the provision of specialist disability services in a manner which most effectively meets the needs of people with disability, their families and carers, consistent with local needs and priorities.</p> <p>The Better Start for Children with Disability initiative was successfully implemented on 1 July 2011 and aims to increase access to early intervention services for children with a range of developmental disabilities.</p> <p>Children under 6 years who have been diagnosed with a moderate or greater hearing or vision impairment, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy or Fragile X syndrome may be eligible to access up to \$12,000 in funding (up to \$6,000 can be accessed in any one financial year). The funding can be used to pay for early intervention services provided by members of the Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider Panel, including services provided via e-technology.</p> <p>Families with a child who is eligible for the Better Start early intervention funding and who live in outer-regional or remote areas may also qualify for a one-off payment of \$2,000 to off-set the additional costs of accessing services.</p> <p>Building on services already provided under the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Teleschool program, the Government announced additional funding of \$4.9 million over three years from 2011-12 to 2013-14 for the Remote Hearing and Vision Services for Children Initiative.</p> <p>The VidKids consortium, which includes Vision Australia, First Voice and Deaf Children Australia, was successful in its application for this additional funding.</p> <p>The additional funding will deliver video and online access utilising the National Broadband Network where available, to allied health and education workers enabling a further 125 children with hearing and or vision impairment living in regional and remote areas to receive services.</p>	Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs

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<p>8 Extend COAG neonatal hearing screening commitment to school entry age</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Council of Australian Governments extends its commitment for universal newborn hearing screening to include hearing screening for all children on commencement of their first year of compulsory schooling. Given the crisis in ear health among Indigenous Australians, the Committee believes urgent priority should be given to hearing screenings and follow up for all Indigenous children from remote communities on commencement of school.</p>	<p>This is a matter for consideration by state/territory governments.</p> <p>While states/territories are responsible for delivering hearing screening services, the Australian Government will offer to work with them to identify opportunities for national collaboration to assist them to respond positively to the recommendation.</p> <p>The Australian Government contributes to hearing assessment for children through two items on the Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Health Assessment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People is available annually for all Indigenous people. When provided to an Indigenous child, the health assessment takes into consideration the results of any previous hearing screening including neonatal screening. It includes an ear examination and audiometry testing where indicated, particularly for those of school age. • The Healthy Kids Check is available to children between 3 and 5 years of age and is an assessment of their physical health, general well-being and development to ensure they are healthy, fit and ready to learn when they start school. The Healthy Kids Check includes a physical examination and assessment of the patients' hearing. <p>Under the Healthy Start for Schools Initiative, which commenced on 1 July 2011, all 4 year old children will need to have a health check, including hearing assessment, if their parent(s) receive Centrelink payments and they wish to receive the Family Tax Benefit Part B Supplement payment. These health checks can be undertaken either through state health arrangements or through the Medicare Healthy Kids Check.</p> <p>The Australian Government has also announced the introduction of a health and wellbeing check for three year olds, that will replace the current Healthy Kids Check. Advice on the activities to be undertaken as part of the health and wellbeing check will be developed by a group of childhood health experts in 2011-12, with the check to be introduced on 1 January 2013.</p>	<p>The Healthy Start for Schools initiative commenced on 1 July 2011 and makes access to Family Tax Benefit Part A for families on income support with a four year old child conditional on the completion of a relevant health check.</p> <p>A relevant health check can take the form of a Medicare funded Healthy Kids Check or an age appropriate check by state/territory child and maternal health services.</p> <p>The Australian Government is continuing to work through the Child Health and Welfare Subcommittee (a subcommittee of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council) to finalise the development of National Framework for Neonatal Hearing Screening (the Framework).</p> <p>Since 1 July 2011, additional support has been provided through the <i>Better Start for Children with Disability</i> initiative which provides access to early intervention services for children with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, Fragile X syndrome, or a moderate or greater vision or hearing impairment, including deaf/blindness. The program provides Medicare rebates for the development of a treatment and management plan for eligible children under the age of 13 years. When a treatment and management plan is in place, Medicare rebates are available for up to four allied health assessment services and up to 20 allied health treatment services per child, providing the child is under 15 years and the treatment and management plan is put in place before the child's 13th birthday. The assessment and treatment services can be provided by a range of allied health providers, including audiologists.</p>	Health and Ageing
<p>9 ASA resources and professional development</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Audiological Society of Australia develop and make available to its members resources and professional development that promotes better understanding about the impact a diagnosis of hearing loss can have on people, and which provides resources and techniques for counselling and supporting people at the time of diagnosis.</p>	<p>This is a matter for consideration by the Audiological Association of Australia (ASA).</p>	<p>The Audiological Society of Australia recently undertook a review of continuing professional development needs of its members and the issues raised in this recommendation were not identified as a priority for its members.</p>	ASA
<p>10 Development of professional standards for interpreters</p> <p>The Committee recommends that education providers develop professional standards for interpreters working in educational environments. These standards should be based on existing</p>	<p>This is a matter for consideration by state/territory governments.</p> <p>The Australian Government appreciates the critical contribution Auslan interpreters and other education paraprofessionals make to supporting students with a hearing impairment. Developing rigorous professional standards specifying the skills and knowledge interpreters need could help to ensure an on-going supply of suitably trained staff.</p>	<p>No further action required from DEEWR.</p>	Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

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standards, such as the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters paraprofessional level accreditation, or the National Auslan Interpreter Booking and Payment Services / Australian Sign Language Interpreter's Association Deaf Relay Certification.	The states and territories employ school paraprofessionals and are best placed to partner with the deaf community in the development of professional standards to underpin interpreter training, performance management and professional development.		
