



13 December 2018

Hon Natasha Fyles
Minister for Health
GPO Box 3146
Darwin NT 0801

Email: minister.fyles@nt.gov.au

Dear Minister

Re: Hearing Health Information Management System

Audiology Australia is the member association for the profession of audiology. We represent 2700+ audiologists working across Australia, including in the Northern Territory (NT).

We are writing to you regarding the recent NT Government announcement that the Hearing Health Information Management System (HHIMS) has been discontinued.

In development since 2010, the HHIMS aimed to enable real time data collection and coordinating functions for hearing health care services and to assist with case management and continuity of care for children and young people accessing these services. Through the iHearing portal, the HHIMS was also intended to integrate a child's hearing health record with advice to the school on appropriate actions that can be taken to support the best educational outcomes.

Audiology Australia notes your statements in the NT Parliament on 24 October and 27 November 2018 about the reasons for HHIMS's discontinuation, including that the stand alone HHIMS was not designed to deliver any services until 2020 and it was not compatible with the new NT wide Core Clinical Systems Renewal Program (CCSRP). We also understand the decision to cease HHIMS was made after an independent review by the Department of Health's strategic information management steering committee earlier this year due to HHIMS's ongoing delays and increasing costs.

We are pleased to see that hearing is an identified priority for the NT Government with a focus on prevention and that you have spoken with the Department of Health about ensuring some of the systems from HHIMS can be similar on the CCSR.

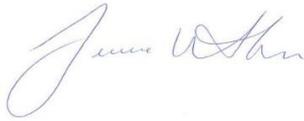
However, Audiological Australia and its members are concerned that HHIMS's discontinuation will have detrimental impacts on hearing health care providers, patients and education staff in an environment where hearing loss among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and especially children and young people is at recognised crisis proportions.

Therefore, we seek assurances from you that HHIMS's offered benefits and features will not be lost or made a secondary priority and that ear and hearing health information needs will be adequately resourced in any new system. We also note your statement in Parliament that the Government "will ensure there is an interface with the Department of Education, to

provide our teachers and health staff with accurate information on the hearing issues of young people, so they can get the right resources” and request further information as to how and when this will occur.

I look forward to your advice and update on this very important issue. I can be contacted via the Audiology Australia office on (03) 9940 3900 or email at: jessica.vitkovic@audiology.asn.au.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Jessica Vitkovic', written in black ink.

Dr Jessica Vitkovic
President