



Australian Government
Department of Health

Australian Government **Hearing Service Program**

Office of Hearing Services

Regulator Performance Framework
Performance Metrics



Hearing Services Program

About the Office of Hearing Services

The Office of Hearing Services (the Office) is part of the Australian Government Department of Health, and is responsible for regulating and contracting hearing service providers.

The Office administers the *Hearing Services Administration Act 1997* (the Act), five other pieces of legislation and numerous quasi legislative instruments, to ensure hearing services provided and hearing devices fitted under the Hearing Services Program (the program) meet acceptable standards of quality and safety (performance).

The Office uses risk based auditing to ensure program clients are receiving services that meet their clinical needs and that contracted service providers are complying with program requirements.

The Office investigates complaints it receives to determine any necessary regulatory action.

For further information on the program or to contact the Office, please visit the [hearing services website](#).

Introduction

Regulator Performance Framework

The Australian Government has developed a framework to measure the performance of regulators. The [Regulator Performance Framework](#) (the Framework) comprises six outcomes-based key performance indicators (KPIs) to articulate the Government's overarching expectations of regulator performance:

1. Regulators do not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of regulated entities
2. Communication with regulated entities is clear, targeted and effective
3. Actions undertaken by regulators are proportionate to the regulatory risk being managed
4. Compliance and monitoring approaches are streamlined and coordinated
5. Regulators are open and transparent in their dealings with regulated entities
6. Regulators actively contribute to the continuous improvement of regulatory frameworks.

These KPIs are supported by measures of good regulatory performance to assist regulators in assessing their achievement of the KPIs.

The Framework commenced from 1 July 2015, with the first assessment period being the 2015-16 financial year. Further information on the Framework is available at the [Cutting Red Tape website](#).

Assessing our achievement of the KPIs

The Office has developed a series of qualitative and quantitative outputs and evidence to assess our achievement of the six KPIs and associated measures. The Service Provider Consultative Group (SPCG) and the Hearing Care Industry Association (HCIA) have agreed to provide feedback on the Office's regulatory performance prior to the self-assessment results being provided to the Health Ministerial Advisory Council for validation.

The first report assessing our achievement of the KPIs for the 2015-16 financial year, was published at www.health.gov.au in December 2016, and future reports will be published annually thereafter.

Other reports detailing information about our regulatory and corporate activities include:

- the Department of Health's annual reports (available at www.health.gov.au)
- Audit and Compliance Reports (available at www.hearingservices.gov.au)

These can be read in conjunction with the reports that will be produced against the Framework KPIs.

Our role and our stakeholders

Hearing loss affects one in six Australians and can have a significant impact on independence, participation in community life and the ability to communicate with others. The program aims to reduce the impact of hearing loss by providing eligible people with access to hearing services. The program is managed by the Office within the Department of Health.

Our overarching mission is to:

Support access to quality hearing services for eligible clients, provide better targeted hearing services and support research into hearing loss prevention and management.

While the purpose of the Framework is to encourage regulators to minimise the impact of carrying out their regulatory objectives, with a particular focus on the regulated industry, we have a broader remit, as outlined above. Therefore, we have developed outputs and activity-based evidence as required by the Framework, as well as additional outputs to demonstrate that we are fulfilling our obligations.

KPI 1 – Regulators do not unnecessarily impede the efficient operation of regulated entities.

Measures of good regulatory performance	Potential output/evidence
1. Regulators demonstrate an understanding of the operating environment of the industry or organisation, or the circumstances of individuals and the current and emerging issues that affect the sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We initiate and participate in stakeholder meetings, events, industry conferences and working groups. • We employ audiologists who maintain industry involvement, to inform understanding of the operating environment, the circumstances of individuals and current and emerging sector issues. • We undertake environmental scanning, including reviews of relevant literature reports.
2. Regulators take actions to minimise the potential for unintended negative impacts of regulatory activities on regulated entities or affected supplier industries and supply chains.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback mechanisms provide opportunities for stakeholders to comment on proposed program changes, to minimise potential for unintended impacts.
3. Regulators implement continuous improvement strategies to reduce the costs of compliance for those they regulate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within legislative constraints, we implement continuous business improvements to reduce compliance costs for industry.

KPI 2 – Communication with regulated entities is clear, targeted and effective.

