



**Australian Government**

**Department of Health**

## Consumer Representative Forum on Hearing

### Communiqué 10 February 2018

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The Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP, Minister for Aged Care and Minister for Indigenous Health, met with consumer representative groups on Saturday 10 February 2018 to discuss contemporary issues faced by families and individuals living with a hearing impairment, listen to their views on hearing related topics and provide an opportunity for representatives to discuss key issues that are affecting consumers.

Minister Wyatt reflected on the range of recent reports and reviews on hearing health in Australia including the Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport, “*Still waiting to be heard...*”. He acknowledged the breadth of issues raised across all of these reports and the need for a cohesive approach across the sector to address them. Minister Wyatt also noted that many of the issues raised by consumer representatives were outside of the Health Portfolio and spanned across state and territory government responsibilities. This included matters relating to education, social services and employment.

Key themes discussed during the forum included:

- the importance of adopting a consistent approach across Australia to prevent hearing loss,
- the inconsistent access to services for individuals,
- the varied levels of rehabilitation support offered across Australia
- differences observed in educational, social and emotional support provided to children within the school environment.
- the stigma associated with having a hearing impairment, and
- the difficulties faced by hearing impaired people.

Minister Wyatt called for the development of a roadmap for hearing health that provides the basis for the sector, consumers and Governments to move forward with a collective understanding of the issues and actions that will lead to improvements in hearing health for all Australian. The roadmap would be co-designed and developed with the hearing sector ensuring that representation across the sector, including consumer groups, is appropriate and equitable. It will set out the short, medium and long-term actions leading the sector to the destination that addresses the issues identified. A similar road map approach has been successfully developed for the aged care sector - [Aged Care Roadmap](#).

Minister Wyatt thanked members for their valuable contributions and insights provided on the day. The Department of Health will continue to work with industry and consumer partners to develop the hearing health roadmap.