

A New Era in Hearing Aid Fitting: What NAL-NL3 means for better hearing outcomes

By **Brendan Lonergan**

Updates to hearing aid fitting software don't come around that often—in fact, the last time was over a decade ago.

A quiet but significant milestone in hearing care has recently been reached with the global launch of new hearing aid fitting software that integrates the next generation of prescription formula known as NAL-NL3. While this development may sound highly technical, its implications are very real for people living with hearing loss—offering the potential for clearer, more comfortable, and more personalised hearing experiences.

Developed by the National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL), NAL-NL3 builds on decades of research into how hearing aids should be programmed to best match an individual's hearing needs. Prescription formulas such as NAL-NL2 have long been considered a “gold standard” in audiology, helping clinicians determine how much amplification is needed across different frequencies. NAL-NL3 represents the next step forward, incorporating updated research, real-world user feedback, and advanced modelling to further refine these settings.

What makes this latest development particularly noteworthy is that NAL-NL3 has now been integrated into fitting software used by hearing care professionals. This means audiologists can apply the new formula more easily and consistently during appointments, without needing complex workarounds or manual adjustments. For patients, this translates to fittings that are more precise from the outset, reducing the need for multiple follow-up visits to fine-tune sound quality.

According to **Brent Edwards, Director of NAL**, the integration marks a significant leap forward for clinical practice:

"This will enable hearing care professionals to harness the full power of our cutting-edge prescriptive formula, providing their patients with the most precise and personalised sound experience possible. It truly elevates the standard of care."

The new fitting software from GN Group is the first to integrate NAL-NL3 into its latest platforms, allowing clinicians to combine the prescription formula with other advanced tools. These include enhanced AutoREM (automated Real-Ear Measurement), which helps ensure that the hearing aid's sound output closely matches the user's individual ear acoustics.

The global launch also highlights the importance of collaboration between research organisations and industry.

Andreas Anderhov, Regional President of Asia-Pacific for GN Hearing, emphasised this point:

"This launch underscores GN's commitment to innovation built through partnership and clinical evidence. We are proud that the very first fitting with NAL-NL3 successfully took place at a Hearing Australia clinic. This achievement demonstrates our dedication to people-centred innovation."

The fact that the first successful fitting occurred at a Hearing Australia clinic is particularly significant. Australia has long been a global



leader in hearing research and clinical practice, and this milestone reflects the country's ongoing contribution to advancing hearing care worldwide.

Real-Ear Measurement (REM) remains one of the most important, yet sometimes underutilised, aspects of hearing aid fitting. By placing a tiny probe microphone inside the ear canal during the fitting process, clinicians can directly measure how sound behaves in that specific ear. This allows them to fine-tune amplification with a high degree of accuracy. The combination of NAL-NL3 and improved REM capabilities means that fittings are not just based on averages or predictions, but on real, measurable outcomes.

From the perspective of hearing aid users, this advancement offers several tangible benefits.

Firstly, greater personalisation.

No two hearing losses are the same, and even small differences in ear shape, lifestyle, or listening preferences can significantly affect outcomes. NAL-NL3 is designed to better account for these variables, helping deliver sound that feels more natural and easier to understand, particularly in challenging listening environments such as busy cafés, restaurants, or family gatherings.

Secondly, improved consistency in care.

One of the long-standing challenges in audiology has been variability in fitting practices between clinics and providers. By embedding a widely recognised, evidence-based prescription standard directly into fitting software, clinicians have a stronger and more consistent foundation for delivering high-quality care.

Thirdly, the potential for improved long-term satisfaction. Many hearing aid users experience an adjustment period where sounds may initially feel too sharp, too loud, or simply unfamiliar. In some cases, this can discourage regular use. More accurate first fittings, guided by NAL-NL3 and verified through REM, may help reduce this barrier, supporting greater comfort and confidence from the outset.

It is also worth noting that while technology continues to improve, outcomes still depend on access to qualified hearing care professionals and appropriate follow-up support. Even the most advanced prescription formula cannot replace the importance of a thorough hearing assessment, clear communication between clinician and client, and ongoing fine-tuning as listening needs evolve.



Image supplied by GN.

For the hearing loss community, developments like NAL-NL3 represent meaningful progress. They signal a continued commitment not only to improving hearing aid technology itself, but also to enhancing the way that technology is fitted and personalised.

Ultimately, the goal is simple: to help people hear better in the environments that matter most to them. Whether that is following a conversation in a noisy café, enjoying a family gathering, or participating in community events, improved fitting precision can make a real difference.

“Back in March 2025 I blind tested a set of Resound Omnia hearing aids including the NAL NL3 noise module. The increase in comfort quickly became

apparent when I selected the mode corresponding to the noise module even though I didn't know in advance which was which. I was immediately excited by the possibility of NAL NL3 providing more pleasing and therefore less stressful, listening in challenging situations. "

- Andrew Bellavia Aura Futurity



RESOUND Smart 3D App on smartphone.

While NAL-NL3 may be largely invisible to hearing aid users, its impact could be profound. By combining cutting-edge research, advanced software integration, and clinical best practice, this next generation of fitting technology brings us one step closer to more natural, effortless hearing, and a better quality of life for people with hearing loss.

On his visit to Australia last year for the Sydney Opera House Auracast launch, Andrew Bellavia interviewed Padraig Kitterick, Head of Audiological Science at NAL, to talk about the work behind the development of NAL-NL3.

You can watch the interview that was recently released on the *This Week in Hearing* podcast series here: **NAL-NL3: What's Changing in Hearing Aid Fitting—and Why It Matters.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDDcJWByFzo>



An Australian Government Initiative

**National
Relay
Service**

A free Australian service supporting people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech difficulties to make and receive phone calls.

NRS Chat

- Go to nrschat.nrscall.gov.au and click the **NRS Chat call** button:
- Then dial the below number call Triple Zero:

Call 000 - Chat

Call 000 - Captions

Tip: Bookmark nrschat.nrscall.gov.au on your laptop, tablet or phone.

SMS Relay

- Make a regular NRS SMS call and provide the following information
 - 000
 - FIRE or POLICE or AMBULANCE
 - Your name, location and details about the emergency

Tip: Save [0423 677 767](tel:0423677767) in your contact as an emergency access number.

The NRS APP

- Download the NRS App and click the button below to make an emergency call:

000 Emergency call only

Scan the QR code for further information



If you need further information or require assistance, contact the NRS helpdesk via -

Phone: 1800 555 660

SMS: 0416 001 350

Email: helpdesk@relayservice.com.au

Online: www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs/nrs-helpdesk/enquires

Chat: nrschat.nrscall.gov.au/nrs/internetrelay

Video: nrschat.nrscall.gov.au/contactus