



Transition of the Hearing Services Program to the National Disability Insurance Scheme

A report on the perspectives of parents of children with hearing loss

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Aussie Deaf Kids is a national organisation providing online support and information to families raising children with hearing loss across Australia.

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We would like to thank the parents who responded to the survey for providing such comprehensive consideration to the questions.

Executive Summary

A survey of parents who are members of the Aussie Deaf Kids online groups was undertaken prior to the recent National Disability Insurance Scheme Transition Planning Workshops (Workshops) that were facilitated by the Office of Hearing Services (OHS).

The aim of the survey was to canvas the perspective of parents whose children are current clients of Australian Hearing, regarding the four questions posed by OHS in relation to the transition process.

The questions were:

1. What does a smooth and painless transition look like?
2. What is important to get right during the transition?
3. What are the stakeholder needs during the transition process?
4. What are the obstacles we need to overcome?

The survey used a mixed methods approach with multiple open-ended questions which allowed parents to voice their thoughts, perspectives and experiences about the transition of the hearing services program to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Results of the quantitative data can be found in the appendix. Qualitative data was arranged into the themes that appear in the report.

Ninety-six parents completed the survey. In viewing the responses to the survey questions, it should be noted that the participants represented a specific segment of the population of parents with children with hearing loss, in that the majority of parents who responded were highly educated, English speaking and their children were over two year of age. They were committed to good outcomes for their children reporting consistent daily use of their hearing devices. If this cohort of experienced, engaged parents is expressing the level of concern regarding the proposed arrangements as shown in the report, then it is likely that parents with lower levels of education, English as a second language, or parents of a child who has just been diagnosed with hearing loss and consequently with no knowledge of hearing loss, will be in a highly vulnerable position in trying to successfully negotiate the proposed new arrangements which puts their child's outcomes at risk.

What are parents of children with hearing loss saying?

1. There needs to be open and transparent information about what the changes will mean in real terms to families.
2. Parents are sceptical that the transfer of hearing services to a contestable market place will provide the same quality of service and devices that their children currently receive – i.e. paediatric audiologists, high quality devices, responsive repair and loaner system and independent quality assurance.
3. Parents are concerned the commercial pressure on private audiologists will impact on the service provided to their children. The potential for exploitation of vulnerable parents and the cost implications for both family and the government were discussed.
4. These experienced parents were concerned how new parents will be able to seamlessly navigate the path from newborn hearing screening to audiological services and early intervention with an additional level of bureaucracy at a time when they are least knowledgeable and highly stressed.

Recommendations

1. The Office of Hearing Services and the National Disability Insurance Agency commence an information strategy that informs parents in a way that is meaningful and helpful to all parents.
2. The Office of Hearing Services and the Australian Government seriously considers the considerable risks posed by moving to a contestable environment when this has not been tested and found to be a viable model across the country. This is a high-risk strategy that could significantly compromise the excellent outcomes children with hearing loss demonstrate in the current system.
3. The Australian Government maintain Australian Hearing as the sole provider of hearing services to children and young people when the program transitions to the NDIS.

Transition of the Hearing Services program to the National Disability Insurance Scheme: A survey of parent perspectives

A survey of parents in the Aussie Deaf Kids parent groups was undertaken prior to the NDIS Transition Workshops conducted by the Office of Hearing Services in August 2015. The aim of the survey was to canvas the views of parents, whose children are currently in the CSO program, about some of the issues OHS was intending to raise at the workshops.

The survey was available online for a two week period. A link to the survey was distributed through the Aussie Deaf Kids online parent groups and was anonymous. This was a mixed methods survey with multiple open-ended questions allowing parents to voice their thoughts, perspectives and experiences about the transition of the hearing services program to the NDIS.

121 parents started the survey and 96 completed the survey. Some of the qualitative data from the parents who did not complete the survey was retained as it was felt their comments and thoughts warranted inclusion. The open-text questions provided considerable insight into the concerns and questions of respondents.

Data analysis

Quantitative data was analysed for frequency distribution using SPSS and content analysis of the qualitative data was undertaken using NVivo 10. Results of the quantitative data can be found in the appendix. Qualitative data was arranged into the themes that appear in this report.

