Hearing services for children

14 August 2014
Overview

- Who is Australian Hearing?
- Services for children and young adults
  - Aided children
  - Central Auditory Processing
- Services for adults – the Voucher program
Who is Australian Hearing?

Australian Hearing has 65 years’ experience in meeting the hearing needs of the community.

We are the largest provider of hearing services for children, young adults, indigenous people, pension recipients and veterans in Australia.
Our History

- Australian Hearing was established in 1947 to provide services to veterans who suffered hearing damage during World War II, and to assist children whose hearing was affected as a result of the rubella epidemic of the late 1940s.

- Australian Hearing became a statutory authority constituted under the Australian Hearing Services Act in 1991.

- Australian Hearing is part of the Department of Human Services, reporting to the Minister for Human Services.

- Today, we are the hearing services provider of choice for more than 335,000 Australians.

- We offer the most advanced technology in hearing devices and accessories to assist client's with their hearing and communication difficulties.
National footprint

• Australian Hearing has over 126 permanent centres and visits approx 363 locations across the country.

• We also visit 215 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander outreach sites across the country.

• Our centres are staffed by a team of clinicians (audiologists and audiometrists), technicians and customer service officers.

• Our National Support Office is located in Sydney.
National Acoustics Laboratories

Australian Hearing’s National Support Office in Sydney is also home to the internationally renowned National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL), a leading national research facility into hearing loss and treatment innovations.
Australian Hearing’s clients

We are the hearing services provider of choice for more than 335,000 Australians.

- Veterans and pensioners
- Children and young people under 26 years
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders over 50 years

Hear the sounds you love
Hearing loss in Australia: the facts

• Hearing loss currently affects one in six people in Australia.

• With our ageing population, hearing loss is projected to increase to one in every four by 2050.

• In the past year, Australian Hearing provided more than 464,000 hearing services to clients and fit around 130,000 hearing aids each year.

• Australian Hearing fits around 2,000 children with hearing aids for the first time every year.

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Services for children:

Children with hearing loss
Services for children and young adults

Australian Hearing is the sole provider of hearing services for children and young adults (under 26) with a permanent or long-term hearing loss.

Our paediatric specialists work with parents or carers to help find the best way to manage a child’s hearing loss. All clinicians working with children are university qualified audiologists with specialist knowledge in paediatrics.

Our role is to provide information, support and guidance on hearing loss. hearing aids if required, and follow up assessments.

Hear the sounds you love
The world’s most advanced sound system

Hear the sounds you love
The Audiogram

Hearing Loss

Normal Hearing

Right ear: mild to severe sensorineural
Left ear: severe to profound mixed
When are children referred to Australian Hearing?
Newborns

Since 2004 newborn hearing screening is provided by Queensland Health’s Healthy Hearing program.

Neonates with a refer result on a repeat Automatic Auditory Brainstem Response (AABR) tests are referred to their local diagnostic audiologist for full assessment.

Newborns with any degree of hearing loss are referred to Australian Hearing following diagnosis for consideration of amplification needs and fitting of hearing aids where appropriate.

Childhood Hearing Clinics:
Mater Children's, Royal Children's and Townsville Hospital.
Older children

• Sensorineural hearing loss
• Permanent conductive hearing loss
• Chronic and long term middle ear issues with associated conductive hearing loss

Australian Hearing will accept referrals for children from a range of sources, however our services are for those children for whom amplification is likely to be required.
Our Paediatric services include

- Comprehensive hearing assessments
- Fitting of the latest technology hearing aids where appropriate
- Fitting of other devices (FM systems and tactile aids) where appropriate
- Evaluation of the fitting and the child’s performance with hearing aids or other devices
- Regular monitoring of each child’s hearing and hearing aid benefit
- Replacement and updating of devices as required
- Regular visits to early intervention programs and educational facilities for hearing-impaired children
- Support for teachers including advice on management of hearing aids and other devices in the classroom and detailed reports
- Repairs for the majority of devices
- Batteries, replacement parts, repairs and upgrade processors for young children and young people using cochlear implants
- Referral to other agencies where appropriate

Hear the sounds you love
Hearing technology for children

Hearing aids

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Cochlear Implants

Australian Hearing is not directly involved in the provision of cochlear implants, however we will support children with cochlear implants in a number of ways:

