# Assistive Listening Devices (ALDs)

Under the Australian Government Hearing Services Program (the program), if you have a hearing loss you can be fitted with either a fully subsidised hearing aid **or** an assistive listening device (ALD) - but not both.

In most instances, where a person has a hearing loss a hearing aid will be offered, but in some circumstances your service provider might recommend an ALD instead. ALDs can be used by people with a hearing loss if they are not able to manage a hearing aid, if they only want to hear better in a specific situation, or if for another reason a hearing aid is not suitable.

## What kinds of assistive listening devices are available in the program?

There are two main types of ALDs available through the program. These include

* **Personal amplifiers**, consisting of a microphone which can be pointed to what you want to listen to, and a set of headphones which you use to listen to the sound. Personal amplifiers are useful for people who want to hear one-on-one conversations or other sounds over a short distance, and who cannot manage or wear a hearing aid.
* **Television headsets**, which connect directly to your television using a transmitter so that you can listen to the sound via headphones. These devices can also be connected to a radio or other audio device. By using a headset, you can turn the headphones to your preferred volume without the sound being too loud or distorted for others around you. Anybody else listening to the TV or the radio at the same time can adjust the volume to their preferred level without affecting your headphones.

## Why would I need an ALD instead of a hearing aid?

ALDs are not meant to replace hearing aids, and are not for everyone. ALDs are easy to manage because they are larger and have bigger physical controls. They are not as versatile as hearing aids, as they are typically only designed to help you listen in very specific situations.

However, ALDs can be useful when your main need is to listen to just one person at a time, or just to hear the television or radio. ALDs are particularly useful for people who have other health concerns which limit their ability to use and manage a hearing aid independently. Other people who have a mild hearing loss might find that they can hear well enough in general, or aren’t yet ready for hearing aids, but their family or neighbours complain about the volume of their television. In this case, a TV headset might be useful, rather than hearing aids.

If you feel you would benefit from an ALD please discuss this with your service provider.

## If you are a veteran

Department of Veterans’ Affairs (DVA) clients may be eligible for additional ALDs through the DVA Rehabilitation Appliance Program (RAP).

Provision of ALDs under RAP is subject to DVA eligibility, your individual hearing loss, and your service provider’s recommendation.

For further information or to discuss your eligibility, your service provider can contact the DVA RAP team on 1300 550 457 (Metro) or 1800 550 457 (regional).