Results

This was largely a qualitative survey so emerging themes are reported here. The results of the quantitative data is available in the appendix.

About the parents

Ninety-seven percent of the parents who completed the survey were mothers. Over half (55%) were aged between 35 and 44 years and two-thirds (63.5%) live in metropolitan areas. Parents from all states and territories completed the survey although the majority were from NSW (52%).

They are a highly educated group of parents with over half having a university degree. One-third (31.3%) had a post-graduate university degree. A quarter of the parents (26%) were homemakers and most of the others were in some form of employment – either full-time (17.7%) or part-time (44.8%).

We asked about the hearing status of both the mother and father of the child and almost 90 percent of the children have hearing parents. This is consistent with prevalence data in the literature. Over 90 percent of the respondents had only one child who is a current client of Australian Hearing. Between them, the respondents have 108 children who receive hearing services from Australian Hearing.

About the children

Almost half the children (46.3%) were identified through a newborn hearing screening program. Children with a unilateral hearing loss comprised almost a quarter of the respondents (24.5%). Most parents who responded to the survey had children between 2 and 18 years (91.7%). A third of the children have additional needs including cerebral palsy, global developmental delay, autism spectrum disorder and Usher Syndrome.

The children wear hearing aids (60.5%), cochlear implants (34.6%) and bone conduction devices (4.8%). And they are excellent users of the devices provided to them through the hearing services program with 95 percent 'always' or 'almost always' wearing their devices.

Eight of the children are receiving a funding package from the NDIS in one of the trial sites and another 4 are transitioning to the NDIS.

The NDIS Transition Planning Workshops were looking for answers to four key questions from participants:

1. What does a smooth and painless transition look like?
2. What is important to get right during the transition?
3. What are the stakeholder needs during the transition process?
4. What are the obstacles we need to overcome?

In reviewing the data from the survey to answer these questions, we feel it is important to highlight that the parents who responded to the survey were highly educated and knowledgeable and most have years of experience with managing their child's hearing loss. It is, therefore, reasonable to infer, that if this group of parents are concerned about the changes to hearing services for children and what it will mean for their child and family, then the ability of parents with lower education levels or parents whose first language is not English is a considerable concern. Views similar to this parent below should provide a red flag about the potential risks to child outcomes that the transition poses, if not done correctly.

"I guess it will be a matter of trying the local guys and see what they can offer and how they cope with children."

It is clear from the responses of parents that the announcement of the transition of hearing services to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and a contestable environment has caused considerable concern for parents.

“How can [OHS] make sure the quality of service is maintained in a contestable and varied environment?”

“If Australian Hearing will have to compete with private practitioners, how will [OHS] guarantee that it remains financially viable? The client base of children spread throughout Australia is not that big to support multiple players. How will you ensure good standards of service?”

“Can they ensure that it remains unbiased and independent? Will my child still be supported as well as what she is now?”

It should be noted that the letter from the Office of Hearing Services sent to parents in August was the first time parents (and organisation in the deafness sector) knew that the transition to the NDIS would occur. Parents had been concerned about the potential sale of Australian Hearing and the letter, confirming that children’s hearing services would become contestable under the NDIS, caused confusion and alarm.

“We need more information provided!”

“I am just confused so some clarity would be great.”

“The information about this transition given to date to parents has been grossly inadequate. The letter sent out was unclear and lacked detail of how it will work. Please make information that is useful to users of the service clear and widely available. We live in the ACT, where the NDIS is up and running, and have been told nothing of this transition to date.”

“My husband and I are both highly educated but we could not understand the letter. For less educated parents it would be even more difficult.”

Over half the parents in the survey (52%) felt they did not know about the NDIS and the services it will provide their child.

To answer the questions posed in the workshops, this is what parents are saying...

What does a smooth and painless transition look like?

- There is a clear pathway from newborn hearing screening to audiological services that ensures children and families don't fall through the gaps.

"In the early phase of diagnosis you do not have another thing to try and work out, you just would go to Australian Hearing and know that you would get the best and choice of products."

"Choice is important when you are informed and have knowledge to base that choice on. As a hearing parent of a baby diagnosed with hearing loss I was not in a position of knowledge on which to base a choice. Having AH available with no decision required on my part and a quality based training of paediatric audiologist was crucial to the early success of hearing aid use with my daughter (progressive loss now CI). It is important that establishing eligibility to access services through NDIS does not take time."

