

Dear Sir/Madam,

As the mother of a deaf child, one of the most difficult things about hearing loss is the cost, and lack of support for children after they turn 21 from Australian Hearing.

As a mother, I would like to see the following changes made to the way hearing health is dealt with in Australia:

1. Hearing health should be moved out from under the Federal government Ageing portfolio, and placed under the Federal Government Health portfolio, alongside eye health. It currently does not receive the attention it deserves under the Ageing portfolio.

2. Subsidised government services should be offered via Australian Hearing to people between the ages of 21 and 65 if they are on a low income, unemployed, full time students, or part time students. In Australia there is currently no help for these people in affording hearing aids, implants and other hearing health services.

3. Insurance companies should cover hearing aids and cochlear implants if they are lost or broken. Currently most insurers will cover silly things like iPods, but not a cochlear implant processor, which is \$8,000 to replace, and vital for many to be able to hear. It also only provides a ridiculous rebate of \$400 for a \$4000 hearing aid and they can only be replaced every five years from memory.

4. Former child clients of Australian Hearing who are not unemployed, students, or on low incomes should not be suddenly cut off from services of Australian Hearing. They should be able to pay for services to stay on at Australian Hearing with their audiologist with whom they usually establish a very supportive relationship. This is often critical to their mental health and well being eg my daughter was struggling to complete a communications degree at UTS and turned 21 during her degree and all of a sudden there was no support. Very traumatic.

5. All hearing aids, cochlear implants and other hearing health aides should be able to be claimed as a tax deduction once someone starts work. Currently you can't claim expensive hearing aids as a tax deduction.

Thanks for accepting my submission.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Locke