<p>11 Investigate top ups and financial viability of private services</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Office of Hearing Services engage with representatives of the hearing aid manufacturing and distribution industry, private providers of hearing health services, and hearing health consumers to investigate:</p> <p>(a) the relationship between the Voucher Program, top-ups and the financial viability of private health services; and</p> <p>(b) whether extending the capacity to audiologists to bulk bill Medicare directly for clinical services would have any impact on the financial viability of private health services (i.e. would it ameliorate the need to push 'top-ups' to stay viable?); and</p> <p>(c) that the findings of these investigations be made publicly available for the consideration of all hearing health stakeholders.</p>	<p>The Australian Government accepts in principle this recommendation.</p> <p>The Department of Health and Ageing will discuss these issues with key stakeholders.</p> <p>Under the Medicare Benefits Schedule, there are arrangements for audiologists to access some items for services delivered to clients in team care arrangements.</p>	<p>The Department is continuing to engage with stakeholders about these issues. In most consultations, this matter was not raised as a priority by stakeholders.</p> <p>During consultations there was some discussion about the overall indexation of items in the Hearing Services Program and on certain other items such as client relocations and device replacement.</p> <p>Medicare payments in general for audiological services are lower than those offered under the Hearing Services Program.</p>	Health and Ageing
<p>12 Review cochlear speech processor replacement policy</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Office of Hearing Services review its policy with regard to the replacement of damaged, lost or obsolete cochlear implant speech processors for eligible clients over 21 years of age, and if possible align it with the replacement policy for eligible clients less than 21 years of age.</p>	<p>The Australian Government accepts in principle these recommendations.</p> <p>From 1 January 2012, eligibility for hearing services provided by the Australian Government provider Australian Hearing, under the Community Service Obligations (CSO) component of the HSP, will be extended to young adults aged 21 up to 26 years of age (21 to 25 years inclusive).</p> <p>This measure will allow hearing impaired young Australians continued access to free support, including hearing aid upgrades or replacements and maintenance, in line with the current policy for young adults under 21 years of age. It also includes an extension of access to those under 26 years of age for assistance with replacement of damaged, lost or obsolete cochlear implant speech processors. This will allow this group of young adults to complete their education or establish themselves in the workforce with a view to maintaining self-reliance in the longer term.</p>	<p>For eligible clients up to the age of 26 years, the 2011-12 Budget measure aligns policy with regard to the replacement of damaged, lost or obsolete cochlear implant speech processors. This change came into effect on 1 January 2012.</p>	Health and Ageing
<p>13 Hearing Loops in all government shopfronts</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the public counters in all government shopfronts be accessible to people with a hearing impairment through the provision of hearing loop technology. The Committee recommends that the Office of Hearing Services coordinate a project which sets targets toward that end for all government agencies, at all levels of government, and that</p>	<p>The Australian Government accepts in principle this recommendation.</p>	<p>In respect of the provision of hearing loop technology, Commonwealth government shopfronts have commenced implementing strategies to comply with the Premises Standards.</p> <p>The Commonwealth has no mandate to require other levels of government to provide this or any other hearing technology.</p>	Health and Ageing

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these be publicly reported upon.			
<p>14 National dataset and register for neonatal screening</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the national data set and register for neonatal hearing screening, currently under development by the Neonatal Hearing Screening Working Group on behalf of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council, be expanded to include a national database which can:</p> <p>(a) track children through neonatal hearing screening, diagnosis and intervention; and</p> <p>(b) record and report cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional development outcomes of children diagnosed at birth with a hearing loss.</p>	<p>This is a matter for consideration by state/territory governments.</p> <p>While the delivery of screening services is a state/territories responsibility, the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council auspiced Working Group, established in 2009, is currently discussing potential models for a national dataset and registry function. Implementation of a dataset and registry function would need to be considered by the Australian Health Ministers' Conference.</p>	<p>The Australian Population Health Development Principal Committee (APHDPC) endorsed the draft National Framework for Neonatal Hearing Screening at its 9 March 2011 meeting, subject to further discussions being held with jurisdictions regarding the Framework's proposed indicators.</p> <p>The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare has developed a set of key indicators which could be collected by all jurisdictions to enable nationally consistent reporting.</p> <p><i>The Australian Government is continuing to work through the Child Health and Welfare Subcommittee (a subcommittee of the Australian Health Ministers' Advisory Council) to finalise the development the Framework.</i></p>	Health and Ageing
<p>15 Research funding for NAL longitudinal study</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Australian Government fund the National Acoustic Laboratories to undertake longitudinal research into the long-term impacts of recreational noise, particularly exposure to personal music players.</p>	<p>The Australian Government accepts in principle these recommendations (refer Recommendations 15-19).</p> <p>Through the 2011-12 Budget, the Australian Government has provided additional funds for research into the underuse of hearing aids. The Government will consider the proposed areas of research and take these into account in prioritising allocation of future research funding. In addition, the Department of Health and Ageing will work with Meniere's Australia to identify potential opportunities for further research.</p> <p>Currently the Australian Government supports research into hearing loss prevention through a number of mechanisms including the Hearing Loss Prevention Program (\$7 million for 2010-11 until 2012-13) and funding for the National Acoustic Laboratories through Community Service Obligations' funding arrangements.</p> <p>Under the Cooperative Research Centres (CRC) Program, administered by the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR), the Government is providing \$32.55 million over seven years to the HEARing CRC (commencing 1 July 2007 until 30 June 2014). One of the research projects supported by the Centre aims to determine the barriers to noise exposure reduction and the sources and profiles of noise exposure (www.hearingcrc.org).</p> <p>Additionally, there is continued Australian Government support for research into occupational noise exposure through the competitive funding schemes of various research funding agencies, including the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Australian Research Council and DIISR.</p>	<p>Some funds for research are available under the Hearing Loss Prevention Program. This Program of research grants is administered through the National Health and Medical Research Council.</p>	Health and Ageing
