



# Roadmap for Hearing Health: Workforce

The [Roadmap for Hearing Health](#) aims to improve access to high quality hearing services for vulnerable Australians. Roadmap activities supported through the 2020 Federal Budget includes approximately \$2.5 million for those working with people with hearing loss.

## What are the investments?

\$2 million will be used to develop and test training programs for residential aged care workers that will help them support residents with hearing loss.

\$200,000 will be used to identify the current hearing workforce issues and needs – particularly those in more rural and regional areas. This information will help future service planning.

\$350,000 will be used to develop new tele-audiology standards. A key professional organisation will undertake this work.

## Why is this investment being made?

Australia needs a hearing workforce that is appropriately recognised, trained and qualified, and an aged care workforce that is appropriately supported to identify hearing loss in residential care settings. The hearing workforce includes ear nose and throat (ENT) specialists, audiologists, audiometrists, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander hearing health professionals, teachers of the deaf, and Auslan interpreters.

We need to know more about the needs of the workforce, especially those working in aged care and in regional and rural areas. This will assist service planning into the future and benefit clinicians and consumers.

Importantly, targeted aged care workforce training could result in earlier identification and possible prevention of hearing loss.

Audiologists and audiometrists are increasingly providing services via telehealth platforms. Professional and ethical standards of practice and codes of conduct need to be of a high standard, with professional bodies supported to maintain those standards under a self-regulatory framework.

## What does this mean for consumers?

People living in Australia's rural and regional areas, and people receiving aged care services, can be confident that workers looking after them are appropriately trained and supported to provide quality hearing health care.

Patients receiving audiology services via a telehealth platform can be confident that their provider is following best practice approaches as agreed to by audiology professional groups, and that the quality of care is consistent across Australia.

## What does this mean for providers?

Residential aged care services will have improved training programs for staff. This will help their workers to be able to identify residents' hearing problems and know what to do to better support these older Australians.

Audiology service providers will be supported to deliver safe and effective tele-audiology consultations in accordance with evidence informed national standards.