"My daughter was older when she was diagnosed and we were completely at a loss. The support from Australian Hearing has been amazing. We really did not know what we should do. We cannot compliment AH enough for the support and services provided during a very emotional period of our lives."

This parent expressed the view of many:

"A pre-existing referral process, which means, that parents who have just received bad news about their child's diagnosis, don't have to worry about initial contact and leg work makes such a huge impact on the ease of navigating the system. Hate the idea of having to hunt out our own specialists / interventions etc."

Only 3 parents felt they would have been able to find an appropriate audiology service for their child without the current pathway from screening to Australian Hearing.

- Many parents expressed concerns that children will fall through the cracks if the new system is difficult to navigate.

"We need to ensure that no child is left behind. That parents are not adversely affected by having to make choices when they have no knowledge about the condition or what it means for their child."

"Learning about the non hearing world is very confusing and the systems need to work well together. Its hard learning your child has a disability and would be much harder again if services are not top notch."

"How will children diagnosed through newborn hearing screening be referred into the system and what supports will be available to those families to help them navigate the system?"

- Parents with newly diagnosed babies must not be burdened with onus of proof to receive prompt audiological and early intervention services through the NDIS.

“Please ensure the transition for newly diagnosed children through to audiology services and fitting of hearing aids is not held up by new bureaucratic requirements. Parents of newborns are typically sleep deprived and not in the best position to navigate to services.”

“How will children diagnosed through new born hearing screening be referred into the system and what supports will be available to those families to help them navigate the system?”

“That the same level of service is continued and newly diagnosed families do not have to wait long periods to access services.”

“We were completely devastated and confused following our son's diagnosis, there is no way we would have been able to navigate all the services and options ourselves especially as we had no knowledge whatsoever of hearing loss and what help/ supports our son would require.”

- Parents want to be kept informed by the Office of Hearing Services and the National Disability Insurance Agency throughout the transition process.

“More information! Better start did not provide enough information, and the NDIS could drastically improve the amount of information they have provided.”

“[I need] a lot of information that indicates the services that will be available for my child and the clear pathway to achieving the implementation of those services.”

- Parents want clear information that is meaningful and useful for them so they understand what the transition to the NDIS will mean for the hearing services and devices their child receives. Many parents expressed concern about how the new system would ensure quality of service and how these will be monitored in a contestable environment.

“Who will ensure that there are high standards of service and that these standards are consistently adhered to?”

“The change to early intervention funding was in my view, not successful. What steps are in place to ensure individual providers are monitored for quality and non-misleading conduct under the NDIS?”

“How will this process still offer the quality & level of service delivery in a timely manner without all of the administrative delays and requirements of the NDIS.”

- Parents ask for transparency from both the OHS and the NDIA about any changes to service provision they can expect with the transition – will their child be better or worse off? It is fair to say that most parents fear their child will be worse off in a contestable environment.

“I am very concerned that the standard of service and the quality of hearing devices we currently receive will change under an NDIS funded service.”

“Currently we can be confident the hearing devices fitted for our kids meet their current needs, they are high quality and don't include options they don't need at that particular time. I am concerned that this won't be the case with more providers competing for clients.”

“Are we going to be worse off under the new scheme?”

“What measures will you use to ensure that outcomes for children do not suffer because of this change?”

“I want to know figures, what funding will we actually get, will it cover my sons hearing aids costs, upgrades, accessories and repairs.”

- Parents require appropriate evaluative information to make informed decisions about both choosing a provider and choosing devices. What options are available to them? What are the benefits? What are the risks? And what will happen if they don't make the right decisions?

“What safeguards will there be to insure our kids receive the level of service and quality of hearing devices that they currently receive? We don't want a service where people who have more knowledge about hearing loss, technology or hearing devices get better services and hearing devices than those who don't.”

“An objective evaluation of available services.”

“How will I know I am choosing the best provider for my child?”

“How easy will it be to change providers if we are unhappy with their service?”

