Providing world leading research and hearing services for the well-being of all Australians
This Corporate Plan has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Hearing Services Act 1991, the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (PGPA) Act 2013 and the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014. More broadly, it shows our commitment to improving the hearing health outcomes of our clients and demonstrating value for money for the Australian community.

Australian Hearing has a long and distinguished history of helping people and communities across Australia deal with the challenges of hearing loss. Drawing on our 70 years of experience, leadership and commitment to innovation, we are actively working to assist and improve the lives of those affected by hearing loss and, where possible, to prevent it arising in the first place. We do so with the greatest level of care and in the most effective and cost efficient ways.

We also operate in a complex and competitive arena with rapid advances in technology, hearing health solutions and service delivery models. This means we must be thought-leaders and drive innovative solutions that meet the evolving expectations of our clients and governments.

A key focus of this plan is building the capabilities, systems and technologies needed to support our objectives. By embracing new ideas we will improve our service offerings and client outcomes, including (where possible) the prevention of hearing loss.

Through this Corporate Plan, the Board of Directors and the Executive Management look forward to working with government to ensure our ongoing success as a strong and sustainable organisation; delivering quality outcomes to the people we serve.

Dr Peta Seaton
Chair

Kim Terrell
Acting Managing Director
The Board of Australian Hearing Services, as the accountable authority of Australian Hearing, presents this Corporate Plan (the Plan). In developing the Plan, the Board has considered the following:

- The Plan is prepared for section 35(1)(b) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (the PGPA Act) and sections 36-40 of the Australian Hearing Services Act 1991.

- The reporting period for which the Plan is prepared is the year beginning on 1 July 2018 and ending on 30 June 2019 (2018-19).

- The Plan for Australian Hearing covers a four year period from 2018/19 - 2021/22.

- This Plan is also prepared in accordance with section 16E of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014 made under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013 (as amended).

*It should be noted that the Australian Hearing Services Act 1991 requires the delivery of a Corporate Plan to the Minister for Finance and the Minister for Human Services at least 60 days before the start of the first reporting period to which the plan relates.

The purpose ascribed to Australian Hearing is outlined by the Parliament in our enabling legislation, the Australian Hearing Services Act 1991, as amended, with specific powers/functions outlined in section 8 of that Act. Australian Hearing’s purpose is detailed in the Performance Section of the Plan.
Our Vision
Providing world leading research and hearing services for the well-being of all Australians

Our Essence
Caring

Our Purpose
Positive impact

Our vision statement explains why we are here and what we aspire to achieve. We have a responsibility to deliver the best possible hearing health care for our clients and the communities we serve and to provide value for money to our stakeholders.

Our Essence and Purpose goes to the heart of the organisation and is reflected in our day-to-day work and contact with all of our stakeholders, our clients and their families and communities, government, our suppliers, our staff and our competitors. What we do changes lives and we do this with the greatest level of care.
This Corporate Plan has been developed in the context of the changing nature of the health industry. It outlines Australian Hearing’s role within the industry, and how this role will be fulfilled by achieving positive hearing health outcomes and delivering value for money.

For Australian Hearing, some of these changes are already being experienced such as the rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), increased competition and the impact of technology on hearing health.

Strategies to prevent or mitigate avoidable health issues are increasingly becoming a focus of government, with a push towards demonstrating not only health and social benefits, but also cost efficiencies. The government has also highlighted the important role of innovation in every sector of the economy, including healthcare.

These factors need to be balanced against today’s increasingly health conscious consumer. The need for convenient access, being digitally-enabled and the desire to take charge of their health are now strong consumer traits.

Our Strategic Focus

Australian Hearing’s Corporate Plan defines the organisation’s strategic focus, priorities and the key performance indicators (KPIs) to drive and measure progress.

To achieve its purpose, Australian Hearing will continue its move towards being a more client-facing organisation. By working closely with government, the organisation will focus on achieving better client outcomes, while strengthening productivity and continuing to deliver value for money. The establishment of appropriate and productive partnerships will also support efficiencies in service delivery, while responding to client needs with a holistic health approach.

This Corporate Plan outlines the strategic themes and key performance measures which will underpin the delivery of Australian Hearing’s vision.
Australian Hearing’s purpose is detailed in section 8 of the Australian Hearing Services Act 1991. Functions that have been ascribed include:

- Providing hearing services to voucher holders in accordance with an agreement entered into by the Authority under Part 3 of the Hearing Services Administration Act 1997;
- Providing hearing services to designated persons, including young Australians, Comcare clients and Commonwealth employees;
- Carrying out research and development (including co-operative research with other institutions) into hearing assessments, hearing aids and fitting procedures, hearing rehabilitation, hearing loss prevention and the effects of noise on the community; and
- Providing advice on, and conducting public education programs in relation to hearing services provided.

