



Veteran Specific Information – Hearing Services

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1. Australian Government Hearing Services Program

The Australian Government Hearing Services Program (the program) provides eligible people with access to hearing services, including hearing assessments, management, advice and support, and the fitting of a hearing device where needed. The program is managed by the Department of Health (the Department).

Are veterans eligible?

You are eligible for the program if you are an Australian citizen or permanent resident 21 years or older and a Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) client if you are

- the holder of a DVA Gold Card issued for all conditions
- the holder of a DVA White Card issued for specific conditions that include hearing loss
- the holder of a DVA Pensioner Concession Card or
- dependent or spouse of one of the above categories

Key points of the program

- If you need a hearing device you will be offered a fully subsidised hearing device to assist you with your hearing loss.
- Participating in a maintenance agreement can be a cost effective way to take care of your hearing device. (For further information refer to Maintenance and batteries below).
- If you hold a Gold or White (hearing specific) DVA card and have chosen a fully subsidised hearing device, you do not have to pay the annual maintenance agreement fee.
- You can also choose to purchase a partially subsidised hearing device. These partially subsidised hearing devices have additional non-essential features. For further information refer to Partially subsidised hearing devices below.
- Partially subsidised hearing devices, due to their additional features, are only partially subsidised by the program and if you choose a partially subsidised hearing device, you will be required to pay the additional cost.
- Neither DVA nor the program will reimburse you the additional cost in purchasing a partially subsidised hearing device or the extra cost of your maintenance agreement for such a device.
- Discuss trial period options with your hearing services provider when purchasing a partially subsidised hearing device.
- You are under no obligation to purchase a partially subsidised hearing device.
- If you are experiencing difficulties with your hearing device, please discuss your concerns with your hearing services provider.

- Specialist hearing services are available under the program for people who need additional assistance to manage their hearing loss and communication. Your hearing services provider will discuss this with you if this applies to you.

Hearing services provided through the program include

- your choice of hearing services provider
- a comprehensive hearing assessment
- ongoing advice and support
- if needed, the fitting of a hearing device and
- a contribution to maintenance and repairs

How do I access hearing services?

If you meet the eligibility criteria you can apply by selecting [Apply Now](#) at www.hearingservices.gov.au.

If you would prefer not to apply online you can

- visit your chosen hearing services provider who can apply online on your behalf, or
- complete the [Client Application Form](#) available on the Client Forms and Publications Page on the website. (Paper applications can take up to four weeks to process)

How do I find a hearing services provider?

To find a hearing services provider in your area

1. visit www.hearingservices.gov.au
2. select [Find a Hearing Services Provider](#)
3. search for a provider at a location of your choice

Services are provided by over 270 hearing services providers at over 3,000 sites across Australia.

What if I need a hearing device?

Before you visit a hearing service provider, it is important to read our [Consumer Guidance Factsheet](#). This factsheet aims to help you make an informed decision about your hearing.

If your hearing services provider identifies you would benefit from a hearing device, you will be offered a fully subsidised hearing device, as well as any support required for you to operate the hearing device. There is a range of high quality digital devices including both in-the-ear and behind-the-ear hearing devices, and assistive listening devices (ALDs). Eligible DVA clients may be fitted with a hearing aid and an ALD if both are required. ALDs for DVA clients are provided through the DVA Rehabilitation Appliances Program and your hearing provider can assist with this.

You may be presented with different hearing device options including the option to purchase a partially subsidised hearing device. Partially subsidised hearing devices will incur a cost to you. You are under no obligation to take the partially subsidised option.

Partially subsidised hearing devices

The program allows for partially subsidised hearing devices that have additional features that are considered extra to those necessary to manage your hearing loss. Your hearing services provider may offer you the option of purchasing a partially subsidised hearing device and this is a matter of negotiation between you and your hearing services provider.

This additional cost could be substantial and will vary depending on the hearing device you have chosen. Neither DVA nor the program will reimburse you the additional cost of this partially subsidised hearing device.

If you choose a partially subsidised hearing device you will be responsible for any additional costs for its ongoing maintenance and battery supply. You should discuss any additional costs with your hearing services provider.

You are under no obligation to your hearing services provider to take the partially subsidised option. The range of fully subsidised devices can be accessed through the program and should meet your needs in the majority of cases. If your provider believes that fully subsidised options are not suitable to meet your clinical hearing needs, they can contact DVA by emailing Health.Approval@dva.gov.au to discuss your circumstances.