This parent expressed the confusion of many when asked what support and information would be needed in the transition phase – *“that's a difficult question to answer given we've never had to look before and have not needed to come up with criteria for selection.”*

- Parents want clarity about who will be eligible for the NDIS and what will happen to their services if their child is not. This is particularly the case for parents whose children have a unilateral hearing loss.

“What if, your child has no other disability and only the hearing loss, and they do not qualify for NDIS...which could be possible. Who funds then?”

“My main concern is that we are so close to the roll out of the NDIS yet no one can give us an answer as to whether our son will be eligible for services. We have a 3yr old that has just been implanted with a CI and yet we are still told that this could still be considered a 'mild loss' as its unilateral. No one can tell us what we will need to do if he is not covered and this is very concerning when you take into account that he is also attending Early Intervention.”

What is important to get right during the transition?

We asked parents what features of a hearing service are important to them - the aspects of the service that they believe needs to be right as the program transitions to the NDIS.

- The experience of the audiologist is very important to parents. Ninety-five percent say that paediatric experience is very important to them.

“Having a system where only trained paediatric audiologists can register as providers for hearing services for people under 26. This will allow for a high level of care and prescribing of suitable devices rather than whichever device will make them the biggest retail cut.”

“That all audiologists be trained in treatment of babies/children and understand the psychological effects to parents and thus show understanding and compassion within the government services.”

- Having an audiologist who is experienced with children with additional needs was seen as very important by almost half (46.9%) the respondents.

“I would certainly pick a place that understands children with additional needs need patience and understanding”

- Appointment availability is important to parents (92.7%). This was the one area where parents reported very different experiences with the current system – some parents reported the ease of organising an appointment while others were frustrated by the difficulty of getting a timely appointment. This was the area parents felt could improve under the NDIS.

“I do hope it will not be so hard to get an appointment like it is now...”

“Happy with current service but access to appointments is difficult as the service is very busy.”

“[I like the] easy to get appointments. No long queue.”

- Others recognised that children need more time in appointments and this needs consideration in a fee-for-service system.

“... having generous time allocations for appointments is essential with children as there is a lot to cover each time and kids do not run to a schedule.”

“[We need] longer than normal appointments as children being children do not always perform when they are meant to.”

- Working parents and parents with young people who were working were looking for some additional flexibility in appointment times.

“Availability of after hours and maybe weekend appointments for families where both parents work or when older children move into work.”

“I would welcome more flexible opening hours for AH as my children are finding it difficult to get to appointments in work hours.”

- Ninety per cent of parents said the quality of the devices provided to children is very important to them and comments indicated many have concerns the fully funded devices will be a reduced quality to those their children currently receive.

“How will [OHS] ensure all children get access to suitably high quality devices? how will you ensure that children will not be funded for only the base model hearing aids (eg, level 3) that are not as appropriate for the classroom and with FM use?”

- Eight-five per cent of respondents rated regular upgrades of technology as very important to them. Cochlear implant upgrades were a particular concern to parents.

“Upgrading to the latest technology means my child has the opportunity to overcome his condition as much as is possible. It improves the quality of his relationships and access to education.”

“Limitation in bulk funding can slow upgrade to improvements in technology such as Cochlear N6”

What sort of time frame are we looking for in regards to upgrading hearing aids and FMs?

- The availability of a quick repair service and loaner devices is another priority for parents - one they have appreciated with the current service and are wondering how this will be managed under the NDIS.

“My child is able to gain a loan device immediately Australia wide at the moment. I cannot imagine a provider providing a device if we are on holidays or in another

location under NDIS. We need an Australia wide service for our kids.”

“Will the number of replacement parts for ci (batteries, mic protectors, cables etc) be capped / limited per plan year? Will there be 'a generic amount' allocated to ci replacement parts per plan year? Will there be 'a generic amount' allocated to ci repairs per plan year”

- Parents are particularly concerned how the commercial pressure on private audiologists will impact on the service provided to children. The existing problems of an unregulated profession in recent media reports have exacerbated the concerns parents have about a contestable service delivery model. Parents are concerned there will be more out-of-pocket expenses in the new system.

“When my daughter was first diagnosed I wanted the best available technology for her and was happy to pay for pretty much anything that was available, there needs to be safeguards in place that commercial operators don't exploit that vulnerability in the early stages of diagnosis , there is huge potential for parents to be exploited and sold devices that are not appropriate.”

