

## **Audiology Australia welcomes the Parliamentary Report into Hearing Health and Wellbeing in Australia**

**15<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

Audiologists are tertiary educated health professionals. Audiologists work with clients of all ages to help them to preserve, manage and improve their hearing, their ability to process and understand sounds, and their balance. Audiology Australia is the peak professional body for audiologists with over 2,500 members, which is estimated to be almost all of the clinical audiologists currently practicing in Australia. Audiology Australia provides the highest standard of self-regulation for its members and strives to meet the National Alliance of Self-Regulating Health Professions Standards.

Audiology Australia welcomes Wednesday's release of the report from the Commonwealth Parliamentary Standing Committee (the Committee) on Health Aged Care and Sport from its 'Inquiry into Hearing Health and Wellbeing in Australia'.

In line with Audiology Australia's recommendations in its **December 2016 submission** to the Committee, Audiology Australia is particularly pleased to see the Committee has recommended that:

- hearing health be made a National Health Priority Area.
- the Office of Hearing Services should review the provision of hearing services to residents in aged care facilities, including the use of assistive listening devices for aged care residents; service provision for deafblind Australians in aged care facilities; and the education of aged care facility staff.
- the Australian Government add hearing health services delivered via the internet to the Medicare Benefits Schedule, including audiology services.

Moreover, Audiology Australia welcomes the recommendation that the Australian Government pursue the registration of the audiology profession under the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency framework with the Council of Australian Governments. In the interim, Audiology Australia will continue to promote high professional standards for audiologists under a self-regulating model.

Audiology Australia also supports the Committee's recommendations that:

- the Australian Government's Hearing Services Program prohibit the use of commissions or any other similar sales practices likely to undermine the ability of audiologists to provide independent and impartial clinical advice.
- Australian Hearing cease the use of commissions and similar sales practices as soon as is feasible.
- the Department of Health amends contracts with service providers operating under the Hearing Services Program Voucher Scheme to prohibit the use of commissions and similar sales practices as soon as is feasible.

- if necessary, changes be made to the Hearing Services Administrative Act 1997 (Cwlth), and any other relevant legislation or regulation, to enable the prohibition of commissions and similar sales practices as described above.

The Committee's recommendations are consistent with Audiology Australia's position statement on remuneration and incentives and Code of Conduct, which state that Audiology Australia members must make recommendations to clients based on clinical assessment and the client's needs, not on the basis of financial gain on the part of the member.

More detailed information of the recommendations in Audiology Australia's submission to the Hearing Health and Wellbeing in Australia Inquiry and the Committee's recommendations is **[available here](#)**.