

# Enhancing Access and Services for Aided Australian Children: Updated Triage, Telehealth and Impression Scanning

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**Hearing Australia** is funded by the Australian government to provide hearing services and devices to Australian citizens or permanent residents under 26 years of age who have a permanent or long-term hearing loss.

These children and young adults are seen under the Community Service Obligation Program (CSO)



## Referral pathway

The majority of children diagnosed with permanent or long-term hearing loss are referred directly to their local Hearing Australia centre.

- An additional 60,000 families contact us each year seeking a hearing assessment
- HAPEE program



## Hearing Assessment Program- Early Ears (HAPEE)

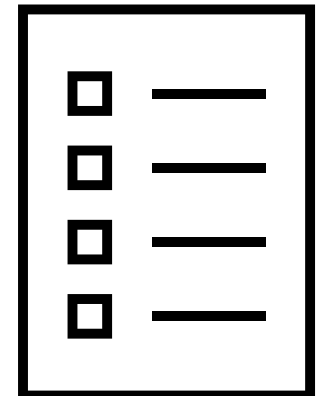
- Hearing checks for First Nations children aged 0-6years
- Free assessment for all young First Nations children regardless of their location- urban, regional, remote and very remote
- Training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander primary health care staff



# Updated Triage Process

## Review of the triage process

- 14 triaging questions (including 8 risk factors)
- Average time to book an appointment was 10 minutes



## Review of the triage process

- Literature review
- Consultation with stakeholders
- File reviews

Which risk factors predict hearing loss?

How can we streamline the triage process?

How can we continue to ensure access?

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## Risk factors considered included:

- Family History
- Parental concern
- Speech and language delay
- Developmental delay
- Chemotherapy
- Bacterial meningitis
- Head injury
- Diagnosed hearing loss
- Failed UNHS
- ENT/paediatrician/speech pathologist/teacher referral
- Asphyxia
- CMV
- Jaundice
- ADHD/ASD
- Syndromes associated with hearing loss



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5 triage questions devised including risk factors:

- Diagnosis of permanent/long term hearing loss or referral for hearing aids
- Family history

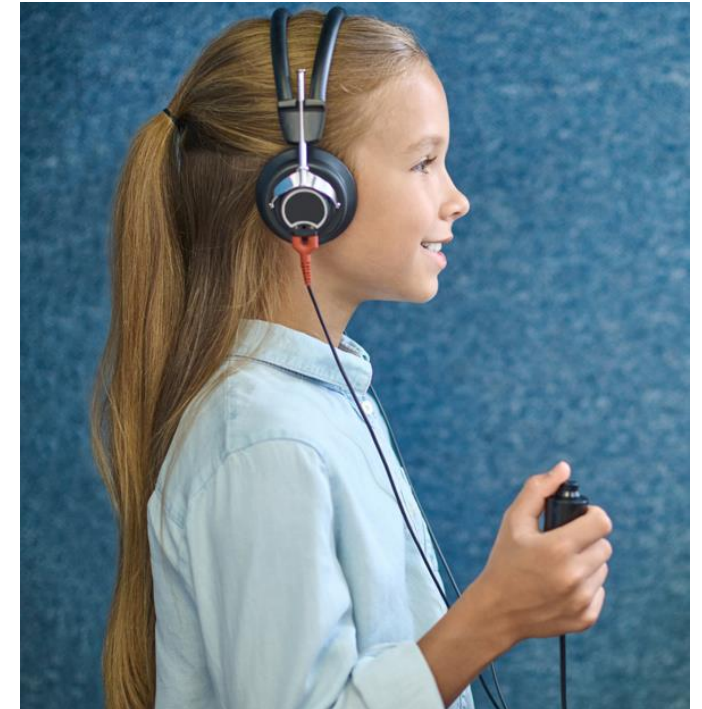


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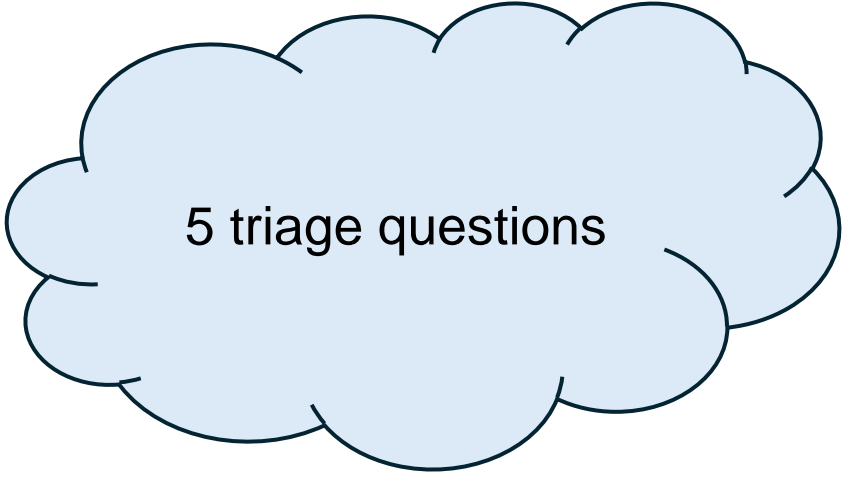
## Pilot