“We're concerned that individual providers will promote devices for kickbacks and maybe not with the best interests of the individuals at heart.”

“...that the service provider does not try to sell technology just to make money. I do not want a commercial type practice for my child.”

“I don't want a hard sell from pushy commercial providers.”

“How will this move impact on the services provided to a child with a bilateral profound hearing loss - bilateral implants wearer? Out of pocket expenses should never fall on the family, we carry so many other expenses already and cannot afford to have to take on more to provide good hearing for our child. These children are already at a disadvantage with social/school issues caused by a profound hearing loss and being different to their peers and it would be tragic if they are disadvantaged any further by not having access to the best hearing available.”

- Parents in regional and rural areas expressed concerns about the services they will receive in the future.

“I am also concerned about the cost of duplication of infrastructure if there is more than one delivery service, the cost of monitoring the level of quality and the possibility that rural families will be left without an adequate services because of too many providers and not enough income to make servicing rural families attractive.

“Raising a well aided deaf child is not like raising a hearing child and because we live in rural Victoria ... so the experience of professionals and educators is limited due to deafness being a low incidence disability.”

- Many parents commented that they hope to stay with Australian Hearing when children's services transition to the NDIS. But they have concerns about how Australian Hearing will maintain the quality of service when other providers are in the market place.

"Just don't change or take away the support we currently get from Australian hearing. I couldn't be without them."

"Will t[there] be the same great service now through Australian Hearing."

"At this stage I don't feel there are many improvements [needed]. For us, Australian Hearing has been a great support and has always ensured our son is well cared for."

"I would not want to lose the quality of the devices we get as standard with AH. I would not want to lose the quality and skill of the AH [audiologists] and the one stop shop."

"...ensure the quality of service isn't affected as Australian hearing do an amazing job."

"...the future of AH is at stake because of this and it shouldn't be as it is a trusted quality service taking the risk out of this type of service delivery and also provides incredibly easy access."

"I distrust private providers as they are known to 'upsell' and be vertically integrated. There has been media about this. I am concerned that the loss of buying power that AH has will mean inferior devices are being given to my child."

- The collaboration between the audiologist and the school in the current system is important for families and many expressed a concern as to how this liaison would be managed in a fee-for-service system.

"They go out of their way to be part of my child's early intervention and education strategy."

"...liaison with school hearing support officer (this is invaluable!!)"

"Ongoing support to Hearing Support units in public school as currently exists through Australian Hearing."

"I want to ensure that there is an ethos in the service provider that will see it as their role to liaise with other professionals: school, doctor, speech pathologist and so on."

"If Australian hearing goes out of business it will be a great loss to 1000s of families. Australian Hearing also have a close working relationship to all of the teachers of the deaf who support the children in schools. If the children move

away from Australian Hearing to other service providers it will be extremely difficult for those teaching professionals to provide consistent, quality care and communication between what is happening in the child's school environment and what may end up being a multitude of service providers.”

What are the stakeholder needs during the transition process?

- Parents want information and engagement. Many parents indicated the lack of information to date has been a frustration and others indicated the kind of information they need.

“Being provided with information! We have received no information at all!”

“We need more personalized info, maybe there could be meetings set up at local Centrelink offices. Or [a] pre qualified web based form, to see how much we will be [entitled] to so that we all might be able to make our minds up about this change and whether or not it is suited for us all?”

“What it actually means in laymans terms for my child. What it will actually provide.”

“Child entitlements on terms of range of devices they can access and when, how many visits each year, support for repairs and troubleshooting. Professional qualifications of audiologists and experience with children. Full disclosure of any incentives from commercial suppliers, conflicts of interest.”

- Many parents discussed the advice and support they receive from parent groups is very helpful in keeping them up-to-date.

“Honest advice from other parents and parent support groups like ADK.”

“Talking to other families who have members with a hearing loss, discussions with our early intervention providers, facebook aussie deaf kids”

“As we move through the different phases of life and education input is needed in different ways. After hours support via well laid out and researched websites and forums important. Input from other parents also important - they get it.”