<p>16 Research funding for occupational noise exposure</p> <p>The Committee recommends that Australian Governments continue to prioritise and fund research into occupational noise exposure. The focus of research should be informed by the results</p>	Refer Recommendation 15	<p>Through the Hearing Loss Prevention Program (HLPP), Safe Work Australia were funded \$600,000 (GST incl) over 2 years (2008/09-2009/10) for their 'Getting Heard; Effective Prevention of Hazardous Occupational Noise' project. This project was completed on 30 May 2010.</p> <p>In October 2011 the NHMRC announced funding of \$576,727</p>	Health and Ageing

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of the 'Getting heard: effective prevention of hazardous occupational noise' project, currently being undertaken by Safe Work Australia, and include investigation into the effectiveness of current legislation in limiting occupational noise exposure. Research should continue to develop understanding about the design of workplace equipment, hearing protection, and the long-term effects of acoustic shock and acoustic trauma.		(GST excl) to Deakin University under the HLPP funding round to undertake investigations into noise induced hearing loss for those working on farms. Getting Heard; Effective Prevention of Hazardous Occupational Noise' project research concluded that regulatory enforcement and education are vital for achieving more effective noise control and occupational noise-induced hearing loss. A limited amount of research funding is available under the HLPP. This Program of research grants is administered through the National Health and Medical Research Council.	
<p>17 Research funding for investigation of the under use of hearing aids</p> <p>The Committee recommends that Australian Governments prioritise and fund research into the reasons for the under use of hearing aids, and develop practicable strategies for hearing health practitioners to help overcome the under use in the community.</p>	Refer Recommendation 15	Some funds for research are available under the HLPP. This Program of research grants is administered through the National Health and Medical Research Council. Additionally, the Government has committed \$1 million across the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 financial years to investigate this issue.	Health and Ageing
<p>18 Ototoxic substances and hearing impairment</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing work closely with Safe Work Australia to investigate the relationships between ototoxic substances and hearing impairment, and the possible implications for workplace safety practices.</p>	Refer Recommendation 15	In October 2011, the NHMRC announced funding of \$242,925 (GST excl) to the University of Queensland under the HLPP funding round for research to investigate the influence of solvent and noise exposure on the function of the auditory system and for the development of an audiological test battery capable of detecting early signs of occupational solvent-induced hearing loss that can be used in the workplace.	Health and Ageing
<p>19 Opportunities for research into Meniere's Disease</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing works with Meniere's Australia to identify opportunities for research into the prevalence of Meniere's disease in Australia, rates of diagnosis, options for treatment and personal management, and the socio-economic impact of the disease, including on the employment and lifestyles of those affected.</p>	Refer Recommendation 15	A meeting was held between Meniere's Australia and the Office of Hearing Services on 7 May 2012. Meniere's Australia is seeking assistance to secure research funding. A number of options to secure funding were discussed including funding available under the HLPP, funding available through the Department's Flexible Funds Program, funding from FaHCSIA for assistance with administrative costs, or from the NHMRC for research funding opportunities for health and medical research.	Health and Ageing

Recommendation	Government Response	Action Taken	Lead Portfolio
<p>20 National health awareness campaign</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing provides funding for Australian Hearing to develop, in close consultation with major stakeholders, a national hearing health awareness and prevention education campaign. This campaign should have three dimensions. It should:</p> <p>(a) target those at high risk of acquired hearing loss (including employers and employees in high risk industries, farmers and rural workers, and young people) to improve their knowledge about hearing health and change risky behaviours;</p> <p>(b) raise the level of awareness about hearing health issues among the broader Australian population to help de-stigmatise hearing loss; and</p> <p>(c) promote access to support services for people who are hearing impaired.</p>	<p>The Australian Government notes this recommendation. Public health campaigns are also a matter for consideration by state and territory governments.</p> <p>Australian Hearing is one of many service providers under the Australian Government's HSP. The Department of Health and Ageing will discuss the proposal for an awareness raising campaign with the states and territories and will explore whether there is an appropriate role for HSP providers in such a campaign.</p> <p>As part of the ear health component of the <i>Improving Eye and Ear Health Services for Indigenous Australians for Better Education and Employment Outcomes</i> measure, the Department of Health and Ageing is implementing a national social marketing communications project which aims to increase awareness of ear disease and to highlight the importance of seeking and following treatment to prevent hearing loss in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people(s). The National Indigenous Ear Health Campaign will primarily target Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers and female carers, especially those with children under five years of age, as well as intermediaries such as health care workers and teachers. Administered funding of \$9.57 million was allocated to the campaign, which will be implemented from 2009-2013.</p>	<p>The Commonwealth raised this recommendation at the Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council 29 September 2011 meeting.</p> <p>The Australian Health Ministers Advisory Council has agreed that state and territory jurisdictions will manage as appropriate within each jurisdiction any issues around recreational noise and safety regulations for entertainment venues.</p>	Health and Ageing
