

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO
2016 – 2017 Supplementary Budget Estimates Hearings

Outcome: National Disability Insurance Agency

Question No: NDIA SQ16-000039

Topic: Hearing Services

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert, asked:

Is Office of Hearing Services (OHS) or National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) considering introducing a minimum level for any of its client groups under its plans for the program after these current rounds of consultations have been conducted?

- a) If so, at what levels of impairment is OHS considering introducing - if no specific number has been determined, what is the range of impairment under discussion?
- b) What, if any, restrictions or similar barriers will be introduced with regards to children accessing NDIA/OHS financial support for hearing services such as their current access to Australian Hearing Services?

Answer:

Access to individualised funding for support under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is defined by the NDIS Act. From time to time guidance material is issued to assist the National Disability Insurance Agency (the Agency) in understanding specific disabilities or conditions and the level of functional impact. The Agency is considering the development of guidance material related to hearing loss and the level of loss that would be likely to result in a substantial functional impact. Any advice developed would be evidence informed and tested by consultation with experts in the relevant field.

The Hearing Services Program has a minimum hearing level threshold for fittings (of hearing devices) under the voucher component of the program.

- a) There are no plans for introducing a hearing loss threshold for eligibility to any component of the Hearing Services Program.
- b) Access to the NDIS is defined by the NDIS Act. No other restrictions or similar barriers will be introduced with regards to children accessing NDIS financial support for hearing services. The NDIS will provide funded supports tailored to meet the individual needs of a child unless it is identified that the supports needed are more appropriately provided by, or the responsibility of, other service systems.