

## Audiology Australia supports the ACCC's Report

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 (NASRHP) Standards. Central to this self-regulation is the clinical certification program which includes:

- completion of an Audiology Australia Accredited Australian Masters-level degree and the intensive one-year Audiology Australia internship;
- meeting the rigorous Recency of Practice and Continuing Professional Development Requirements, and;
- adhering to the [Code of Conduct](#) that all members of Audiology Australia must abide by. Our Code of Conduct is in line with the [National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers](#) and must be displayed, or a copy made available, at all premises where they deliver services.

Clinical certification by Audiology Australia is a requirement to provide government-funded audiological services. Additionally, private healthcare funds also require that the audiologist is a member of Audiology Australia for hearing service fees to be reimbursed.

In accordance with our Code of Conduct, 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. In addition, Audiology Australia members must not engage in any form of misinformation or misrepresentation in relation to the hearing services or devices they provide.

"Audiology Australia takes the ACCC's claims that employment conditions may be encouraging clinicians at hearing aid clinics to supply hearing aids that are unnecessary or more expensive than a consumer needs very seriously. We encourage any member of the public who has concerns regarding the clinical services provided by an audiologist to contact Audiology Australia.", Audiology Australia CEO Dr Tony Coles said.

"If the clinician is a member of Audiology Australia, anybody with concerns regarding the clinician's conduct can lodge a formal complaint regarding a potential breach of our Code of Conduct. If the clinician is not a member of Audiology Australia, we can help them to find another organisation or body that can help them."

Audiology Australia is responsible for ensuring the standard of clinical services its individual members provide. Audiology Australia is not responsible for the regulation of businesses. Based on our membership statistics, over 90 % of our members are employed by an organisation which they do not own. The majority of Audiology Australia members' remuneration models are therefore largely out of their own personal control.

"Audiology Australia welcomes the Australian Competition and Consumer Commissioner's statement that 'Hearing clinics should be conscious of the incentives they offer and consider remuneration structures that reward service and quality advice ahead of sales.'", Dr Coles said.

Audiology Australia has been included in consultations between peak industry groups, the Australia Government's Office of Hearing Services and the Australian Commission on Safety and

Quality in Health Care regarding the implementation of a Service Delivery Framework which would include standards hearing aid clinics must adhere to. If implemented, Audiology Australia believes the Service Delivery Framework will provide further assurances to the public regarding the safety and quality of services provided by hearing aid clinics.

Audiology Australia urges any person who has concerns about their hearing to seek audiological services from one of our clinically certified members. Those who have questions or concerns about ethical behaviour or professional conduct of any member of Audiology Australia are encouraged to contact the Ethics Committee at [ethics@audiology.asn.au](mailto:ethics@audiology.asn.au).

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