

You might have heard in the news lately that there are many unscrupulous practices in the Hearing Aid Industry and it is a matter of "Buyer Beware". While this may be true to some extent, there are many clinics out there doing the right thing, but unfortunately it is the negative news that enjoys more media coverage than the positive.

The following checklists will help you find an ethical hearing company, a competent hearing specialist and your ideal Hearing Aid that fits with your needs. After all, hearing aids are a long-term purchase, so it's only right that you feel 100% comfortable with the hearing clinic that will see you through the process.

Feel free to use the checklists compare several companies side-by-side.

These checklists will walk you through the initial process of discovering your motivation for getting a hearing aid, contacting a company and asking the right questions, to the hearing test and hearing aid discussion, through to the hearing aid fitting process. All these steps are important to ensure you are getting the best possible solution for your requirements.

About the Author

This document was prepared and edited by two Audiologists employed by Value Hearing, Pauline Primrose-Heaney and Christo Fourie.

Value Hearing believes in empowering individuals, such as yourself, to thrive and Engage through Optimised Hearing. For us it is about getting optimal Value from your hearing solution. Value is what you get, price is what you pay. Even though our prices are very fair, it is our service that sets us apart.

This guide was prepared with this in mind and can be used anywhere in Australia to help you identify the best practices available to any hearing aid purchaser, regardless whether you choose to ever contact us or not.

You are however guaranteed that Value Hearing always abides by the best practices and our focus is exclusively on providing the best outcomes for the frequently under-served Australian with Hearing loss. If this is you, then feel free to contact us on 1300 586 104 or visit us at www.valuehearing.com.au to see if we are your ideal partner to better hearing.

Enjoy your journey to better hearing.

You may also enjoy some of the detailed articles on our blog (simply click on one to read it):

- **Hearing Aid Funding in Australia**
- **A Guide to the Must Have Hearing Aid Features**
- **How do I know if a Hearing aid will work for me or not?**
- **Don't be the 1 in 3 who ends up not using their hearing aid**
- **Everything you need to know about hearing aid batteries**
- **Hearing aid troubleshooting**
- **Discreetly improving your hearing in noise**
- **The Quality difference between various hearing aid technology levels**
- **Hearing Aids are just one step in the journey to better hearing**
- **Two ears are better than one, why professionals recommend two hearing aids**
- **What to expect from a comprehensive hearing aid assessment**
- **Don't be fooled into a decision you might regret**
- **When a hearing aid isn't actually a hearing aid**
- **Hearing Loss and the ageing brain**
- **Which is my best hearing aid**
- **The pros and cons of very small hearing aids**

1. Preparing to buy hearing aids

What are my hearing needs? (Take this page with you to your first appointment)

Five situations that I currently find hearing the most difficult, frustrating and/or limiting are:

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

Five situations that I currently find hearing the most difficult, frustrating and/or limiting are:

2. Questions to ask when making an appointment

| Clinic | Clinic | Clinic |
|--------|--------|--------|
| | | |

Is the appointment for a hearing screening only or a comprehensive hearing assessment? Are there any costs involved?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> Hearing screening (Not Ideal) <input type="radio"/> Comprehensive hearing assessment (Ideal) Cost : | <input type="radio"/> Hearing screening (Not Ideal) <input type="radio"/> Comprehensive hearing assessment (Ideal) Cost : | <input type="radio"/> Hearing screening (Not Ideal) <input type="radio"/> Comprehensive hearing assessment (Ideal) Cost : |
|---|---|---|

How long will the appointment take?

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="radio"/> <45 minutes <input type="radio"/> 1-2 hours (Ideal) Notes : | <input type="radio"/> <45 minutes <input type="radio"/> 1-2 hours (Ideal) Notes : | <input type="radio"/> <45 minutes <input type="radio"/> 1-2 hours (Ideal) Notes : |
|---|---|---|

Will I be seeing an audiologist or an audiometrist?

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Audiologist (University) <input type="radio"/> Audiometrist | <input type="radio"/> Audiologist (University) <input type="radio"/> Audiometrist | <input type="radio"/> Audiologist (University) <input type="radio"/> Audiometrist |
|--|--|--|

Are they willing to provide prices or price ranges at a minimum?

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Yes (Ideal) <input type="radio"/> No Notes : | <input type="radio"/> Yes (Ideal) <input type="radio"/> No Notes : | <input type="radio"/> Yes (Ideal) <input type="radio"/> No Notes : |
|--|--|--|

Will I be visiting a clinic in a chain, a single location clinic or a partner/affiliate clinic?

