

'Top-Up' arrangements

Under the Australian Government Hearing Services Program you will be able to obtain, free of charge, a quality hearing aid that will provide a satisfactory rehabilitation outcome if you are found to have a clinical need for one. However, the Australian Government Hearing Services Program also allows for 'Top-Up' arrangements where you may choose to be fitted with a hearing aid with additional features beyond those necessary to achieve a satisfactory rehabilitation outcome. Under the 'Top-Up' arrangements you pay the difference in cost to your service provider.

You can expect a Government contribution towards the cost of your 'Top-Up' hearing aid. All hearing aids including 'Top-Up' aids are GST free. Hearing devices that are not hearing aids will incur a GST charge.

Entering into a 'Top-Up' arrangement is a matter of personal choice. You are not obliged to enter into such an arrangement.

Maintenance and batteries

If you are fitted with a hearing aid, it is recommended that you enter into a maintenance agreement with your service provider. For an annual fee your service provider will maintain your aid and supply batteries. If you choose not to pay the annual maintenance fee, you will need to buy batteries regularly and pay for servicing and repair of your hearing aid.

The annual maintenance charge for a 'Top-Up' device may be higher and should be negotiated between you and your hearing services practitioner.

Consumer support groups

For information about consumer support groups throughout Australia contact the Deafness Forum Australia on **(02) 6262 7808** (phone) or **(02) 6262 7809** (for users of TTY equipment only).

For more information

Contact the Office of Hearing Services on the following number:

Hearing Services Information **1800 500 726**

If you use a telephone typewriter (TTY) telephone **1800 500 496**.

Correspondence should be addressed to:

Office of Hearing Services
Department of Health and Ageing
Mail Drop Point 113
GPO Box 9848
Canberra ACT 2601

e-mail: hearing@health.gov.au

Information on the Australian Government Hearing Services Program is available in a number of community languages on the Office of Hearing Services Internet Site: www.health.gov.au/hear



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing

The Australian Government Hearing Services Program

Understanding the Australian Government Hearing Services Program

Information for clients and
potential clients

Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing

Office of Hearing Services

www.health.gov.au/hear

Do you need help?

Do you have trouble understanding people when they talk to you? Do you have trouble hearing on the telephone? Does your family complain that you have the television too loud? If you answered yes to any of these questions you may have a hearing loss. If so, an Australian Government Program administered by the Office of Hearing Services may be able to help you to gain access to hearing services.

Are you eligible?

You are eligible to apply for a hearing services Voucher if you are an Australian Citizen or permanent resident 21 years or older and you are:

- a Pensioner Concession Card Holder;
- receiving Sickness Allowance from Centrelink;
- the holder of a Gold Repatriation Health Card issued for all conditions;
- the holder of a White Repatriation Health Card issued for conditions that include hearing loss;
- a dependent of a person in one of the above categories;
- a member of the Australian Defence Force; or
- undergoing an Australian Government funded vocational rehabilitation service and you are referred by your service provider.

OR

You are eligible to receive other declared hearing services if you are an Australian Citizen or permanent resident and you are:

- younger than 21 years; or
- an Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander who is over 50 years; or a participant in a Community Development Employment Projects Program.

What services will you receive?

Eligible people can obtain a comprehensive range of hearing services designed to meet your needs, free of charge. These include:

- Your hearing assessed by a qualified hearing services practitioner.
- If the assessment indicates that a hearing aid or other device would assist you, your practitioner will help you select an appropriate model from a range of quality devices made by leading manufacturers.
- The practitioner will also advise you on how to get the maximum benefit from your hearing aid.
- If you have complex hearing problems, you will be offered additional special services to meet your needs.

In addition, eligible people can obtain maintenance of their hearing aids and devices and a regular supply of batteries on payment of a small annual maintenance fee.

How to apply for a hearing services Voucher

If you are eligible to apply for a hearing services Voucher, you can obtain an application form from your doctor or from a hearing services provider who is contracted to the Office of Hearing Services. Alternatively, if you telephone **1800 500 726** (phone) or **1800 500 496** (for users of TTY equipment only) and give your postal address, an application form will be posted to you.

If you are applying to the program for the first time you need to ask your doctor to complete the referral on the application form. Holders of Repatriation Cards applying for the first time should ask their Local Medical Officer to complete the referral.

If you are already a client of the program, you should ask your current hearing services practitioner to complete the referral on the application form. As a hearing aid wearer, new aids will only be fitted if your current hearing aids are no longer meeting your clinical needs as assessed by your hearing services practitioner.

How to apply for other declared hearing services

If you are eligible to apply for other declared hearing services you should telephone Australian Hearing on 131 797 or visit their website at **www.hearing.com.au**