



A Wellbeing approach to the Veteran Hearing Service Offering

This initiative will support the delivery of a veteran-centric wellbeing-focused approach to veteran hearing support and funding decisions by progressively implementing business process improvements from 1 July 2024.

The *Veteran Hearing Services Framework* will provide a streamlined pathway to fair and consistent funding decisions on appropriate hearing devices for veterans with complex service-related hearing needs that place whole-of-person considerations at the centre of decision-making.

This will be delivered through improvements including:

- enhanced communication with, and information for, clients and providers
- updated forms for providers and audiology advisers, and
- updated guidance material for DVA decision-makers.

Updated forms and business processes will be co-designed with audiologists and will make the process simpler for veterans and hearing professionals.

Why is this important?

Ensuring veterans with complex service-related hearing needs receive improved and more timely access to high-quality hearing support that better meets their needs will ensure the best possible wellbeing outcomes for the veteran community.

With a focus on simplifying the customer journey, the *Veteran Hearing Services Framework* will also support greater transparency and accountability so veterans can better understand the process, and streamline existing processes to provide a more positive experience for veterans with complex service-related hearing needs.

Who will benefit?

Up to 10,000 veterans per year currently access partially subsidised hearing devices through the Hearing Services Program (HSP). Within this cohort, veterans with complex service-related hearing needs will now be able to more easily receive a better hearing device to support their social connectedness, employment, and wellbeing.

Date of effect?

From 1 July 2024

How much will this cost?

This initiative will be delivered within existing funding.

Examples

1. A 52-year-old veteran white card holder has bilateral sensorineural hearing loss, tinnitus, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other conditions affecting her whole of person wellbeing. The *Veteran Hearing Services Framework* would ensure that PTSD management needs are considered alongside hearing loss-related needs. In this example, consideration may be given to more technologically advanced devices (with additional features and that are simpler to use) that would provide optimal hearing outcomes in a range of social settings, increasing social and vocational participation and improving overall wellbeing outcomes.
2. A 76-year-old veteran gold card holder has bilateral sensorineural hearing loss, tinnitus, and arthritis and other conditions affecting whole of person wellbeing. The *Veteran Hearing Services Framework* would ensure that functional impairment limitations are considered alongside hearing loss-related needs. In this example, consideration may be given to more technologically advanced devices that are able to be recharged, rather than relying on devices that require fine motor skills to replace batteries.