For each reporting period covered by this plan, Australian Hearing will measure its performance and the achievement of its purposes against the activities listed below. This section is prepared for Section 2, item 4(c) of the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Rule 2014.

The tables below detail performance targets to achieve our purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Intended Result</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Forecast 2017/18</th>
<th>Annual target*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Services provided to Voucher holders - clause 8(1)(a) of the Act</td>
<td>Solutions that address the hearing needs of eligible adult clients</td>
<td>Number of voucher related appointments</td>
<td>387,000 services</td>
<td>Provide 392,500 services to voucher holders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services provided to children up to age 21 - clause 8(1)(aa) of the Act</td>
<td>Solutions that address the hearing needs of young Australians</td>
<td>Number of services provided to aided and unaided young Australians</td>
<td>68,380 services</td>
<td>Provide 70,000 services to young Australians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services provided to Community Service Obligation (CSO) clients - clause 8(1)(ad) of the Act</td>
<td>Solutions that address the hearing needs of eligible CSO clients</td>
<td>Number of services provided to CSO clients</td>
<td>147,450 services</td>
<td>Provide 149,000 services to CSO clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients with hearing services</td>
<td>Number of remote communities visited</td>
<td>232 communities visited</td>
<td>Visit 238 communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screening to detect, advise and educate on hearing issues and services – clause 8(1)(f) of the Act</td>
<td>Provide all (including eligible) clients with hearing screening and advice on hearing services</td>
<td>Number of screenings</td>
<td>77,000 screenings</td>
<td>Undertake 79,000 hearing screenings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Intended Result</td>
<td>Method</td>
<td>Forecast 2017/18</td>
<td>Annual target*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessibility of services-clause 8(1)(i) of the Act</td>
<td>Provide all eligible clients with convenient access to hearing services</td>
<td>Number of permanent and visiting sites</td>
<td>640 permanent and visiting sites</td>
<td>Grow the number of permanent and visiting sites by up to 25 nationally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Provide all (including eligible) clients with advice on hearing services</td>
<td>Reach of our fleet of 12 hearing buses</td>
<td>2,160 locations visited</td>
<td>Improve access by using our Hearing Buses to visit 2,200 locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services provided to aided Indigenous Eligibility (IE) clients at Outreach sites</td>
<td>Increase the proportion of aided Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander seen at Outreach sites</td>
<td>IE services provided at outreach sites to aided clients</td>
<td>Increase of 0.9%</td>
<td>Increase by 0.92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of services to culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) clients</td>
<td>Increase services to CALD to be more representative of demographics</td>
<td>% of active CSO client base (where preferred language at home is not English) compared to the % of the general population as defined by ABS data</td>
<td>Increase of 4.9%</td>
<td>Increase by 5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services provided to young adults between the ages of 21 and 26</td>
<td>Solutions that address the hearing needs of young adults</td>
<td>Number of services provided to aided and unaided young adults</td>
<td>8,570 services to young adults</td>
<td>Provide 8,900 services to young adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of services to complex adult clients</td>
<td>Solutions that address the hearing needs of complex adults</td>
<td>Number of services provided to complex adults</td>
<td>60,400 Services provided</td>
<td>Provide 59,000 services to complex adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total injury frequency rate (TIFR)</td>
<td>Injuries per million hours worked</td>
<td>12 month rolling average</td>
<td>TIFR 8.9</td>
<td>TIFR 9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarterly reporting to the Minister of Human Services against:</td>
<td>Minister updated quarterly</td>
<td>Report submission</td>
<td>4 quarterly reports submitted</td>
<td>4 quarterly reports to be submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• KPIs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Corporate Plan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Risk Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quarterly reporting to the Department of Health (DoH):</td>
<td>DoH updated quarterly</td>
<td>Report submission compliant with the Memorandum of Agreement</td>
<td>4 quarterly reports submitted</td>
<td>4 quarterly reports to be submitted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Memorandum of Agreement on Community Service Obligations (CSO) delivery KPIs (including financial)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Promoter Score (NPS) – customer metric that indicates client propensity to recommend or advocate Australian Hearing to others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improvements in Customer Experience drive improvements in the NPS score</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voice of the Client online survey amongst Australian Hearing clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newly introduced metric – limited data showing +68 NPS</td>
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<tr>
<td>A benchmark of +70 NPS has been set</td>
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</table>

*Covers the period of the plan*
This Corporate Plan contains four strategic themes for the four year period (2018/19-2021/22):

1. Putting the client at the centre of our service design through a culture which values responsiveness and responsibility.
2. Growing the business including through effective partnerships and collaboration.
3. Achieving sustainability through efficiency and effectiveness.
4. Building stronger positive stakeholder relationships.

