



Summary of proposed changes for consultation

The following table summarises suggested changes to the current Schedule. The proposed approach being explored is to reduce the number of service items to around ten, to minimise current repetition and simplify claiming.

The new items in the left column are being suggested to replace the items in the middle column. The right column briefly covers the rationale or justification for the suggested change as well as provide some supporting information.

New item/frequency	Current item/s	Supporting information
Assessment Available every five years or via revalidated service	600, 610 Assessments 800, 810 Reassessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will remove dependencies on 600 prior to an 800.
Clinical Session Available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> every year, or every two years for clients who don't meet the device eligibility criteria or via revalidated service if already claimed 	670: Rehab service (unaided), 680, 681: Rehab Plus (2&1 sessions) 920,930,940: Client review (unaided, monoaural or ALD, binaural)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client can access a greater breadth of activities and time frames in which to receive services. Recognises importance of clinical expertise and decision making. This provides a broader suite of activities to choose to tailor to each individual client's needs. Will provide greater access and flexibility for rehabilitation activities and to whom they can be provided.
Fitting Available every five years if clinically necessary, meets device eligibility criteria and ECRs.	630, 631, 640, 641: Initial fittings 650, 651, 660, 661: Initial fitting (no Maintenance Agreement) 760, 761, 770, 771: Subsequent initial fittings 820, 821, 830, 831: Refittings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncouples the fitting from the follow up – allowing claiming for fitting and devices at the time of fitting. If devices are returned, allows recovery of the devices without needed to recover the fitting service and reclaim. One fitting service item claimed for monaural and binaural fitting (and claim for one or two devices). ALD provision is provided through ALD supply item
Follow Up Required 6-12 weeks after fitting	Previously part of Fitting items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unbundled from fitting service Mandatory following fitting service or fitting service may be recovered Should increase transparency of monitoring client outcomes. Will allow provider to claim the Fitting earlier. Should increase the time for client to acclimatise to device before accepting.



<p>Supply of Assistive Listening Device Available every five years if clinically necessary, meets device eligibility criteria and ECRs.</p>	<p>635, 636, 655, 656: Initial ALD fittings 825, 826: ALD Refittings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidated ALD item • Mandatory follow up at least 7 days after supply to check the success of the service.
<p>Remote Control Available if client is aided but unable to independently use their device controls</p>	<p>4</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cap could be reduced to \$100 consistent with approximately 60% of claims for remote controls in 2023 being less than \$100.
<p>Repairs Available for repairs outside warranty or consumer law provision</p>	<p>Covered by annual Maintenance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For repairs where the device needs to be repaired by the manufacturer. • This would improve visibility of frequency and types of program devices needing repair. • Repair quotes kept on file when repairs undertaken and claimed. • Device to be replaced if repair cost quote is more than the device subsidy amount
<p>Replacements Two replacements allowed per ear every five years or via revalidated service if additional replacements required</p>	<p>840 & 850: Replacement of Lost/DBR Device – Monaural and Binaural</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One item for monaural and binaural replacement service (and claim for one or two devices). • Replacement available if the device is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lost ○ Damaged beyond repair ○ The repair cost is more than the device subsidy amount • Will require a new program form (Lost Device Declaration) to explain why a replacement is needed, rather than a Commonwealth Statutory Declaration - simpler for the client and provider. • New ECR will allow the client to be refit with an approved device if the device that should be replaced is no longer available on the schedule.
<p>Spare Devices Available for clients with only one aidable ear</p>	<p>960 Spare device</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When a replacement spare is required, due to being lost, DBR or no longer suitable, a new spare device claim would be submitted. • Better transparency over provision of spares instead of claiming a replacement when a new spare device is required.
<p>Miscellaneous For use if directed by the program</p>	<p>6: Miscellaneous</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change.



Other suggested changes

Maintenance: In addition to a new repair service item, the department proposes to:

- remove maintenance agreements
- remove all maintenance claim items (700, 710, 711, 722, 790 and 791)
- introduce a quarterly auto-payment to providers based on number of active clients with devices that have had an approved claim within the past 2 years. This will cover battery supply, consumables and minor repairs.

Client Maintenance Co-payment: A maintenance co-payment for fully subsidised devices will no longer be charged to the client.

DVA Maintenance Co-payment: There will no longer be a maintenance co-payment service item for DVA Gold or White Card holders (currently item 777).

Replacement Co-payments: Replacement co-payments will be per device. The current replacement co-payment exemption items (555 and 888) are not needed as the amount will be included in a replacement claim in the portal for those clients.

New program form justifying replacements: The program is seeking to change the requirement for replacements and replace the statutory declaration requirement for lost devices with a program form signed by the client. See draft Lost Device Declaration provided as part of this consultation.

Devices Currently claimed with a Fitting. [Categories 1,2,3 and non-standard devices (ALD, BiCROS, CROS, bone conductor)]. Will be updated after a project commissioned by the department on technologies but will still be claimed separate to a Fitting. If a device is to be returned, the device fee will be recovered, rather than the current situation where items 1 or 2 are claimed.

Program standards

Minimum hearing loss threshold: Recommend this be renamed device eligibility criteria which incorporates:

- a new questionnaire about motivation (for initial fittings only), and
- a pure tone threshold, using a 4 FAHL (similar to the current 3 FAHL), or
- evidence of other indicators such as fatigue, hearing difficulty and/or tinnitus.

Eligibility Criteria for Refitting (ECR): Suggested changes include:

- New ECR for situations where:
 - a client's device requires repeated warranty repairs and cannot be optimised to meet the client's needs
 - a client loses a device, and it is no longer available on the schedule, or they cannot afford to replace with the same device.
- Removing the current ECR for clients requiring a telecoil because legislation stipulates that clients are required to be offered telecoils before being fitted.