470 clients were triaged during the pilot:

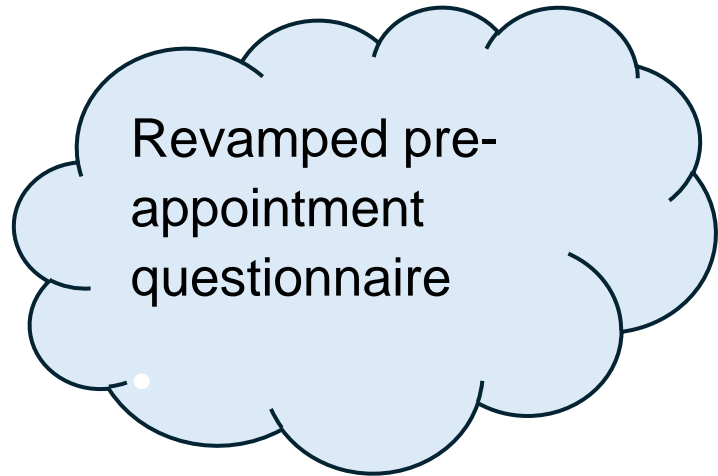
- 6.5% declined an appointment
- Of the children seen 11% seen under HAPEE, 5% seen under the CSO program
- 1% (3 children) had a permanent hearing loss not identified by the triage process (none of these children had risk factors)
- Average time to book an appointment reduced to 3 minutes (with supporting information emailed)



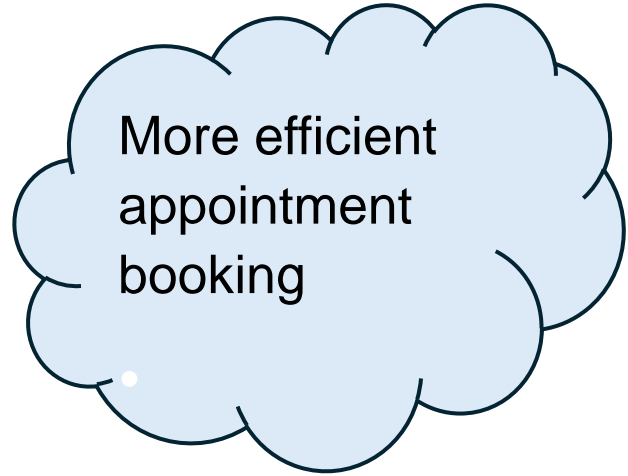
## New triage process



5 triage questions



Revamped pre-  
appointment  
questionnaire



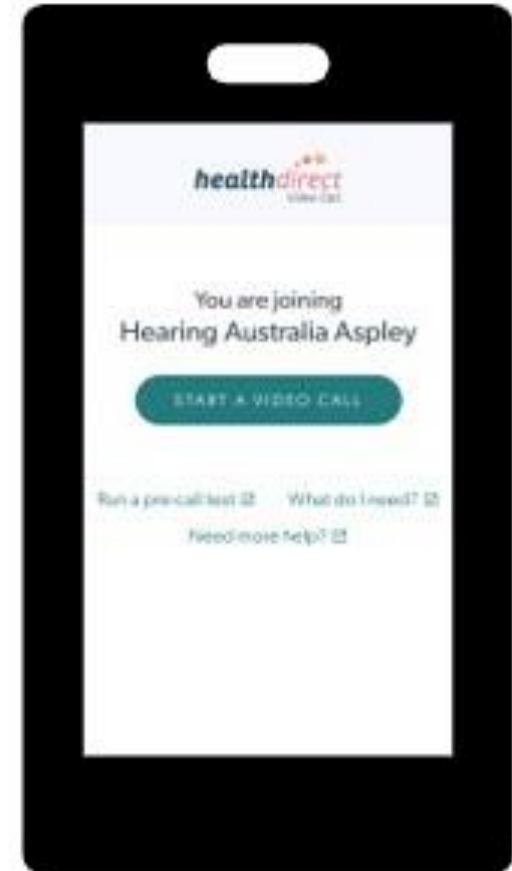
More efficient  
appointment  
booking

# Telehealth

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Review of telehealth procedures:

- Reinforced the use of video
- Healthdirect the most appropriate platform
- Telehealth at ~ 10%



## Telehealth activities

### Initial appointments for new families:

- Timely initiation of hearing supports
- Information, counselling and support

### Review appointments:

- Remote device adjustments
- Troubleshooting
- Functional questionnaires and assessments
- Counselling and support

### Remote fittings for First Nations children

- Pre-programmed bone conduction devices sent to trained local service provider
- Audiologist conducts remote fitting with assistance of local staff



# Impression Scanning

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- Impressions can arrive at the manufacturer the same day they are taken
- Production starts sooner and moulds arrive back faster
- Real time feedback on impression quality



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***Thanks for listening!***

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