<p>21 Educational needs of hearing impaired Indigenous Australian children - joint task force with DEEWR</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and Department of Health and Ageing jointly establish a taskforce to work across portfolios and jurisdictions on a plan to systematically and sustainably address the educational needs of hearing impaired Indigenous Australian children.</p>	<p>The Australian Government accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) and the Department of Health and Ageing welcome and support the opportunity to work together and with other agencies to address the educational needs of hearing impaired Indigenous Australian children.</p> <p>Dialogue between these departments has already commenced, to discuss possible points of common interest around implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan (the Plan).</p> <p>The Plan, sets out a five year strategy across six domains of action to make substantial inroads into closing the education gaps for Indigenous children.</p> <p>One of the actions in the Plan notes that:</p> <p><i>The Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs will seek support from the Australian Health Ministers' Conference and Community and Disability Services Ministers' Conference to strengthen connections between schools and health, welfare, family support and youth and community services at local and systemic levels. Consideration will also be given to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students with disabilities.</i></p> <p>Supporting children with hearing difficulties was one of several areas of interest discussed in this context, and this important area is currently being examined by Commonwealth, state and territory officials in the course of implementing the Plan.</p>	<p>Representatives from DEEWR, DOHA and FAHCSIA have met with representatives from state and territory jurisdictions to identify areas for cross portfolio action to address the Action Plan. This group has identified otitis media as one of the intersecting priority areas for action by the Standing Council on School Education and Early Childhood (SCSEEC), the Standing Council on Health (SCoH) and the Standing Council on Community, Housing and Disability Services (SCCHDS). The Chair of SCSEEC wrote to the Chair of SCoH, SCCHDS, the Working Group on Indigenous Reform, and the Early Childhood Development Working Group seeking agreement to these priority areas.</p> <p>Chairs of relevant groups (SCoH, SCSEEC, SCHDS, ATSI Education Working Group, and COAG Working Group on Indigenous Reform) subsequently held a teleconference on 14 September 2012 and agreed to progress this work. It was agreed a mapping exercise should be undertaken nationally, to identify potential gaps and overlap, for each of the three identified activities (Otitis Media; young Indigenous carers and mothers; and early childhood education connection of services at a local level) by the Health, Education and Community/Disability Services Standing Councils. This information will be provided at the next meeting in early 2013.</p>	Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Health and Ageing

Recommendation	Government Response	Action Taken	Lead Portfolio
<p>22 Supply of hearing loops in new classrooms</p> <p>The Committee recommends that Australian Hearing be enabled under the Australian Hearing Services Act 1991 to supply and maintain sound field systems in all new classrooms, and in all existing classrooms where there is a significant proportion of Indigenous children.</p>	<p>This is a matter for consideration by state/territory governments.</p> <p>While the primary responsibility for supplying and maintaining sound field amplification systems in schools rests with the states and territories, the Australian Government has recently undertaken a cross sectoral project in Western Australia.</p> <p>Acknowledging the links between hearing and early literacy acquisition, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations provided funding of \$1.3 million to support the Kimberley Sound Amplification Project. This cross sectoral project provided sound amplification equipment in all classrooms in Kimberley schools in the Government, Catholic and independent sectors. The project is a response to evidence that on any one day in a Kimberley classroom, up to 65 percent of Aboriginal students can experience intermittent hearing loss.</p> <p>Under the Smarter Schools and Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnerships, funding provided has supported the Northern Territory Department of Education to install Sound Field Systems in targeted remote schools.</p> <p>In addition, it has enabled the provision of enhanced services and support for students with conductive hearing loss to 37 targeted remote schools.</p> <p>The Department of Health and Ageing, the Department of Human Services and Australian Hearing have a role to play in supporting the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations in the development of any standards and types of sound systems best suited to the needs of children particularly in Indigenous communities. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations will also work with the relevant education providers in the states and territories, so that together, governments and education providers can systematically and sustainably address the educational needs of hearing impaired Indigenous Australian children.</p>	<p>The More Support for Students with Disabilities initiative provides additional funding of \$200 million over the 2012 and 2013 school years to strengthen the capacity and expertise of Australian schools and teachers to support students with disability. The funding will be provided to government and non-government education authorities to choose from a menu of supports those that will have the greatest benefit for the students with disability in their jurisdiction. Under this initiative, education authorities are implementing assistive technologies such as sound field amplification systems and live captioning in classrooms, to support the teaching and participation of students with hearing loss.</p> <p>In 2011 DEEWR formed a Schools Disability Advisory Council. The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing wrote to the Minister for Schools, Education, Early Childhood and Youth, noting that the Council does not include a representative from the hearing impaired community and seeking a mechanism for the recognition of the needs of this group.</p> <p>DEEWR wrote to Education Authorities in December 2011 informing them of Recommendation 22 and that they may wish to consider the use of sound field amplification systems for hearing impaired students in the selection of activities.</p> <p><i>The Australian Government invested \$44.3 million over three years (2009-10 to 2011-12) under the Initiatives supporting Quality Teaching and Literacy and Numeracy. This funding has enabled the provision of enhanced services and support for students with conductive hearing loss in targeted remote schools. Services have included professional learning programs for classroom teachers, special education teachers and assistant teachers that focus on the provision of advice about improving classroom acoustics, and the provision of support in the development of action plans for individual and groups of students diagnosed with conductive hearing loss.