

Choosing an Audiologist or Hearing Care Professional

Hearing loss is usually a chronic condition which requires ongoing care from an audiologist, so it's important that you find a hearing care provider with whom you can build a long-term relationship, like what you may already have with your GP. Getting a hearing aid is just one step in a lifelong hearing rehabilitation process. If you don't choose wisely that hearing journey could become very frustrating.

What's the difference between an Audiologist & an Audiometrist?

Audiometrists	Audiologists
Audiometrists are required to have completed a minimum Diploma in Audiometry (TAFE) & have received in-house training from the hearing aid industry. They are required to have a minimum of three years on the job experience in hearing assessment, hearing device prescription, fitting and management of hearing loss.	Audiologists are allied health professionals who are university graduates with post graduate qualifications in Audiology or equivalent training, plus a minimum of twelve months supervised clinical practice. They have broad responsibilities and expertise in all non-medical areas of hearing services, including complex hearing assessment, hearing device prescription, fitting, management, hearing rehabilitation and more.

Audiologists & Audiometrists are both qualified to undertake hearing assessments; however, audiologists can perform a more complex & detailed investigation of your hearing issues. Note that because there is no Government regulation in the hearing care industry a person does not actually need to be accredited to provide hearing services. Make sure you check for a provider number or professional body registration number for proof of registration.

* Relevant info on Page 4: [How to check if your hearing care provider is qualified?](#)

Types of hearing care providers in Australia

There are several types of businesses offering hearing services. Understanding how they operate can help you choose the provider that best meets your needs.

1. Large Retail Chains

Owned or partly owned by hearing aid manufacturers. These clinics often promote specific brands of hearing aids.

2. Government-Run Clinics

Operated by the Australian Government through **Hearing Australia** (formerly Australian Hearing). Hearing Australia centres provide hearing services to a wide range of clients, including pensioners, veterans, children, and eligible adults under the Hearing Services Program, as well as self-funded (private) clients.

* Relevant info: [HMA Café and Chat session about Hearing Australia](#)

3. Non-Audiology Retailers

Some optical chains and warehouse-style stores also sell hearing aids, but they may not employ qualified audiologists.

4. ENT-Linked Clinics

Partly owned by Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) specialists who may refer patients to these clinics.

5. Retail Hearing Outlets

Located in shopping centres and focused on retail-style service and product sales.

6. Independent Audiology Clinics

Small, locally owned practices offering a wide range of hearing solutions with a strong client-centred focus.

7. University Hearing Clinics

Run by universities to provide training for audiology students and promote evidence-based practice.

A clinic's overall standards and professional practices are usually more important than which individual clinician you see, as many clinics have several audiologists who follow the same testing and care protocols. However, it's still important to find an **audiologist you feel comfortable with**, someone who listens, communicates clearly, and understands your individual needs.

Useful Questions to Ask when making a hearing appointment

Clinic & Accessibility

- ☐ Can I get to the clinic easily?
- ☐ Do they offer ongoing support, minor repairs, and hearing aid accessories onsite?

Clinician & Assessment

- ☐ Will I see an audiologist or an audiometrist?
- ☐ How long will the appointment take?
A hearing screening appointment is usually less than 30 minutes, while a full assessment appointment can take from 1 to 1½ hours.
- ☐ Is it a hearing screening only or a comprehensive hearing assessment? Ask the costs.
A complete hearing assessment helps the specialist understand your lifestyle, hearing needs, and hearing difficulties from the start. It also enables them to recommend the most suitable options for you.

Funding & Pricing

- ☐ Is there any Medicare rebates available for the hearing test or appointment?
- ☐ Can the clinic provide prices or at least price ranges?
- ☐ Does the clinic provide free services to pensioners and veterans, or only self-funded (private) clients?

Clinic Type & Experience

- ☐ Is the clinic part of a chain, a single location, a partner/affiliate, or an independently owned clinic?
- ☐ How long has the clinic/company been operating? Ideally 6+ years
- ☐ Is it Australian-owned?

Hearing Aids & Brands

- ☐ Does the clinic sell multiple major brands of hearing aids?
Look for clinics that have at least four brands available (eg. Phonak, Oticon, Signia & Resound) to ensure you get the best choice for your needs and budget.
- ☐ Can aids be adjusted at other clinics?
It might also be prudent to find out if the brand that they sell can be adjusted by other clinics. Some brands that are sold through non-audiological retailers are re-branded and identifying what manufacturer/model the hearing aid is can be challenging for other clinics.

How to check if your hearing care provider is qualified?

Who can assess hearing?

Both audiologists and audiometrists are qualified to undertake hearing assessments. However, audiologists can perform more complex and detailed investigations into hearing issues.

Why you should check credentials?

Because hearing care is not government-regulated, anyone can technically offer hearing services, even without proper accreditation. To ensure you're receiving safe and professional care, always ask for proof of registration.

What to ask for?

- Do they have a **Provider or QP number** if they work under the Australian Government's Hearing Services Program?
- Which recognised professional body are they a member of? And their membership number?
 - **Audiology Australia (AudA)** – audiology.asn.au
 - **Australian College of Audiology (ACAud)** – acaud.org
 - **Hearing Aid Audiometrist Society of Australia (HAASA)** – haasa.org.au

Asking these questions ensures your hearing care provider is accredited and meets professional standards.

How to verify registration?

1. Visit the professional body's website (links above)
2. Look for "Find a Practitioner" or "Check Accreditation"
3. Confirm your provider's name and membership are listed
4. If unsure, contact the organisation directly to confirm their status

If you're concerned

For information on how hearing practitioners are regulated, or to raise a concern, you can visit:

Hearing Professional Conduct and Complaints Body

<https://hpccb.org.au/faqs/how-are-hearing-service-practitioners-regulated/>

Support Guides are shared by HMA as a service to members and those in the community who have an interest in hearing loss. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, however HMA accepts no responsibility for any adverse consequences arising from the contents of these sheets. HMA information sheets are for personal use only. Downloads and printing allowable for whole sheets. Contact HMA with queries or amendments.

Find out more and join HMA for additional member benefits at www.hearingmattersaustralia.org