We asked parents what sources of information would be helpful in the transition period. Information from their current audiologists was a clear preference with 90 percent of respondents indicating this would be most helpful. This was followed by a hearing services website (64.5%) and written information (63.5%) and an independent family advisor (62.5%). This indicates that the audiologists at Australian Hearing will need to be prepared to provide families with information about the transition process and have information they can provide, or direct families to, when required.

The plea of one parent sums up the views of many. She wrote simply -
“Some one to talk to.”

What are the obstacles we need to overcome?

It is evident from the survey responses that the current hearing services program for children is meeting the needs of children and their families. From a parent perspective, there needs to be open and transparent discussion and information from both the Office of Hearing Services and the National Disability Insurance Agency about what the change in services will actually mean for their child.

Parents want the new system to be the same or better than the current system but fear this will not be the result in this new funding regime.

- There is considerable concern and distrust amongst families about what the transition to the NDIS and a contestable environment will mean for the quality of services provided to their child in the future.

“What can the NDIS do that improves an excellent service? if it isn't going to be better than what is currently available, shouldn't it be left alone?”

“Will it just be the same AHS but funded through the NDIS? If not, then what will the new service look like?”

“My concern is not about improvement but the potential that the service will not be as good.”

“Is there any risk that services currently available will no longer be available?”

“Feedback I have heard from people in the trial sites around hearing issues through my personal networks indicates that the process for accessing services is frustrating, clunky and lacking in disability specific expertise. If this is not going to improve things, what is the point?”

- Parents fear the quality of devices, repairs and upgrades will be compromised with the transition to the NDIS. Parents are also concerned that the change will mean more out-of-pocket expenses for them that may challenge their ability to optimise their child's hearing.

“Are we still going to be entitled to access the same type of services we currently get without having to 'fight' or 'prove' that we need it. My child is deaf and that is not going to change. The best technology ensures the best outcome for hearing impaired people.”

“Is this likely to result in us having to pay out of pocket to receive the same level of technology that we receive at the moment?”

- Only two parents reported they were looking forward to the opportunity to choose a private provider.

“I would love the opportunity to be able to go where we want for Audiology services...”

And finally, we asked parents who are already receiving funding through the NDIS about their experiences. This was a small sample but one parent has a positive insight about moving to the NDIS and a word of warning.

“The [NDIS] is great - has taken a lot of financial pressure off us - BUT - you need to know what you want & we worry about all the people that will miss out for their children because they don't know what they want or need.”

Appendix

Table 1: Demographic details of the respondents

	n	%
Relationship		
Mother	95	96.9
Father	3	3.1
Total	98	100
Language spoken at home		
English	91	94.8
Auslan	1	1.0
Other	1	1.0
Unknown	3	3.1
Total	96	100
Highest level of education		
High school	13	13.5
Trade/vocational/technical	23	24.0
Undergraduate degree	25	26.0
Postgraduate degree	31	31.3
Unknown	5	5.2
Total	96	100
Employment status		
Unemployed	2	2.1
Self-employed	4	4.2
Part-time	43	44.8
Full-time	17	17.7
Homemaker	25	26.0
Student	2	2.1
Unknown	3	3.1
Total	96	100
Location		
Metropolitan	61	63.5
Regional	21	21.9
Rural	9	9.4
Remote	2	2.1
Unknown	3	3.1
Total	96	100
State		
ACT	7	7.3
NSW	50	52.1
NT	1	1.0
QLD	10	10.4
SA	2	2.1
TAS	1	1.0
VIC	17	17.7
WA	5	5.2
Unknown	3	3.1
Total	96	100

Table 2: Demographic details and hearing status of children

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Total
Age	n	n	n	n
0-6 months	6	0	0	6
6-12 months	1	0	0	1
12-24 months	2	0	0	2
2-5 years	19	4	0	23
5-12 years	46	1	2	49
12-18 years	24	3	0	27
Total	98	8	2	108
Identified through newborn hearing screening program				
Yes	44	4	2	50
No	50	4	0	54
Total	94	8	2	108
Hearing loss				
Bilateral	71	7	2	80
Unilateral	25	1	0	26
Total	96	8	2	106
Hearing device				
Hearing aid(s)	58	3	2	63
Cochlear implant(s)	30	5	0	35
Bone conduction aid	5	0	0	5
Total	93	8	2	103
Use of hearing device				
Always	70	5	1	76
Almost always	17	1	1	19
Sometimes	4	1	0	5
Almost never	0	0	0	0
Never	0	0	0	0
Total	91	7	2	100
Additional needs				
Yes	32	3	1	36
No	65	5	1	71
Total	97	8	2	107
NDIS participant				
	n	%		
Yes	8	8.3		
No	84	87.5		
In transition to the NDIS	4	4.2		
Total	96	100		