</i></p> <p><i>Increased support for students with conductive hearing loss has enhanced the strategic coordination of services across the Northern Territory. School leaders and teachers are now more effectively supported through staff induction, training and ongoing assessment to ensure learning environments meet the needs of students with conductive hearing loss. Professional learning, including both formal training and peer forums, has been enhanced through the use of interactive online technologies. Complementing this, individual teachers have received in-class coaching where additional targeted support is required. Principals have been assisted in developing whole of school approaches to overcoming the challenges experienced by students with this condition – including changing the physical set up of classrooms through the inclusion of soft furnishings to reduce levels of ambient noise.</i></p> <p><i>On 2 April 2012, the Australian Government announced that it would invest a further \$583 million on education related measures over 10 years as part of the Australian Government's Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory package.</i></p>	<p>Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</p>

Recommendation	Government Response	Action Taken	Lead Portfolio
		<p>The Stronger Futures package is the Australian Government's program response to the Stronger Futures Consultation process which took place during 2011. The package is designed to address the significant challenges to Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory.</p> <p>The package provides for the continuation of the <i>Initiatives supporting Quality Teaching and the Literacy and Numeracy</i>. Under the Stronger Futures package the <i>Initiatives supporting Quality Teaching and the Literacy and Numeracy</i> has been renamed to the <i>Quality Teaching initiative</i>.</p> <p>The <i>Quality Teaching initiative</i> will continue to provide support and programs for teachers to enhance their capacity to teach in remote schools, and allow Northern Territory education providers to continue support for students with special learning needs, including students diagnosed with conductive hearing loss.</p>	

Recommendation	Government Response	Action Taken	Lead Portfolio
<p>23 Supply and maintenance of sound field amplification systems</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing work with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations to develop a program with Australian Hearing to:</p> <p>(a) supply and maintain sound field amplification systems and acoustic conditioning in all new classrooms where there is a significant population of Indigenous children; and</p> <p>(b) report publicly on where the sound field amplification systems and acoustic conditioning are installed to assist parents in making informed choices about schools for their children.</p>	<p>Refer Recommendation 22</p>	<p>Under the Smarter Schools and Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnerships, funding provided has supported the Northern Territory Department of Education to install Sound Field Systems in targeted remote schools.</p> <p>In addition, it has enabled the provision of enhanced services and support for students with conductive hearing loss to 37 targeted remote schools.</p> <p>In 2011 DEEWR formed a Schools Disability Advisory Council. The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing wrote to the Minister for Schools, Education, Early Childhood and Youth, noting that the Council does not include a representative from the hearing impaired community and seeking a mechanism for the recognition of the needs of this group.</p> <p>DEEWR wrote to Education Authorities in December 2011 informing them of Recommendation 23 and that they may wish to consider the use of sound field amplification systems for hearing impaired students in the selection of activities.</p> <p>Refer Recommendation 22</p>	<p>Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</p>
<p>24 Induction training for teachers on the effects of hearing health on education</p> <p>The Committee recommends that education providers ensure that teacher induction programs for teachers posted to schools in Indigenous communities emphasise the likelihood that hearing impairment among their students will be very high. Induction programs for these teachers must include training on the effects of hearing health on education, and effective, evidence-based teaching strategies to manage classrooms where a majority of children are hearing impaired.</p>	<p>This is a matter for consideration by state/territory governments.</p> <p>The Australian Government notes the importance of supporting teachers and special training needs for those teachers deployed to Indigenous communities. While the primary responsibility for teacher recruitment, including induction and professional development of teachers, is the responsibility of the states and territories and the relevant education providers, the Government supports working with jurisdictions to ensure the best outcomes for Indigenous students.</p>	<p>The More Support for Students with Disabilities initiative provides additional funding of \$200 million over the 2012 and 2013 school years to strengthen the capacity and expertise of Australian schools and teachers to support students with disability. The funding will be provided to government and non-government education authorities to choose from a menu of supports those that will have the greatest benefit for the students with disability in their jurisdiction. Under this initiative, education authorities are implementing professional development or pre-service training for teachers, including training in the area of hearing loss of students.</p> <p>In 2011 DEEWR formed a Schools Disability Advisory Council. The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing wrote to the Minister for Schools, Education, Early Childhood and Youth, noting that the Council does not include a representative from the hearing impaired community and seeking a mechanism for the recognition of the needs of this group.</p> <p>The Disability Standards for Education clarify the obligations of education and training providers and seek to ensure that students with disability can access and participate in education on the same basis as other students. The Standards were formulated under the <i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</i> and came into effect in August 2005.</p> <p>The Standards were recently reviewed with the Report on the Review published on 1 August 2012. One recommendation of the Review was to ensure that practice guides on the Standards take greater account of technological advances and reflect the current and emerging technologies being used in all education sectors, including hearing loops and other assistive technologies for students with hearing loss. The Government will be working with state and territory education authorities, and the non-government sector, to address this recommendation.</p>	<p>Education, Employment and Workplace Relations</p>

Recommendation	Government Response	Action Taken	Lead Portfolio
