

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000572

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: Hearing Services

Type of Question: Hansard Page 82, 29 May 2017

Senator: Siewert, Rachel

Question:

Senator SIEWERT: Over the years we have had a discussion about people getting their aids and not using them. I had a discussion with some people just the other day—

Mr Stuart: Could you please talk to my mum about that!

Senator SIEWERT: Yes, okay! Over the years, you have been doing quite a bit of work in that space. Have you seen some improvements in people actually using the aids when they get them so that the aids do not sit in a drawer?

Ms Garrett: Yes. The National Acoustics Laboratories has undertaken some studies. I do not have the figures here, but there has been an improvement in the number. I would be happy to provide that on notice.

Senator SIEWERT: If you could provide that on notice, and if there are some key things that have happened that have been the most effective in terms of getting people to use their aids, that would be great. Thank you.

Answer:

Based on surveys conducted by the National Acoustics Laboratories (NAL) of the Hearing Services Program (the program) clients conducted in 2005 and 2010, the non-use rate for hearing aids dropped from 21 per cent to 10 per cent (unpublished data).

NAL concluded that there may be various reasons for the reduction including improved methods for controlling feedback (whistling) in hearing aids, devices that are able to be fitted in a more comfortable and less visible manner and the introduction of a minimum hearing loss threshold for the program.