Table 3: I know about the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the services it will provide my child

	n	%
Strongly disagree	29	29.6
Somewhat disagree	22	22.4
Neither agree not disagree	16	16.3
Somewhat agree	21	21.4
Strongly agree	5	5.1
Other (Comment)	5	5.1
	98	100

Table 4: Listed below are some sources of information that may be helpful as the Hearing Services Program moves to the NDIS. Please indicate the response that best describes how helpful each option would be for you.

	Extremely helpful	Very helpful	Moderately helpful	Slightly helpful	Not at all helpful	Don't know	Unknown	Total
Hearing services website	36	26	18	10	2	3	1	96
Written information	29	32	22	8	1	2	2	96
Audiologist	65	21	8	0	1	1	0	96
Independent family advisor	33	27	14	4	3	14	1	96

Table 5: What aspects of an audiology service are important to you? Please indicate the response that best describes how important each of the listed are to you.

	Very unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat important	Very important	Unknown/Don't know	Total
Experience of audiologist	1 (1.0%)	0	0	4 (4.2%)	89 (92.7%)	2 (2.1%)	96
Audiologist has paediatric experience	2 (2.1%)	0	0	3 (3.1%)	91 (94.8%)	0	96
Audiologist has experience with complex needs	1 (1.0%)	3 (3.1%)	16 (16.7%)	26 (27.1%)	45 (46.9%)	5 (5.2%)	96
Liaison with other professionals	2 (2.1%)	0	1 (1.0%)	17 (17.7%)	75 (78.1%)	1 (1.0%)	96
Appointment time availability	2 (2.1%)	0	3 (3.1%)	30 (31.3%)	59 (61.4%)	2 (2.1%)	96
Distance from home	1 (1.0%)	3 (3.1%)	9 (9.4%)	42 (43.8%)	39 (40.6%)	2 (2.1%)	96
Quality of devices available	2 (2.1%)	0	0	4 (4.2%)	86 (89.6%)	4 (4.2%)	96
Regular upgrades of equipment	2 (2.1%)	0	1 (1.0%)	8 (8.3%)	81 (84.4%)	4 (4.2%)	96
Quick repair service	2 (2.1%)	0	1 (1.0%)	2 (2.1%)	86 (89.6%)	5 (5.2%)	96
Loaner device availability	2 (2.1%)	0	4 (4.2%)	17 (17.7%)	67 (69.8%)	6 (6.3%)	96
Amount of out-of-pocket expenses	2 (2.1%)	0	3 (3.1%)	20 (20.8%)	68 (70.8%)	3 (3.1%)	96
Information and advisory service	2 (2.1%)	0	2 (2.1%)	17 (17.7%)	69 (71.9%)	6 (6.3%)	96
Clear feedback/complaints mechanism	0	2 (2.1%)	5 (5.2%)	35 (36.5%)	53 (55.2%)	1 (1.0%)	96

Survey: Hearing Services Program transition to NDIS Survey

Does your child currently receive hearing services through Australian Hearing? If the answer is yes – we need your feedback and perspective!

By 2019-20, the Hearing Services Program will transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The Office of Hearing Services (OHS) administers the Hearing Services Program, and has identified a range of issues which need to be worked through to ensure a smooth transition of Hearing Services to the NDIS for program clients, i.e. your child/children with a hearing loss.

OHS is holding a series of workshops and have asked us to consult with families to get your views on a number of these issues. The easiest way for everyone to have their say is through a survey. We are asking parents of children 18 years or younger and who currently receive services from Australian Hearing to complete this survey. The survey will be available until 18 September 2015.

**This survey is anonymous. You can write as much or as little as you like.
Thank you for your participation.**

**If you have any questions about the survey, please contact
Ann Porter – ann.porter@aussiedeafkids.org.au**

Section 1

This section asks a few questions about your child/children who CURRENTLY receives hearing services from Australian Hearing.

