

The mission of Independent Audiologists Australia is to promote and support clinical practices owned by audiologists.



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**INDEPENDENT AUDIOLOGISTS AUSTRALIA CALLS FOR INDUSTRY REGULATION
IN WAKE OF COCHLEAR IMPLANT PROGRAMMING REVELATIONS**
IAA member flags incorrectly mapped paediatric cochlear implants

“We welcome the announcement that an independent and external review will be conducted by the South Australian government, of the cochlear implant program at the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide, in light of their recent public apology for incorrectly programming the cochlear implants of one in four children in its program”

- Dr Tegan Keogh, President, Independent Audiologists Australia (IAA).

IAA supports the call for an extensive and independent review of the Hospital's cochlear implant mapping program, in addition to the diagnostic Audiology program. The importance of reviewing both areas relates to the overlap of knowledge and skills required to work in both areas of Audiology. IAA has been advocating for many years to have the audiology industry regulated as a healthcare profession that requires mandatory registration under the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA). Change is needed. We are calling on State, Territory and Federal governments to recognise that insufficient safeguards against harm are given to vulnerable Australians living with hearing loss, due to an ineffectively self-regulated industry.

IAA member, Nicole Eglinton, a paediatric specialist with 20 years' experience working with cochlear implants, has over the past 12 months identified nine children whose cochlear implant processors were incorrectly programmed. It is important to note that children have a critical window for speech and language development between the ages of 0-3 years. This is one of the rationales behind universal neonatal hearing screenings - identifying hearing loss at birth so that children receive intervention in the form of hearing aids or cochlear implants before this critical window closes. If a child is implanted, but the processor is incorrectly managed or programmed, they cannot receive the necessary exposure to speech sounds from an early age to develop listening and speaking skills, leading to challenging lifelong outcomes in a child's development.

IAA applauds and supports Ms Eglinton for championing the children and their families who have been greatly impacted by these events. IAA strongly believes that families need choice and control when managing the hearing care of their children, to ensure quality of care and opportunity for second opinions where needed. Registration of Audiologists under AHPRA is an important part of this picture.

This situation highlights the critical need for a formal and extensive review of processes, systems, checks and balances, and to establish new pathways for Australians to support their hearing health. IAA will continue to advocate for change.

INDEPENDENT AUDIOLOGISTS AUSTRALIA.

Independent Audiologists Australia Inc (IAA) promotes and supports clinical practices owned by audiologists. Members are Masters-qualified Audiologists who independently own and operate more than 350 audiology practices across Australia, and adhere to IAA's strict code of ethics.

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