

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH AND AGEING PORTFOLIO

Additional Estimates 2011-2012, 15 February 2012

Question: E12-133

OUTCOME 7: Hearing Services

Topic: AUSTRALIAN HEARING CENTRES - REHABILITATION PLUS  
EVALUATION

Written Question on Notice

Senator Boyce asked:

What other studies or research has the Government conducted to collect information on hearing aid use and what has been the result of such research?

Answer:

The Department periodically conducts voucher client satisfaction surveys.

The June 2006 survey found that 56 per cent of voucher clients used their hearing devices for more than five hours per day\*.

The July 2008 survey found that 60.4 per cent of fitted voucher clients used their hearing devices for more than five hours per day.

The preliminary results of the June 2010 survey (designed to measure the effectiveness and client benefit of Rehabilitation Plus) indicate that approximately 63 per cent of fitted voucher clients used their devices for more than five hours a day.

The results of the 2006, 2008 and 2010 surveys are not directly comparable due to different methodologies.

In 2005, the Office of Hearing Services commissioned a separate study that was carried out by the National Acoustics Laboratory, aimed at determining the minimum hearing threshold at which hearing aids provide significant benefits. It surveyed 400 clients. In this study, 21 per cent of the sample reported no use of hearing aids, and a further 10 per cent reported that they used their hearing aids less than one hour per day. Across the complete sample, the amount of benefit obtained was strongly related to the level of hearing difficulty the participants reported when they were not using hearing aids. The 2005 study was commissioned for a different purpose to the voucher client satisfaction surveys and its results are not directly comparable to the three surveys mentioned above.

\*Note: This measure is a quantitative key performance indicator for the hearing services outcome in the 2006-07, 2008-09 and 2010-11 Portfolio Budget Statements.