

Senate Community Affairs Committee

ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

HEALTH PORTFOLIO

Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018, 29 & 30 May 2017

Ref No: SQ17-000944

OUTCOME: 4 - Individual Health Benefits

Topic: Hearing Aids

Type of Question: Written Question on Notice

Senator: Griff, Stirling

Question:

- a) Does the Department provide any information resources for the general public requiring hearing aids - aside from information about the Hearing Services subsidised program for concession-card holders and pensioners - to assist them with decision-making on devices?
- b) If not, why not?
- c) Will the Department consider developing resources to help people who are not eligible for the government's subsidy program (ie, general consumers) navigate the purchase of a hearing aid and making them aware of commissions?

Answer:

The Australian Government Hearing Services Program's (the program's) website offers a range of information directed towards both the general public and clients of the program. Under the Client Information and About Hearing sections on the website there are a range of factsheets that provide information about hearing¹, how to make informed decisions², hearing devices³ and what to expect from hearing devices⁴.

The program's website also includes information for those who are not eligible for the program and where they can get help⁵. In addition, there is a number of other useful links to organisations and/or websites that can provide more information, specific details on certain topics, or support and advice⁶.

The consumer guidance factsheet, found on the program's website⁷, provides information about the appointment process, hearing devices, sales targets and commissions. The factsheet also provides a link to the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) website where the report on *Issues around the sale of hearing devices* can be found.

1 www.hearingservices.gov.au/wps/portal/hso/site/eligibility/abouthearing/

2 www.hearingservices.gov.au/wps/portal/hso/site/eligibility/clientinfo/consumer_guidance_factsheet/

3 www.hearingservices.gov.au/wps/portal/hso/site/eligibility/clientinfo/hearing_devices_available_through_the_program/

4 www.hearingservices.gov.au/wps/portal/hso/site/eligibility/abouthearing/expectations_hearing_device/

5 www.hearingservices.gov.au/wps/portal/hso/site/eligibility/programhelp/eligibility/noteligible/

6 www.hearingservices.gov.au/wps/portal/hso/site/about/usefulinfo/useful_links_site/useful_links_lp/

7 www.hearingservices.gov.au/wps/portal/hso/site/eligibility/clientinfo/consumer_guidance_factsheet/