



Review of supply of Assistive Hearing Technology – project scope

The project scope is to develop and evaluate a list of model options for the supply of Assistive Hearing Technology (AHT) under the Hearing Services Program (the program) and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) (where this is reasonable). This work is to support a whole of Government approach and ensure that there are no unjustifiable differences in supply models between the two programs which would distort or disrupt the hearing sector, if implemented.

The project will undertake to

- conduct an analysis of the benefits and challenges inherent in the current assistive hearing technology and device supply model
- consider whether other supply models may better support client outcomes, business processes and reduction in the administrative burden on the Department of Health as well as provide better value for money for the Government
- the assumptions used to underpin the supply models
- the validity of the supply models, and
- the likely market impact and level of support of key market and stakeholder groups (as per above).

In undertaking this work, the project is to consider potential differences in AHT requirements for the following cohorts of clients

- infants and young children up to age three years,
- older children and young adults from three to 18 years,
- adults up to age 65 years with hearing loss as their only disability which affects their ability to communicate,
- complex adults with severe to profound hearing loss or who have other impairments which make communication more difficult, and
- elderly people (65 years and older) with hearing loss.

The project will pay specific attention to

- the need for any supply model to cater for varying AHT needs of different client groups
- the need for client choice,
- comparative supply models for AHT used in other countries, such as the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom,
- comparative supply models for other medical devices in Australia,
- the NDIA Assistive Technology Strategy including their proposed models of assistive technology supply,
- any other hearing related reimbursement programs that incorporate AHT supply (DVA, NDIA, State based workers compensation schemes),
- whether there is any justification for different AHT supply models in the program and the NDIS for comparable hearing devices,

- the relative impacts of any proposed AHT supply models on suppliers and contracted service providers that are vertically integrated and on those that are not,
- the contractor will consider the potential differences between the AHT provided to CSO clients (through Australian Hearing) and voucher program clients,
- consideration of any new technologies (such as self-fitting, self-adjusting hearing aids) that are either available or soon to be available, but that are not currently included under the program,
- previous work undertaken for the program on reviewing device supply options,
- potential for 'bring your own device' models being incorporated into any potential future supply models, and
- requirements to incorporate implantable AHT into the voucher scheme including programming of such technology.

Assumptions

There will be no cross subsidisation between the supply of hearing devices and delivery of hearing services.