<p>25 Professional development programs for teachers and school leaders on the effect of hearing health on education</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations work with jurisdictions to develop accredited professional development programs for teachers and school leaders on the effects of hearing health on education, and effective evidence-based teaching strategies to manage classrooms with hearing impaired children.</p>	<p>The Australian Government accepts in principle this recommendation.</p> <p>The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations supports working in partnership with jurisdictions to ensure all teachers are equipped with evidence based teaching strategies and professional learning to support the needs of all students. Under the Smarter Schools - Improving Teacher Quality National Partnership, the Australian Government has committed \$550 million to support reforms to drive a high performing, quality education workforce.</p> <p>A key element of this Partnership involves the sharing of best practice, materials and resources between jurisdictions and establishing a framework to guide professional learning for principals, teachers and school leaders. In consultation with jurisdictions, the department supports developing accredited professional development on the effects of hearing health and education.</p> <p>As an example, under the Smarter Schools and Closing the Gap in the Northern Territory National Partnerships, the Northern Territory Department of Education and Training is providing enhanced services and support for students with conductive hearing loss. To date, 37 targeted remote schools have accessed services such as professional learning programs for classroom teachers, special education teachers and assistant teachers.</p> <p>The <i>More Support for Students with Disabilities</i> initiative operates in the 2012 and 2013 school years with the aim of providing immediate intensified, targeted assistance to teachers and schools to support students with disabilities, including the hearing impaired. This initiative will support building the knowledge and capacity of teachers of hearing impaired students. It will enable education authorities to assist schools and their staff to access tailored expert advice to learn skills and strategies to improve the education of students with disabilities.</p>	<p>The More Support for Students with Disabilities initiative aims to provide immediate intensified, targeted assistance to teachers and schools to support students with disabilities, including the hearing impaired. It will enable education authorities to assist schools and their staff to access tailored expert advice to learn skills and strategies to improve the education of students with disabilities.</p> <p>The More Support for Students with Disabilities initiative provides additional funding of \$200 million over the 2012 and 2013 school years to strengthen the capacity and expertise of Australian schools and teachers to support students with disability. The funding will be provided to government and non-government education authorities to choose from a menu of supports those that will have the greatest benefit for the students with disability in their jurisdiction. Under this initiative, education authorities are implementing professional development or pre-service training for teachers, including training in the area of hearing loss of students.</p>	Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
<p>26 Change Medicare to provide public funding to specialists working through telehealth</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing make the changes to Medicare necessary to enable specialists and practitioners to receive public funding support for ear health services provided remotely via ear telehealth.</p>	<p>The Australian Government accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>Under the <i>Connecting Health Services with the Future: Modernising Medicare by Providing Rebates for Online Consultations</i> telehealth initiative announced after the 2010-11 Budget, the Government has committed \$352.2 million to provide, from 1 July 2011, Medicare rebates for consultations conducted via video conferencing across a range of specialties. This is likely to be of particular benefit (though not limited) to patients of consultant physicians, surgeons (including ear, nose and throat specialists) and psychiatrists.</p> <p>Financial incentives will also be available to encourage uptake of online consultations, and funding will be available to train health professionals in online technologies. In addition, \$50 million will be provided for expansion of the GP After Hours Helpline to include online services, from 1 July 2012.</p>	<p>On 1 July 2011 the Government's 2010 election commitment <i>Connecting Health Services with the Future: Modernising Medicare by Providing Rebates for Online Consultations</i> was implemented through the introduction of Medicare benefits for video consultations (across the full range of medical specialties including ear, nose and throat specialists) for patients in rural, remote, outer metropolitan areas, and patients at Aboriginal Medical Services as well as residents of aged care facilities in all areas. This proposal has total funding of over \$620 million from 2010-11 – 2014-15.</p> <p>This initiative is aimed at improving access to specialist medical care in remote, regional and outer metropolitan areas, enabling patients to see a specialist without the often significant time and expense incurred in travelling for a face-to-face consultation. Any new or additional services funded through Medicare will need to be assessed by the Medical Services Advisory Committee to review the evidence in terms of safety, clinical and cost effectiveness.</p> <p>Patients are currently able to claim Medicare rebates for referred specialist consultations by video consultation and for the service provided by a health practitioner at the 'patient end' of the consultation (if clinically relevant). Patient-end practitioners could either be a GP or other medical practitioner, nurse practitioner, midwife, practice nurse or Aboriginal health worker.</p>	Health and Ageing

Recommendation	Government Response	Action Taken	Lead Portfolio
<p>27 DoHA to resource hearing assessments for all prisoners who haven't had one, to facilitate access to those assessments, to encourage participation and publish findings</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing work closely with state and territory jurisdictions to develop and implement a national plan which:</p> <p>(a) provides resources to conduct hearing assessments for all Australians serving custodial sentences who have never received such an assessment, including youths in juvenile detention; and</p> <p>(b) facilitates prisoner access to those hearing assessments; and</p> <p>(c) encourages a high level of participation in those hearing assessments; and</p> <p>(d) makes the findings of the hearing assessments available to the public (within privacy considerations).</p>	<p>The Australian Government accepts in principle this recommendation. States and territories have responsibility for both the management and operation of prisons and juvenile justice centres and screening for hearing impairment.</p> <p>The Australian Government will bring this recommendation to the attention of the state and territory governments.