

## New structures required for hearing aid industry in putting consumers' needs first

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Audiology Australia, in responding to today's segment on ABC Radio's [AM program](#) around the need for more stringent regulation of the hearing aid industry, has called for commissions linked to the sale of hearing aids to end.

Chief Executive Officer of Audiology Australia, Dr Tony Coles, outlined the importance of prioritising consumer outcomes when determining remuneration structures for audiologists.

"We welcome the focus on the industry and would like to see commissions linked to the sale of hearing aids desist. We supported the ACCC's 2017 recommendation that the industry needs to prioritise remuneration structures that reward service and quality advice ahead of sales.

"Audiology Australia has taken steps to ensure our position in placing the emphasis on consumer need is reflected in our own Code of Conduct.

"Under the Code of Conduct, Audiologists must provide hearing services in a safe and ethical manner, holding consumers' welfare and needs paramount. Moreover, Audiologists must promote consumers' ability to make informed choices, and make recommendations to consumers based on a clinical assessment of their hearing health care needs and not on the basis of financial gain.

"While many within the industry have followed the ACCC's recommendations and shifted away from sales-based commissions, it is clear that the practice still does exist and that it has the potential to lead to perverse incentives, and this needs to be addressed."

In emphasising the importance of high standards for quality care, Audiology Australia, through its own Code, has set clear guidelines for its members to ensure recommendations to clients are based on clinical assessment and client need.

"Audiologists have an important role in supporting some of the most vulnerable in our community. Our members are health professionals committed to providing person-centred care."

"Audiology Australia would like to see consumers more empowered in the decision-making process and in determining their health outcomes", said Dr Jessica Vitkovic, President of Audiology Australia.

The ACCC and Choice provide information for consumers in relation to the purchase of hearing aids, and Audiology Australia has resources for consumers available on its website, including a register of Audiology Australia's Accredited Audiologists.

Consumers who wish to make a complaint about a hearing health product or service they have received are encouraged to contact the ACCC, or their Health Complaints Commissioner in their local jurisdiction.

Audiology Australia and the Australian College of Audiology have also established a joint complaints procedure overseen by an independent Ethics Review Committee to address consumer complaints. Details for lodging a complaint are available on Audiology Australia's website.

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