



19 June 2017

**Committee Secretariat**  
**Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport**  
PO Box 6021  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Via [Health.Reps@aph.gov.au](mailto:Health.Reps@aph.gov.au)

Dear Sir/Madam,

**Question raised at public hearing 16 June 2017, Canberra**

**AUSTRALIAN HEARING - COMMUNITY SERVICE OBLIGATION PROGRAM**

We wish to supplement information provided in response to a question asked of a representative of Australian Hearing.

A committee member had asked why Australian Hearing should remain in Government ownership. In reference to a question about the commercial aspect of the business an Australian Hearing representative said that it was "historical".

The principal reason is that Australian Hearing relies on the commercial part of the business to provide the infrastructure needed to deliver the Community Service Obligation Program (CSO). The CSO Program is too small and costly to stand alone. If the Government can find another way to ensure the CSO Program groups can continue to receive the current standard of service; and that people in rural and remote areas can continue to receive access to services, then it would be hard to justify a need to retain Australian Hearing in government ownership.

However, there is no evidence that the private sector is interested or able to deliver the CSO Program, so the current arrangements must remain in place. The introduction of contestability under the National Disability Insurance Scheme might change the situation, but not necessarily for the better.

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Williamson  
Chief Executive