Each theme is linked to a strategic initiative. Each strategic initiative is linked to specific initiatives which the Board will monitor each month, in addition to a scorecard on business as usual (BAU) performance.

Diagram One illustrates the linkages between each element of the strategy to deliver the vision.
For Australian Hearing these include advances in technology and the changing competitive landscape with additional competitors entering the hearing market in Australia.

In developing the strategic priorities for Australian Hearing for the duration of this Plan, the Board and Executive Management have considered the competing environmental and competitive factors which are likely to shape the future of the organisation. Australian Hearing will respond to the challenges of a changing regulatory and competitive environment, while delivering efficiencies and quality outcomes for clients and stakeholders.

Changing Face of Consumers

Digitally enabled, health conscious consumers are demanding more from health and wellness providers. With baby boomers reaching retirement age, new consumer drivers are changing health care delivery models. “Connected Health” client pathways including convenient access, customised services and information are important factors for increasingly well-informed Australian Hearing clients. Gathering and responding to our clients’ feedback will help Australian Hearing improve the client experience. Providing a compelling customer value proposition will also be leveraged and matched with client motivations and client needs as they journey from screening to assessment and long term maintenance.

Client expectations must also be addressed within the current government hearing services funding model which clearly prescribes client contact (and payment) options.

Australian Hearing competes in a growing and evolving industry, where many of its key business drivers are undergoing change. The healthcare industry in Australia is transforming rapidly due to market forces, changing demographics, and a dynamic policy and regulatory environment.
Policy environment and government drive towards greater value for money

It is important for Australian Hearing to understand the needs of its key stakeholder and respond to any regulatory changes. The cost and sustainability of healthcare policy is a key consideration of government.

In addition, the rising cost of providing quality, accessible and affordable healthcare is placing legitimate expectations on organisations, such as Australian Hearing, to continue to demonstrate improved efficiencies, effectiveness, expertise and value for money for the community and taxpayers.

Australian Hearing will explore appropriate collaboration and partnership opportunities to deliver an end-to-end service that improves client outcomes, with a focus on cost efficient healthcare delivery.

Prevention of adverse and avoidable health issues is a desirable element in healthcare strategy. For Australian Hearing, including through its relationship with the National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL), there is an opportunity to take the lead in education, research and innovation in service design to help prevent and avoid adverse hearing health outcomes and address the social determinants of poor hearing health where possible.

Growing advances in technology

The delivery model of traditional healthcare is shifting. Consumers want “connected health” solutions that allow them to take charge of their health and be an informed participant in their healthcare decisions. Consumers are demanding more accessible services, including new models of delivery such as online, leading to further disruption and opportunity in traditional markets. For Australian Hearing this will mean exploring a mix of offline and online modes of delivery and technology to deliver services and advice along the client journey.

Hearing device technology continues to advance. The introduction of wearable or hearable technology is encouraging companies outside the traditional health arena to enter the market. For the hearing device industry, emerging technology has the potential to disrupt the traditional device market with an offering that could deliver increased functionality, at a lower cost and with greater wearer appeal.

Ongoing innovations in areas such as self-fitting and trainable hearing devices and the role of downloadable applications to mobile devices also continue to present both a risk and an opportunity for Australian Hearing.

As an organisation Australian Hearing will research these devices, select and add suitable new products to its emerging personal sound amplification device range, either as a sole provider or in collaboration with leading manufacturers.

Australian Hearing and NAL continue to research and engage in the development of innovative hearing solutions, including non-device solutions, which are emerging through new research.

Competitive landscape

Australian Hearing operates in a highly competitive market, where service delivery channels and continuing vertical integration from global manufacturers are changing the landscape. New market entrants are also contributing to increased competition.

Service delivery models globally are seeing a shift towards bundled, holistic retail offerings. Other emerging channels include online, big box retail and convergence with optical chains. New entrants into the hearing market in Australia will affect Australian Hearing’s market share as well as put downward pressure of the price of hearing aids.