• School visits and support for teachers
• Assistance with candidacy assessments
• Funding for processor upgrades and spare parts
• Provision of wireless technology (e.g. FM systems)

Hearing technology for children
Wireless technology

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Services for Children:

Central Auditory Processing Disorder
Meet Stuart Smith, aged 7
Mr & Mrs Smith have just been to parent-teacher interviews

- Stuart doesn’t pay attention in class
  - He is frequently in trouble for talking to his classmates
  - He doesn’t follow instructions well
  - He seems to do worse when it’s noisy.
- Stuart’s academic progress is slipping
- Stuart’s parents are confused and upset – he’s a good kid at home – they ask him what’s happening.
- Stuart says that he can’t hear the teacher and that he gets confused when everyone’s talking at once.
- Stuart’s teacher recommends a hearing test.
Stuart...

- Stuart’s hearing test shows hearing within normal limits in both ears.
- Speech discrimination tests in quiet, under headphones show excellent scores at soft levels.

What’s going on?

Does Stuart have a learning disability?

He’ll just have to try harder

But I can’t hear – why won’t anyone believe me?

Maybe he needs to change schools?

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2-3% of children have a Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD)

- Listening behaviour similar to someone with a hearing loss
  - But hearing is NORMAL
  - NOT related to cognitive ability
  - Occurs in the higher processing sections of the brain
- Greatest difficulties listening under adverse conditions
  - Noise
  - Reverberation
- An “umbrella” term – many different types of disorders
  - Hearing in noise, auditory memory, speech clarity...
- “CAPD testing” can include a range of different tests

Hear the sounds you love
Australian Hearing wants to give children like Stuart the chance to help their CAPD problems so they can get on with their education

Hear the sounds you love
The results…

Will

• Identify many children who have some type of auditory processing problem, and for whom an FM device will provide immediate benefit.

• Identify children with SPD, for which a specific remediation exists.

Won’t

• Identify EVERY type of CAPD.
Intervention options

- Depending upon the individual’s results, we will work with families to develop a program that may involve one or more of:
  - LiSN & Learn for SPD
  - Memory Booster for memory exercises
  - FM System for hearing in class
  - Communication Strategies
  - Referral for educational assessment
  - Discuss other options for improving the classroom environment.

We will sell LiSN & Learn packs & FM systems.
Important info…

• The CAPD assessment can only be performed for:
  – Children who are aged 6 or older
  – Children who have normal hearing.

• Children who have a permanent hearing loss may experience a range of difficulties that are similar to those that are experienced by children who have CAPD.
  – However these tests are not designed to be used with children with a permanent loss.
CAPD services are provided on a fee-for-service basis
• Australian Hearing is funded to provide services to children who have long term hearing loss. Since children with CAPD have normal hearing on pure tone audiometry we aren’t able to use our funding to cover the cost of their CAPD program.

What happens if the test shows that the child has a hearing loss?
• We will then provide them with service through our regular, funded, paediatric program.
Are there any funding options to help pay for this service?

- The service is not claimable through Medicare or through Better Start funding.

- Some private health funds may reimburse costs – please check with your individual health care provider.

- The Lions Hearing Dogs Scheme has a grants system that provides personal FM systems and sound field systems for a defined number of clients each year.

- Some schools may receive additional funding for resources for children who have special needs.
Beyond childhood...

Services for adults

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Beyond childhood…

• Subsidised services continue until clients’ 26th birthday.

• Australian Hearing will continue to see adults eligible for the Office of Hearing Services Voucher program and adult Community Services Obligation clients (adults with complex needs and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders over 50 years).
Who is eligible for the Voucher Program?

- 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
- part of the Australian Government funded Disability Employment Services (DES) – Disability Management Service referred by a Disability Employment Services case manager.

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How do I refer someone to the Voucher program?

• Clients can check their eligibility and apply online, or they can contact Australian Hearing in person or via phone.

• Clients require a Medical Certificate to be completed by their GP.

• Clients will then be sent a list of nearby services providers and can book their hearing assessment.
Community Service Obligation for Adults

• Australian Hearing provides specialist services for adults with complex hearing needs.
  • Adults with a severe to profound hearing loss (> 80 dB HL)
  • Adults with other disabilities which impact upon their ability to manage their hearing aids (e.g. vision, intellectual or physical impairment).
• Australian hearing also provides a home visit service where required and outreach services to remote communities.
For more information:

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