

Response ID [REDACTED]

Submitted to **Hearing Services Program Review - Consultation Paper**

Submitted on [REDACTED]

Overview

About you

Please check this box if you would like your response to be confidential

I would like my response to be confidential:

No

What is your organisation? (please provide your name if you are an individual)

Name:

Odio Tech Pty Ltd

How can we contact you?

Email:

[REDACTED]

Telephone:

[REDACTED]

Which of the following best describes you or your organisation?

[REDACTED]

Introduction

1. What should be the objectives and scope of the Program?

Response to Topic

Response to 'objectives and scope' topic:

Tinnitus is commonly described as a ringing in the ears. It affects an estimated 2.4 million people in Australia and over 700 million people worldwide. Recent studies have shown the individual economic loss can be up to \$30,000 annually which includes lost earnings, productivity, and health expenses. The cost to society as a whole has been estimated at upwards of \$2 billion annually in Australia.

Rehabilitation for tinnitus sufferers is currently not considered in the hearing rehabilitation program.

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2. Which consumers should be eligible for Program subsidies?

Response to Topic

Response to Topic:

Tinnitus has an impact on the quality of life of tinnitus sufferers including symptoms such as sleep disturbance, anxiety and depression. It is likely that these patients would have been seeking help through a GP or audiologist for these symptoms but have experienced barriers accessing helpful care.

Tinnitus sufferers should be a category of people who can access taxpayer funded hearing services.

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3. How well does the Program interface with other schemes?

Response to Topic

Response to Topic:

NA. There is currently no hearing services provided to the 2.4 million people in Australia who are suffering from tinnitus.

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4. Does the Program sufficiently support hearing loss prevention?**Response to Topic****Response to Topic:**

Hearing loss prevention is critical to avoid hearing damage. The first sign of hearing damage is often a ringing in your ears. The ringing can become permanent and debilitating. Hearsmart website is a great initiative and should be promoted more to sensitize the general public to the irreversible effect of noise exposure.

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5. Are the Program's assessment services and rehabilitation activities meeting consumer needs?**Response to Topic****Response to Topic:**

Tinnitus can be experienced in the absence of hearing loss. Therefore the current criteria of a 3 frequency average hearing loss of greater than 23dB is not appropriate for this sub-category of patient. Moreover, a hearing aid are only one element of the suite of evidence based tools.

In fact, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is currently the most effective intervention. Currently, patients who require additional support and therapy are only very rarely supported,

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6. Is the Program supportive of consumer choice and control?**Response to Topic****Response to Topic:****File upload:**

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7. Are the Program's service delivery models making best use of technological developments and services?**Response to Topic****Response to Topic:**

Technology has transformed health care significantly in the past decade. The ease of access to devices such as smartphones is changing the landscape for health care delivery and this evolution not only, opens great opportunity to address the main challenge of delivering effective tinnitus therapy to sufferers but facilitates a more personalised form of therapy targeted towards the individual's specific area of need. In addition, the cost of online therapy will be a fraction of the cost of a face-to-face consultation and will overcome the obstacle of distance, time and availability.

For tinnitus patients, validated mobile app that deliver therapy directly to the patient's mobile device are a way to deliver content centred to the patient's specific areas of need. Moreover, it has the potential to deliver sound therapy library as well as cognitive behavioural strategies to alleviate anxiety and depression induced by tinnitus. For patients who require a more intensive degree of intervention, having the option to engage with a qualified psychologist through video-conferencing would be appropriate.

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8. Does the Program sufficiently support consumers in thin markets?**Response to Topic****Response to Topic:**

For tinnitus sufferers, it is difficult to get psychological support in regional, rural or remote areas.

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9. Are there opportunities to improve the administration of the Program?**Response to Topic**

Response to Topic:

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10. Does the Program effectively make use of data and information to inform decision-making?

Response to Topic

Response to Topic:

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Would you like to provide additional information?

If you wish to upload an additional document in response to this consultation, please do so here. Please note that PDF or DOC formats are preferred. Additional documents can be submitted via email to hearing-review@health.gov.au

Upload additional files here:

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