Your relationship to the child currently receiving services through Australian Hearing

- Mother
 Father
 Other

How many of your children currently attend Australian Hearing for audiology services?

- One
 Two
 Three
 Other

Please indicate the current age of each child who attends Australian Hearing.

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
0-6 months	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6-12 months	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12-24 months	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2-5 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5-12 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12-18 years	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate if your child/children's hearing loss was identified through newborn hearing screening.

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Yes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate each child's hearing loss

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Bilateral (hearing loss in both ears)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unilateral (hearing loss in one ear only)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please indicate the hearing device/device(s) each child currently uses.

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Hearing aid(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cochlear implant(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Bone conduction device	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often does your child/children wear their hearing device(s)?

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Always	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Almost always	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Almost never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Don't know	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Does your child have any condition other than deafness that might affect development or education?

	Child 1	Child 2	Child 3	Child 4
Yes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not sure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
N/A	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I know about the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and the services it will provide my child

- Strongly disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat agree
- Strongly agree

Comment

Section 2

This section is about the transition of the Hearing Services Program to the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

You will be able to choose the audiology service for your child - either Australian Hearing or another provider.

Think back to when your baby was diagnosed with a hearing loss. Do you think you would have managed to find the best audiology service for your baby without the clear pathway from newborn hearing screening to Australian Hearing?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure
- Comment

What aspects of an audiology service are important to you?

Please indicate the response that best describes how important each of the listed are to you.

	Very unimportant	Somewhat unimportant	Neither important nor unimportant	Somewhat important	Very important	Don't know
Experience of audiologist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Audiologist has experience with babies and children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Audiologist has experience with children with complex needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Liaison with other professionals e.g. early intervention/school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Appointment time availability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Distance from home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of devices available	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regular upgrades of equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quick repair service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Loaner devices availability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Amount of out-of-pocket expenses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Information and advisory service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Clear feedback/complaints mechanism	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Do you have any other comments about the aspects of the future audiology service under the NDIS that will be important to you.

Listed below are some sources of information that may be helpful as the Hearing Services Program moves to the NDIS . Please indicate the response that best describes how helpful each option would be for you.

	Extremely helpful	Very helpful	Moderately helpful	Slightly helpful	Not at all helpful	Don't know
Hearing services website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Written information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Audiologist	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Independent family advisor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What information and support will help you to find the best audiology service for your child when hearing services transitions to the NDIS?

What do you think works well with the current service provided by Australian Hearing?

What do you think could be improved when the Hearing Services Program moves to the NDIS?

What questions would you like us to ask the Office of Hearing Services about the Hearing Services Program moving to the NDIS.

Does your child(ren) currently receive services through the National Disability Insurance Scheme?

- Yes
- No
- In transition to the NDIS
- Comment

How helpful has your NDIS planner been in helping you plan for your child's needs?

- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful

- Neither helpful nor unhelpful
- Somewhat unhelpful
- Very unhelpful

Can you tell us what you found helpful and/or unhelpful in your meetings with your NDIS planner?

Do you have any thoughts about the information and support parents with a newly diagnosed baby will need for a smooth pathway from newborn hearing screening to the NDIS and the hearing services program?

**Section 3
Information about yourself**

How old are you?

- 18-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-54
- 55-64
- 65+

Hearing status of your child's immediate family

	Hearing	Hard of hearing/hearing impaired	Deaf	Unilateral hearing loss	N/A
Mother	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Father	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sibling 1	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sibling 2	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sibling 3	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sibling 4	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What language is the MAIN LANGUAGE you use at home?

- English
- Auslan

Other

What State or Territory do you live in?

-- Select --

What location would BEST describe where you live?

- City
- Regional
- Rural
- Remote

Your employment status

- Unemployed
- Self-employed
- Part-time
- Full-time
- Homemaker
- Student
- Retired
- Military

Your HIGHEST level of education

- High School
- Trade/Vocational/Technical
- Undergraduate degree
- Postgraduate degree

Any other comments you would like to add about the transition of the Hearing Services Program to the National Disability Insurance Scheme?