



The Hon Ken Wyatt AM, MP

**Minister for Aged Care
Minister for Indigenous Health
Member for Hasluck**

MEDIA RELEASE

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Framework flagged as report shows hearing challenge

The Turnbull Government has released a new report detailing the impact of hearing loss on Australia's society and the economy.

The Minister responsible for the hearing services program, Ken Wyatt AM, said the Hearing Care Industry Association (HCIA) report was a valuable document highlighting challenges and opportunities and would be carefully considered.

"What is deeply concerning is the estimate more than 1.3 million Australians are living with hearing conditions that could have been prevented," the Minister said.

"The report also warns that this is increasingly due to recreational noise exposure, with almost half of young people at risk from loud music."

Minister Wyatt acknowledged the report's recommendations on further interventions to track hearing loss and reduce its impact.

"The Turnbull Government is always open to evaluating positive proposals, and this will help guide opportunities for us to work together to improve hearing health," he said.

The report says one in seven Australians suffer from hearing loss, equating to 3.6 million people, with more than 90 per cent of these aged over 50. The annual direct economic impact is estimated at \$15.9 billion.

By 2050, the number of people affected by some form of hearing loss is expected to rise to one in four.

"I recognise the importance of safe-guarding hearing services to ensure that Australians continue to receive high quality care to manage their hearing loss," Minister Wyatt said.

“I am announcing today that the Turnbull Government is working with the Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care and the hearing sector to develop a safety and quality standards framework.

“This aims to ensure clients with hearing loss are provided with responsive services that align with the proposed National Disability Insurance Scheme. The framework will also help drive continuous quality improvement in the future.

“The framework is being developed in parallel with the valuable work already being done through the Hearing Services Program administered by the Department of Health.”

The Australian Government is investing almost \$2.3b over 4 years to 2021 for hearing services, preventive measures and research, with \$76 million over 10 years to 2021-22 targeting the ear health of indigenous children.

The Australian Commission for Safety and Quality in Health Care is expected to release a public consultation paper on the hearing standards framework later this year.

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