

To whom it may concern,

I am a 27 year old with a profound hearing loss in both ears, wearing hearing aids. Since turning 26 I am unable to get new earmoulds which are in need of replacement. And eventually will require new hearing aids too, a couple of thousand dollars I don't have. Comparing myself with a hearing person of my age, they will never need to fork out all this money just to be able to hear. It feels as though we're punished for something out of our control...I certainly never asked to be hearing impaired. I live in fear of the day my hearing aids die and I can't get them replaced, as I love sounds and being part of the hearing world. I do know Auslan (Australian Sign Language), but prefer to be bi-lingual and still speak and listen. It would be good if Australian Hearing continued past 21 years of age for those not on Disability Support Pension.

It is hard to find jobs too when have a hearing impairment...I can't work in anything that requires the use of a phone, or face to face customer interaction, and I'm even prevented from studying to broaden my career aspects, due to the lack of interpreters available, so I miss out greatly on getting anywhere in life. I have dropped out of 3 TAFE courses over the years due to not being able to get enough interpreters. As a result, I have no way of funding earmoulds or hearing aids when the need arises.

I also was told by Centrelink that I'm not eligible for Disability Support Pension, due to speaking too well...even though my hearing loss does impact me in jobsearching, as not as many opportunities out there for hearing impaired/deaf people compared to the wider hearing community.

Thankyou for your time, and feel free to contact me to clarify anything or get further information.

Yours sincerely,

Hilda Sutcliffe