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Chain <input type="radio"/> Single clinic <input type="radio"/> Partner A Chain is a company with many outlets in several states (Great when you travel and require support. Some larger chains can be more expensive). | <input type="radio"/> Chain <input type="radio"/> Single clinic <input type="radio"/> Partner A Single clinic is limited to one State (not ideal when travelling as support only available in main offices) | <input type="radio"/> Chain <input type="radio"/> Single clinic <input type="radio"/> Partner A Partner clinic is someone who is paid by an online hearing aid retailer to fit their hearing aids (Far from ideal – who's responsible for your success)? |
|---|---|--|

About checklist

1. Preparing

2. Appointment

2. Appointment

3 & 4. Hearing test and Information

5. Recommendations

6. Hearing aid

📅 2. Questions to ask when making an appointment (Continued)

About checklist 1. Preparing 2. Appointment 2. Appointment 3 & 4. Hearing test and Information 5. Recommendations 6. Hearing aid

Are you an independently-owned clinic?

Do you sell hearing aids from any of the main manufacturers or only some of them?

- Owned by a manufacturer (limits your choice)
- Independent, but only sell some manufacturer's hearing aids (less than ideal)
- Independent and sell all manufacturers' hearing aids (at least 6 manufacturers) (Ideal)

Notes :

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- Independent and sell all manufacturers' hearing aids (at least 6 manufacturers) (Ideal)

Notes :

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- Owned by a manufacturer (limits your choice)
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- Independent and sell all manufacturers' hearing aids (at least 6 manufacturers) (Ideal)

Notes :

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Is the company Australian-owned?

- Yes
- No

- Yes
- No

- Yes
- No

Do you provide free services to pensioners and veterans (OHS) or only self-funded (private) clients?

- OHS only
- OHS & private
- Private only

- OHS only
- OHS & private
- Private only

- OHS only
- OHS & private
- Private only

OHS – refers to clinics providing free services and hearing aids to pensioners.

How long has the company been in business?

(More than 6 Years is ideal)

Notes :

Notes :

Notes :

Any other questions:

Notes :

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Notes :

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Notes :

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3. What the hearing test should entail

| Clinic | Clinic | Clinic |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Has the hearing specialist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Asked you questions about your hearing and hearing difficulties (Case History)? ○ Looked in your ear (Otoscopy)? ○ Performed a test to find the softest sounds audible using 2 different types of headphones (Pure Tone Audiometry)? ○ Performed a word test in quiet (Have you repeat single words in quiet)? ○ Performed a sentence test in noise (Have you repeat sentences in the presence of background noise)? <p>Notes :</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | <p>Has the hearing specialist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Asked you questions about your hearing and hearing difficulties (Case History)? ○ Looked in your ear (Otoscopy)? ○ Performed a test to find the softest sounds audible using 2 different types of headphones (Pure Tone Audiometry)? ○ Performed a word test in quiet (Have you repeat single words in quiet)? ○ Performed a sentence test in noise (Have you repeat sentences in the presence of background noise)? <p>Notes :</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | <p>Has the hearing specialist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Asked you questions about your hearing and hearing difficulties (Case History)? ○ Looked in your ear (Otoscopy)? ○ Performed a test to find the softest sounds audible using 2 different types of headphones (Pure Tone Audiometry)? ○ Performed a word test in quiet (Have you repeat single words in quiet)? ○ Performed a sentence test in noise (Have you repeat sentences in the presence of background noise)? <p>Notes :</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> |

4. How much information should you expect?

| Clinic | Clinic | Clinic |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Has the hearing specialist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Given you an overview of how the ear works and how we hear sounds? ○ Explained the tests performed during the test and your results? <p>Notes :</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | <p>Has the hearing specialist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Given you an overview of how the ear works and how we hear sounds? ○ Explained the tests performed during the test and your results? <p>Notes :</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | <p>Has the hearing specialist:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Given you an overview of how the ear works and how we hear sounds? ○ Explained the tests performed during the test and your results? <p>Notes :</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> |

About checklist

1. Preparing

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5. What should you expect from the audiologist's recommendations?