The continuing rollout of the NDIS represents a potential new market for Australian Hearing, and once fully rolled out will have implication on the current CSO and possibly Voucher funding models. The NDIS model of individual client choice will accelerate a trend to greater contestability of both CSO and Voucher clients.
Measuring and reporting will consist of:

- Financial performance reporting to the Board including progress against strategic initiatives, financial statements and scorecard metrics.
- Progress against BAU and strategic KPIs reviewed each month by management.
- Quarterly reports against KPIs and the Corporate Plan are prepared for the Minister for Human Services. These include a review of strategic and operational risks.
- Quarterly reports to the Department of Health and the Department of Human Services against KPIs in the Memorandum of Agreement on CSO delivery, including financial reporting.
- Work Health and Safety report at every Board meeting. An audit of the Work Health and Safety system is undertaken annually.
- Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) annual financial statements audit and interim audits.
- Internal audits providing assurance on key operational business risks.
- Regular internal peer review audits of Hearing Centres, clinical practices, key Australian Hearing processes and functions, plus strategic risk assessments.
- Statutory annual reporting to the Board and the Minister for Human Services, including financial performance reporting.

The Board consists of the Chair, the Managing Director and up to four other Non-Executive Directors. Meetings of the Board and its Committees:

- A minimum of six Australian Hearing Board meetings per year.
- A minimum of four Audit and Risk Management Committee meetings each year as set out in the Committee's Charter.
- Meetings of the Innovation Strategy Committee as required and in accordance with the Committee's Charter.
- A minimum of three Australian Hearing Research Committee meetings each year as set out in the Committee's Charter.
NAL is the research division of Australian Hearing. NAL’s mission is to lead the world in hearing research and evidence-based innovation, to improve hearing health and transform the lives of people with hearing difficulties.

NAL’s key objectives are (i) to become more involved with commercialisation of technology, (ii) to diversify its funding sources, and (iii) to produce innovation with impact.

The first objective will be accomplished through partnerships with commercial entities such as hearing device manufacturers. The second objective will be met through a variety of initiatives that generate revenue: grants, sponsored research, and intellectual property monetisation. The third objective will be met by focusing resources on projects that maximise the potential impact on benefit to patients, healthcare providers, and the hearing industry. These areas of focus are defined by NAL’s Strategic Objectives.

The following five Strategic Objectives have been identified for NAL through extended strategic planning that included SWOT analysis, research trend analyses, competitive landscape analysis and customer insights.

1 **Precision Hearing Healthcare**

The audiogram provides insufficient information to determine the appropriate treatment for an individual; there is a need to identify what additional diagnostics and patient information can help determine personalised treatment. We need to create a framework that identifies specific client characteristics and allows for the prescription of targeted treatment. This approach is similar to precision medicine which refers to the tailoring of medical treatment to the individual characteristics of each patient. This goal will result in improved outcomes from the application of the framework when compared to current best practice for both paediatric and adult clients.

2 **Alternative Delivery Models**

The hearing health field is adding telehealth and self-diagnosis/self-treatment as alternatives to traditional hearing healthcare delivery. There is a need for guidelines and outcomes for best practices with these new delivery approaches. The goal of this objective is to determine the factors of success for the alternative delivery models of tele-audiology and self-direction for audiological assessment and treatment. A number of success factors will be defined for both of these models.
Special Populations with Unique Needs

There are sub-populations within the serviced hearing loss population that have unique needs that aren’t being effectively met. These sub-populations are either (i) those with unique forms of hearing loss that require different treatment than those with standard moderate hearing loss or (ii) those with hearing loss that also have at least one other disability that modifies the hearing healthcare required. We aim to identify two special populations with unique needs and develop treatments that improve the hearing outcomes of these groups. Success will result in improved outcomes for the two populations compared to current state of care.

Mild Hearing Loss and Normal Hearing with Abnormal Difficulty in Noise

There are large populations with normal hearing and mild hearing losses who have hearing difficulty but are not receiving any hearing help. Our understanding of their needs, expectations and barriers to success with hearing help is minimal. The objective is to identify the factors that predict when treatment is effective for people with mild hearing loss or normal hearing and speech in noise difficulties and deliver a solution. Success will result in the development of assessment tools and improved outcomes over no treatment at all, which is the current state of treatment for most people in these categories.

Environmental Solutions

Environmental situations exist that have harmful sound levels that put hearing health at risk and create extreme hearing difficulty. The goal is to identify and facilitate improvements to the exposure to harmful sounds in two selected types of environments, such that hearing difficulty and/or risk is reduced, within two years. Success will result in a change in the hearing difficulty and/or reduced risk to hearing health in the two selected environment types.