

Re: Inquiry into Hearing Health in Australia

To: Committee Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs,

I would like to make a submission in regards to the Inquiry into Hearing Health in Australia.

I am a young Australian professional working with the federal government and have lived with a moderate-severe hearing loss in my right ear and profound hearing loss in my left ear since a very young age.

Looking back growing up with a hearing disability was difficult as I did miss out on a lot of things: only half grasping the context of conversations, missing out on parts of schooling education, not being able to understand TV and often being disadvantaged in social situations.

I was grateful to be seen as a client with Australian Hearing up to the age of 21

Since I am no longer eligible for Australian Hearing services I have felt frustrated with the way hearing health in general is dealt with in Australia. For example:

- The quality of audiologist outside Australian Hearing do not quite measure up to the services I have been use to growing up
- After schooling years, just shy of 21, staying on unemployed benefits seemed more affordable to obtain hearing services
- Top private health insurance which covers part cost of hearing aids is unaffordable and no hearing services are covered by Medicare
- I have put off cochlear implants as the cost for this surgery is about the same price as a house deposit. Ongoing costs for batteries and repairs of the cochlear are also extremely expensive

I feel that there seems to be little government support for the area of Hearing Health. Most support groups for hearing impaired individuals are charitable based, and often I hear of funding cuts.

I would like to see improvements in the Hearing Health area. Such things might include:

- 24 hour TV captioning services
- Open captions for all movie theatres
- Captioning for educational video media in schools
- Hearing impaired school children being taught basics of AUSLAN (signed English)
- More funding for hearing support groups
- Possibility of hearing services subsidised, Medicare or tax rebatable

Regards

Jenny Lee