If you have been fitted with a hearing device through the program and also require an Assistive Listening Devices (ALD), you will need to seek approval from DVA directly as the program will only fund a hearing device or ALD, not both.

If you choose a partially subsidised hearing device you may wish to obtain quotes from different hearing services providers.

Exceptional circumstances – DVA funding outside of the program

If your hearing provider believes your hearing needs are exceptional and cannot be met by devices under the program and/or assistive listening devices, they may submit a request to DVA. DVA will review the request and if required, work with your hearing provider to explore the available options. DVA only funds hearing aids outside of the Hearing Services Program in exceptional circumstances. Requests for Prior Approval can be sent to DVA by emailing Health.Approval@dva.gov.au. Your provider **must** have written DVA approval before issuing the devices to you.

Trial period

You may be offered a trial period for partially subsidised hearing devices only. This ranges from two weeks to two months and should be discussed with your hearing services provider. If at the end of the trial period you choose not to proceed with the purchase of the partially subsidised hearing device there may be a small service fee charged.

If you are unhappy with the performance or fitting of your hearing device please notify your hearing services provider immediately.

Maintenance and batteries

Maintaining your hearing device and buying batteries can be costly. Maintenance agreements are an optional agreement between you and your hearing services provider where, for a small annual fee, your hearing services provider will supply batteries, service and repair your hearing device for 12 months.

If you hold a Gold or White (hearing specific) DVA card and have chosen a fully subsidised hearing device, you do not have to pay the annual maintenance agreement fee. These charges are fully subsidised by DVA. To confirm your decision to take out or extend your annual maintenance

agreement your hearing services provider will require you to sign an invoice to enable payment by DVA.

Please note DVA does not pay the annual maintenance fee for hearing devices provided to

- DVA Pensioner Concession Card holders
- spouses (any card)
- dependents (any card)

For further information about hearing services please

- visit www.hearingservices.gov.au
- email hearing@health.gov.au
- call **1800 500 726** or National Relay Service (NRS) **1800 555 660**

2. Assistive Listening Device (ALD)

Eligible DVA clients can access Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs) outside of the program via the DVA Rehabilitation Appliances Program (RAP).

ALDs are designed to help you hear better in a specific situation (e.g. watching television, hearing in noise or listening over distance). They may be used on their own or in conjunction with hearing aids.

RAP is administered by DVA for eligible members of the veteran community. Provision of ALDs under RAP is subject to DVA eligibility and individual hearing needs.

To access ALDs under RAP, your hearing services provider can contact the DVA Health Provider line on 1800 550 457.

3. DVA Tinnitus Program

Tinnitus is a noise noticeable in the head or ears in absence of an external source. Many people notice tinnitus but for some it can be annoying and for a few it can be very disturbing.

Most current independent tinnitus research indicates wearing hearing devices can help manage tinnitus. The effectiveness of well fitted digital hearing devices is on par with hearing devices designed especially for tinnitus.

For eligible veterans with mild tinnitus and hearing loss, DVA recommends fitting with a fully subsidised hearing device to help you manage your tinnitus and hearing loss.

If your tinnitus is severe, or if you are not eligible for a device through the Hearing Services Program, your audiologist or Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) specialist can assess you and, if required, recommend treatment. After a complete investigation, the audiologist or ENT can seek DVA approval to fund a program of tinnitus therapy.

Such programs involve a good deal of counselling and commitment to working with a therapist over several appointments. These arrangements are only for eligible veterans through DVA and are not part of the Australian Government Hearing Services Program.

4. Other Initiatives

If you are not eligible for these programs you may be able to obtain help through your state or territory government or through hearing aid banks. Further information about services outside the above programs is [available on the Hearing Services Program website](#).

Disclaimer

The information contained in this document is general in nature and does not take into account individual circumstances. You should not make important decisions, such as those that affect your financial or lifestyle position, on the basis of information contained in this document. Where you are required to lodge a written claim for a benefit, you must take full responsibility for your decisions prior to the written claim being determined. You should seek confirmation in writing of any oral advice you receive from DVA.

More Information

DVA General Enquiries

Phone: 1800 555 254

Website: [Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)

* Calls from mobile phones and pay phones may incur additional charges

Hearing or speech impairment assistance

TTY users: 1800 555 677 ask for 1800 555 254

Speak and Listen user: 1800 555 727 ask for 1800 555 254

Internet relay users connect to the National Relay Service 1800 555 254