</p> <p>The Australian Government is committed to supporting the delivery of initiatives and services to hearing impaired Australians, including those in custodial settings. A person who already has a hearing problem diagnosed, and is already in receipt of Commonwealth funded hearing service at the time they become incarcerated, may continue to receive Commonwealth funded hearing services during the period of incarceration, provided that the prisoner initiates the provision of those services.</p> <p>Any medical attention leading to the diagnosis of a hearing problem, or provision of hearing services which is initiated by a custodial authority, or carried out on behalf of a custodial authority, must be funded by the relevant state or territory.</p>	<p>The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing wrote to the Attorney-General on 26 September 2011 about progress on this recommendation.</p> <p>AGD has now brought this recommendation to the attention of the State and Territory Governments.</p> <p>The Northern Territory Correctional Services (NTCS) representing the Australian Corrective Services Administrators Council has established links with the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) in order to progress this recommendation. NTCS has also bought this matter to the attention of the Australian Juvenile Justice Association.</p> <p>DoHA will continue to liaise with NTCS to receive updates.</p>	Attorney-General
<p>28 Audit of all prisoners to consider whether undiagnosed hearing impairment has caused any miscarriage of justice</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the relevant ombudsman in each state and territory conduct an audit of Australians serving custodial sentences, including youths in juvenile detention, and consider whether undiagnosed hearing impairment may have resulted in a miscarriage of justice and led to any unsafe convictions.</p>	<p>This is a matter for consideration by state/territory governments. States/territories have responsibility for the management and operation of prisons and juvenile justice centres. The Australian Government will bring this recommendation to the attention of state/territory governments.</p>	<p>The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing wrote to the Attorney-General on 26 September 2011 about progress on this recommendation.</p> <p>AGD has now brought this recommendation to the attention of the State and Territory Governments.</p> <p>The Northern Territory Correctional Services (NTCS) representing the Australian Corrective Services Administrators Council has established links with the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) in order to progress this recommendation. NTCS has also bought this matter to the attention of the Australian Juvenile Justice Association.</p> <p>DoHA will continue to liaise with NTCS to receive updates.</p>	Attorney-General
<p>29 DoHA to resource biennial conference on Indigenous ear health and publish outcomes of same</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing:</p> <p>(a) provide funding and resources to manage a national biennial Indigenous ear health conference; and</p> <p>(b) make the outcomes of those conferences publicly available to assist researchers and practitioners in the field of hearing health.</p>	<p>The Government accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>The Department of Health and Ageing will provide funding to support resources for a national Indigenous ear health conference. Preliminary discussions have been held with potential organisers with a view to holding the conference in the second half of 2011.</p>	<p>The Department of Health and Ageing funded the National Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (NACCHO) to hold an Indigenous ear health conference from 2-4 May 2012 jointly with the Australian Otitis Media (OMOZ) Workshop in Fremantle. This was a successful three day conference that included basic science, translational research, policy and advocacy. A summary of the outcomes will be published in the Medical Journal of Australia.</p>	Health and Ageing

Recommendation	Government Response	Action Taken	Lead Portfolio
<p>30 DoHA to fund and support Ear Health Infonet</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the Department of Health and Ageing work with state and territory health agencies to provide funding to support the continuation, promotion and expansion of the Ear Health Infonet.</p>	<p>The Australian Government accepts this recommendation.</p> <p>The Australian Indigenous HealthInfoNet has been funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Health and Ageing since it was established in 1997.</p> <p>\$491,266 (GST inclusive) is being provided to Edith Cowan University for the expansion of EarInfoNet over three years from 2010-2011 to 2012-2013.</p>	<p>Recent enhancements to the EarInfoNet website include:</p> <p>Information summaries about relevant ear health and hearing and communication programs and projects;</p> <p>Listing of events, promotional activities and course opportunities; and</p> <p>The development of a FAQ section on the website.</p>	Health and Ageing
<p>31 Guidelines for police interrogation of Indigenous Australians be amended to include hearing assessment of anyone having hearing difficulties</p> <p>The Committee recommends that guidelines for police interrogation of Indigenous Australians in each state and territory be amended to include a requirement that a hearing assessment be conducted on any Indigenous person who is having communication difficulties, irrespective of whether police officers consider that the communication difficulties are arising from language and cross-cultural issues.</p>	<p>This is a matter for consideration by state/territory governments.</p> <p>In endorsing the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework, all Australian Governments have committed to the goal of improving all justice systems so that they comprehensively deliver on the justice needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in a fair and equitable manner. Guidelines for police interrogation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are matters for each jurisdiction. The Australian Government will bring this recommendation to the attention of the state and territory governments.</p>	<p>The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing wrote to the Attorney-General on 26 September 2011 about progress on this recommendation.</p> <p>AGD has now brought this recommendation to the attention of the State and Territory Governments.</p>	Attorney-General