| Clinic | Clinic | Clinic |
|--|--|--|
| | | |
| <p>If hearing aids are recommended, has the hearing specialist:</p> | <p>If hearing aids are recommended, has the hearing specialist:</p> | <p>If hearing aids are recommended, has the hearing specialist:</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Provided you with information on what hearing aids are suitable for you & why? <input type="radio"/> Recommended the solution based on your test results including your speech in noise results? If not, ask why. <input type="radio"/> Discussed the benefits and limitations of each of the hearing aid options recommended to you? <input type="radio"/> Provided you with a written quote that lists the hearing aid manufacturer and specific model, price and what is included in the price?(Be suspicious of clinics that use designations such as Silver, Gold, Platinum or Diamond Level – these are designed to stop you from comparing prices as they aren't actually product names) <input type="radio"/> Are you required to pay a non-refundable deposit before the hearing aids are ordered?(Avoid - this clinic expects Buyers Regret) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Provided you with information on what hearing aids are suitable for you & why? <input type="radio"/> Recommended the solution based on your test results including your speech in noise results? If not, ask why. <input type="radio"/> Discussed the benefits and limitations of each of the hearing aid options recommended to you? <input type="radio"/> Provided you with a written quote that lists the hearing aid manufacturer and specific model, price and what is included in the price?(Be suspicious of clinics that use designations such as Silver, Gold, Platinum or Diamond Level – these are designed to stop you from comparing prices as they aren't actually product names) <input type="radio"/> Are you required to pay a non-refundable deposit before the hearing aids are ordered?(Avoid - this clinic expects Buyers Regret) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> Provided you with information on what hearing aids are suitable for you & why? <input type="radio"/> Recommended the solution based on your test results including your speech in noise results? If not, ask why. <input type="radio"/> Discussed the benefits and limitations of each of the hearing aid options recommended to you? <input type="radio"/> Provided you with a written quote that lists the hearing aid manufacturer and specific model, price and what is included in the price?(Be suspicious of clinics that use designations such as Silver, Gold, Platinum or Diamond Level – these are designed to stop you from comparing prices as they aren't actually product names) <input type="radio"/> Are you required to pay a non-refundable deposit before the hearing aids are ordered?(Avoid - this clinic expects Buyers Regret) |
| <p>Do the hearing aids you've been recommended come with:</p> | <p>Do the hearing aids you've been recommended come with:</p> | <p>Do the hearing aids you've been recommended come with:</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> A 3 year manufacturer's warranty (standard in Australia)? <input type="radio"/> Aftercare service (appointments after the fitting to ensure initial benefit)? Are six-monthly hearing aid checks recommended? Are you automatically recalled for these appointments? <input type="radio"/> Extra batteries? How much do batteries cost? <input type="radio"/> A return or exchange period? Are there any fees that apply should you return or exchange the hearing aids? <input type="radio"/> Did you feel under any pressure from the clinician to act today or else...? (If so, avoid this clinic) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> A 3 year manufacturer's warranty (standard in Australia)? <input type="radio"/> Aftercare service (appointments after the fitting to ensure initial benefit)? Are six-monthly hearing aid checks recommended? Are you automatically recalled for these appointments? <input type="radio"/> Extra batteries? How much do batteries cost? <input type="radio"/> A return or exchange period? Are there any fees that apply should you return or exchange the hearing aids? <input type="radio"/> Did you feel under any pressure from the clinician to act today or else...? (If so, avoid this clinic) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> A 3 year manufacturer's warranty (standard in Australia)? <input type="radio"/> Aftercare service (appointments after the fitting to ensure initial benefit)? Are six-monthly hearing aid checks recommended? Are you automatically recalled for these appointments? <input type="radio"/> Extra batteries? How much do batteries cost? <input type="radio"/> A return or exchange period? Are there any fees that apply should you return or exchange the hearing aids? <input type="radio"/> Did you feel under any pressure from the clinician to act today or else...? (If so, avoid this clinic) |
| <p>Notes :</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | <p>Notes :</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> | <p>Notes :</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> |

6. Hearing aid fitting appointment

During the fitting appointment, has the hearing specialist:

- Performed verification tests on your hearing aids (i.e. inserted small tubes into your ear canals, played some sounds and measured how the hearing aids are working in your ears)?

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- Explained how to care for your hearing aids & manage them (e.g. distinguishing left from right aids, inserting, removing, cleaning, controls)?

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- Discussed what you might expect from your hearing aids over the next couple of weeks?

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- Discussed how to best get used to wearing your hearing aids over the next couple of weeks?

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- Discussed what happens next?

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- Has a follow-up appointment been made?

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