

MEDIA RELEASE

New Zealand Audiological Society
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NEW ROUND OF ACC CUTS HITTING THE OLD AND VULNERABLE BEING RAMMED THROUGH

The Government is targeting the old and vulnerable with another round of rushed and ruthless ACC cuts that will hurt tens of thousands of New Zealanders who rely on ACC for their hearing aids.

“The cuts mean that everyone with a noise induced hearing loss is going to lose out,” says Lesley Hindmarsh, President of the New Zealand Audiological Society.

“ACC has always covered the full cost of the hearing assessment and hearing aids for people who have lost their hearing because of exposure to noise, regardless of how old they are. This is about to change.”

The new plans mean the Government will no longer cover the full cost of the hearing aid needed by someone who has lost their hearing because of exposure to noise.

“This impacts significantly on the elderly,” says Mrs Hindmarsh. “Many retirees have less money in their pockets as they get older, and the Government wants those with noise induced hearing loss to suddenly come up with the money to pay towards their hearing aids.

“Noise induced hearing loss is a permanent disability. It doesn’t get fixed as you get older.

“People with noise induced hearing loss can’t get half a hearing aid. If they don’t have the extra money to pay they will miss out completely,” she says.

Submissions on the changes close this Friday (June 18).

“Consultation on these changes is a farce. The New Zealand Audiological Society and a range of others have asked for more time to have our say but these requests have been rejected.

“Workers in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s are now paying the price of poor noise management practices in the workplace. Through no fault of their own these New Zealanders were subject to noisy and unsafe workplaces – the ACC no fault comprehensive cover recognised that.

“The Government’s ruthlessness towards people with noise induced hearing loss knows no bounds – these rushed changes come on top of cuts to ACC cover for people with less than 6 percent hearing loss which take effect on 1 July,” says Mrs Hindmarsh.

The New Zealand Audiological Society is the professional organisation representing qualified Audiologists and audiology in New Zealand www.audiology.org.nz.

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