<p>32 Development of programs for the judiciary, lawyers etc on effects of hearing impairment</p> <p>The Committee recommends that the National Judicial College of Australia work with state and territory jurisdictions to develop and deliver accredited professional development programs for judges, lawyers, correctional officers, and court officials on the effects of hearing impairment on Indigenous engagement with the criminal justice system, and effective evidence-based techniques for engaging effectively with people with a hearing impairment in courtroom environments.</p>	<p>The Government notes this recommendation.</p> <p>The National Judicial College of Australia (NJCA) is one of a number of bodies which provide programs and professional development resources to judicial officers in Australia. Other judicial education bodies include the Australian Institute of Judicial Administration, the Judicial Commission of NSW and the Judicial College of Victoria. The issue of hearing impairment has been dealt with in past sessions on disability awareness conducted by the NJCA and other judicial education bodies.</p> <p>The Attorney-General's Department has referred the recommendation to the NJCA for consideration of how hearing impairment issues can be raised in other NJCA programs.</p> <p>The provision of professional development programs for lawyers is a matter for state and territory Law Society and Bar Associations. The Attorney-General's Department will ensure that this recommendation is brought to their attention. The Attorney-General's Department has referred the recommendation to the Australian Federal Police (AFP) in relation to professional development programs for AFP officers.</p> <p>All Australian governments endorsed the National Indigenous Law and Justice Framework in November 2009. The Framework, developed by the Standing Committee of Attorneys-General, provides a comprehensive approach to preventing and reducing contact by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the criminal justice system and outlines a number of strategies and actions that jurisdictions could consider to address specific issues. The provision of culturally competent training for people in all areas of the justice system is a key strategy.</p>	<p>The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing wrote to the Attorney-General on 26 September 2011 about progress on this recommendation.</p> <p>This recommendation has now been actioned:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AGD has referred the relevant part of this recommendation to the NJCA for consideration. 2. AGD has now brought the recommendation to the attention of the State and Territory Law Societies and Bar Associations. 3. AGD has referred the relevant part of this recommendation to the AFP. <p>The Northern Territory Correctional Services (NTCS) representing the Australian Corrective Services Administrators Council has established links with the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) in order to progress this recommendation. NTCS has also brought this matter to the attention of the Australian Juvenile Justice Association.</p> <p>DoHA will continue to liaise with NTCS to monitor progress.</p>	Attorney-General

Recommendation	Government Response	Action Taken	Lead Portfolio
<p>33 Hearing loops to be made available in interview rooms and public counters at police stations</p> <p>The Committee recommends that hearing loops are available in interview rooms and public counters of all police stations, and in all courtrooms, and that loop receiver devices be made available for people without hearing aids.</p>	<p>The Government notes this recommendation, which is also a matter for consideration by state and territory governments.</p> <p>In responding to the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal and Constitutional Affairs Report, Access All Areas, the Government agreed to consider the development of disability standards in relation to building fit out. This consideration may include the provision of hearing augmentation systems in some public buildings, including police stations.</p> <p>The Australian Federal Police (AFP) currently uses accredited sign language translators to assist in taking witness statements from victims and conducting records of interview with suspects where these individuals have hearing difficulties. This is covered by AFP guidance materials and is done to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.</p> <p>The use of hearing loops in a police station could be problematic. For example, if an officer was conducting a taped record of interview with a person in an interview room, it is possible that the conversation could be radiated outside the interview room and picked up by someone else, creating a breach of privacy.</p> <p>ACT Policing, a business unit of the AFP, currently has a 'deaf' phone in operation in the Police Operations room. This phone translates recorded messages into typed messages that are printed on a device attached to the phone (a teleprinter).</p> <p>Arrangements for other police stations are the responsibility of the states and territories. The Australian Government will bring this recommendation to the attention of the state and territory governments.</p>	<p>The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing wrote to the Attorney-General on 26 September 2011 about progress on this recommendation.</p> <p>AGD has now brought this recommendation to the attention of the State and Territory Governments.</p>	Attorney-General
<p>34 Correctional facilities to review environments and practices with a view to improving services to those with hearing impairments.</p> <p>The Committee recommends that correctional facilities in which greater than 10 percent of the population is Indigenous review their facilities and practices, and improve them so that the needs of hearing impaired prisoners are met.</p>	<p>This is a matter for consideration by state/territory governments. States and territories have responsibility for the management and operation of prisons and juvenile justice centres. The Australian Government will bring this recommendation to the attention of the state and territory governments.</p> <p>The states and territories deliver corrective services in accordance with the Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia, which comprise a uniform set of principles that are used by the jurisdictions in developing their own relevant legislative, policy and performance standards on correctional practice.</p> <p>The Guidelines prescribe that prisoners should be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - managed fairly and openly without discrimination on any grounds, including physical or mental impairment - inducted into the prison by undergoing a formal reception process that provides key information on the prison regime, in a linguistic and culturally relevant form, using interpreters where necessary - screened upon admission to enable the prison management to make an initial health and psychological assessment in order to identify and provide appropriate intervention for any medical or welfare concerns. <p>The Guidelines provide that, when being classified or placed, prison staff should consider prisoners' individual needs in regard to health and or disability. Prisoners should be appropriately managed according to their individual needs in regard to health, any intellectual disability, cultural or linguistic issues.</p>	<p>The Minister for Mental Health and Ageing wrote to the Attorney-General on 26 September 2011 about progress on this recommendation.</p> <p>AGD has now brought this recommendation to the attention of the State and Territory Governments.</p> <p>The Northern Territory Correctional Services (NTCS) representing the Australian Corrective Services Administrators Council has established links with the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA) in order to progress this recommendation. NTCS has also brought this matter to the attention of the Australian Juvenile Justice Association.</p> <p>DoHA will continue to liaise with NTCS to receive progress updates.</p>	Attorney-General

Recommendation	Government Response	Action Taken	Lead Portfolio
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