Comment on Radio National Background Briefing
"Have I got a hearing aid for you!"

30 November 2014

Thank you to Radio National for raising issues related to the delivery of hearing services in Australia, many of which have not been discussed publicly to date. Independent Audiologists Australia Inc believes that raising matters related to audiology and the supply of hearing devices is in the public interest.

Independent Audiologists Australia supports and promotes clinical practices owned by audiologists.
Our code of ethics states that the clinician-client transaction must be transparent.

A diagnostic assessment using a combination of behavioural and electrophysiological measures is the basis for a professionally delivered hearing rehabilitation programme. The focus of hearing rehabilitation is on maintaining effective communication skills. If required, hearing devices should be purchased as part of such a programme. The possible benefit to be obtained from using hearing aids will depend on the nature of the hearing disorder –whether there is a hearing loss in one or both ears, damage to the pathways between the ears and the brain, and/or the processing and handling of auditory information that takes place in the brain itself.

Audiologists' tertiary level training provides them with the diagnostic and rehabilitative skills to address all types of auditory disorders. A qualified audiologist who has conducted a comprehensive assessment will be able to advise what additional rehabilitation strategies may be required and what rehabilitation programme would be offered, which may include hearing devices.

We encourage the public to enquire as to the qualifications of service providers and to recognise the difference between hearing aid dispensers and audiologists.

Further, we encourage the public to enquire as to clinic ownership, billing practices and sales incentives that may apply so as to make informed choices about where they obtain hearing rehabilitation services.

Patricia Sharples
IAA President