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## **HEARING THE CALL FOR ACTION**

Australia's peak hearing health sector organisations are joining forces to represent the hearing health sector in Australia to government.

With an ageing population, hearing loss is predicted to increase to a staggering one in every four Australians by 2050.

The Hearing Health Sector Alliance has been formed to work with governments to help improve outcomes for Australians affected by hearing loss and other debilitating ear conditions.

It follows the Council of Australian Governments' (COAG) recent endorsement of the first Hearing Health Roadmap aimed at improving the lives of the millions of Australians affected by hearing loss.

The new alliance brings together for the first time consumer groups, health professional bodies, industry associations and research organisations.

Alliance chair Dr Tony Coles said it was crucial the sector came together to work constructively with all tiers of government to improve hearing outcomes for all Australians, including vulnerable people such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and those living with dementia.

"We now have a plan to find better hearing health outcomes for Australians but we need to make sure it moves forward," he said.

"The Alliance reflects the maturity of the sector in taking a consensus approach to addressing issues affecting over three million deaf and hard of hearing Australians, and advocating as one voice to governments to ensure our message is heard loud and clear."

Dr Coles said hearing loss was a significant cost to the community, estimated at more than \$33 billion a year.

Rates of hearing loss are expected to double from 3.6 million people to 7.8 million people over the next four decades, causing the costs to soar further.

“There is an urgent need to prevent hearing loss, better support deaf and hard of hearing people to be actively engaged in the workforce and community life, and encourage people to seek help earlier,” he said.

“With our ageing population, the impact of hearing loss on productivity at work is a critical issue.”

The Alliance will advocate for Australians having better access to education, treatment services and the latest hearing technology, as well as research that will promote the goals of the Alliance to improve the outcomes for all Australians affected by hearing loss.

The Hearing Health Sector Alliance founding members are:

- Better Hearing Australia
- Deafness Forum of Australia
- Audiology Australia
- Australian College of Audiology
- Hearing Care Industry Association
- Hearing Business Alliance
- Ear Science Institute Australia
- National Acoustic Laboratories

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