Measures of good regulatory performance	Potential output/evidence
1. Regulators provide guidance and information that is up to date, clear, accessible and concise through media appropriate to the target audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance and information is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ available on the hearing services website. ○ <u>provided directly to stakeholder groups via input to their newsletters.</u> ○ <u>provided by seminar to interested groups.</u>
2. Regulators consider the impact on regulated entities and engage with industry groups and representatives of the affected stakeholders before changing policies, practices or service standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation with affected stakeholders is undertaken before processes are changed.

Measures of good regulatory performance	Potential output/evidence
3. Regulators' decisions and advice are provided in a timely manner, clearly articulating expectations and the underlying reasons for decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audit reports are processed in accordance with the Compliance Monitoring and Support Framework.
4. Regulators' advice is consistent and supports predictable outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies and frameworks are available on the hearing services website. Standard Operating Procedures are documented for internal Office processes.

KPI 3 – Actions undertaken by regulators are proportionate to the regulatory risk being managed

Measures of good regulatory performance	Potential output/evidence
1. Regulators apply a risk-based, proportionate approach to compliance obligations, engagement and regulatory enforcement actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Compliance Monitoring and Support Framework provides a proportionate approach to regulation compliance.
2. Regulators' preferred approach to regulatory risk is regularly reassessed. Strategies, activities and enforcement actions are amended to reflect changing priorities that result from new and evolving regulatory threats, without diminishing regulatory certainty or impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk and compliance procedures support governance of the program and are reviewed regularly. Mechanisms and opportunities are available for stakeholders to provide feedback about regulatory compliance activities.
3. Regulators recognise the compliance record of regulated entities, including using earned autonomy where this is appropriate. All available and relevant data on compliance, including evidence of relevant external verification is considered.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple indicators (claiming data, complaints, referrals etc.) are used to assess risk biannually. Compliance responses and actions are reduced for regulated entities with a good compliance record.

KPI 4 – Compliance and monitoring approaches are streamlined and coordinated.

Measures of good regulatory performance	Potential output/evidence
1. Regulators' information requests are tailored and only made when necessary to secure regulatory objectives, and only then in a way that minimises impact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Stakeholder Engagement Plan, reviewed annually, advises stakeholders when consultation will occur.

Measures of good regulatory performance	Potential output/evidence
2. Regulators' frequency of information collection is minimised and coordinated with similar processes including those of other regulators so that, as far as possible, information is only requested once.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Stakeholder Engagement Plan, reviewed annually, advises stakeholders when consultation will occur.
3. Regulators utilise existing information to limit the reliance on requests from regulated entities and share the information among other regulators, where possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing information sources will be considered prior to any requests of stakeholders.
4. Regulators base monitoring and inspection approaches on risk and, where possible, take into account the circumstance and operational needs of the regulated entity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A risk based approach, taking into account the circumstance and operational needs of stakeholders, is used when scheduling and prioritising compliance actions, including audits.

KPI 5 – Regulators are open and transparent in their dealings with regulated entities.

Measures of good regulatory performance	Potential output/evidence
1. Regulators' risk-based frameworks are publicly available in a format which is clear, understandable and accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The hearing services risk based Compliance Monitoring and Support Framework is published on the Office website, and updated as necessary.
2. Regulators are open and responsive to requests from regulated entities regarding the operation of the regulatory framework, and approaches implemented by regulators.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses to requests from regulated entities are made within benchmark timeframes.
3. Regulators' performance measurement results are published in a timely manner to ensure accountability to the public.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance information is published on the hearing services website.

KPI 6 – Regulators actively contribute to the continuous improvement of regulatory frameworks

Measures of good regulatory performance	Potential output/evidence
1. Regulators establish cooperative and collaborative relationships with stakeholders to promote trust and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the regulatory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We collaborate with stakeholders to improve program efficiency and effectiveness.

Measures of good regulatory performance	Potential output/evidence
framework.	
<p>2. Regulators engage stakeholders in the development of options to reduce compliance costs. This could include industry self-regulation, changes to the overarching regulatory framework, or other strategies to streamline monitoring and compliance approaches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual self-assessment processes are maintained. • Feedback mechanisms are available for regulated entities.
<p>3. Regulators regularly share feedback from stakeholders and performance information (including from inspections) with policy departments to improve the operation of the regulatory framework and administrative processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder feedback is disseminated and considered throughout the Office, the Department and Government as necessary.

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