

Ear Science Institute Australia Privacy Policy

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1 Background and aim

The Ear Science Institute Australia (**Ear Science**), including the Lions Hearing Clinic, the Ear Science Implant Clinic and the John and Debbie Schaffer Surgical Training Laboratory, is committed to protecting the privacy of its clients, referrers, donors, partners, suppliers, volunteers, staff and other stakeholders (**Relevant Person**).

This privacy policy has been compiled in the interests of openness and transparency and explains how Ear Science manages the personal information of all its stakeholders in accordance with its obligations under the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) and the Australian Privacy Principles contained therein.

Ear Science will take reasonable steps to ensure stakeholders, particularly clients, understand:

- The type of information that is being collected;
- why the information is being collected, and whether this collection is a legal requirement;
- how the information is used or disclosed;
- why and when consent by the Relevant Person is necessary; and
- Ear Science's procedures for access to and correction of information, and responding to complaints of information breaches, including by providing this policy.

2 What personal information does Ear Science collect and why?

Ear Science collects personal information reasonably necessary so it can carry out one or more of its functions or activities. For clients, the types of personal information Ear Science generally collects include name, date of birth, residential address and other contact details such as telephone numbers and email address. Depending upon the purpose of the client interaction Ear Science may collect additional personal data including health information.

Ear Science may request further information from time to time (e.g. through market research) to enable it to improve its services and meet the wider needs of its clients and potential clients, and to enquire about possible participation in clinical research projects.

2.1 Lions Hearing Clinic and Ear Science Implant Clinic Clients

2.1.1 Audiological services

Ear Science collects certain personal information from clients to provide them with audiological services and products. This may include:

- contact details (including name, residential address, date of birth, telephone number, email address and next-of-kin contact details);
- medical history (including current and past medications, treatments, test results and family medical history);
- health information (including genetic information, information about devices clients are using, ear impressions, name of other healthcare providers); and
- billing and account details (including Medicare details, pension card details and private health fund details).

Ear Science collects personal information to provide quality health services and products at its facilities or to enable the ordering of devices for surgery at another facility. Ear Science also uses the information for management of its services, including appointment bookings and recalls, billing, funding eligibility checks, audits, staff training, accreditation, feedback/complaints handling, measuring outcomes, and service planning. Ear Science uses de-identified information wherever practicable.

2.1.2 Data analytics and research

Ear Science is involved in a range of activities to better understand hearing and treatments for hearing loss. These activities include data analytics and other research projects which use information collected during the provision of routine audiological services, and research that requires the collection of new information (e.g. additional tests, surveys, or interviews).

Ear Science may invite Lions Hearing Clinic or Ear Science Implant Clinic clients to participate in research involving the collection of additional information. Ear Science will do so by email, letter and/or phone. The invitation will provide details of the

study, including the expected level of involvement. Clients may decline to be participants; this will not affect any care Ear Science provides. If a client decides to participate, the researcher will be provided with contact information in order to formally recruit the client into the study.

In some cases, researchers may obtain approval from Ear Science to access information collected during routine audiological services. This activity does not require active involvement by the client. Reasonable steps will be taken to de-identify information used or disclosed for these purposes.

All research undertaken at Ear Science or using Ear Science collected information is approved by an external Human Research Ethics Committee.

2.2 GPs, ENTs and other referring specialists

Ear Science may collect personal information about individual health practitioners who interact with Ear Science's clinical services such as referring doctors or other health professionals involved in the care of its clients.

This is typically information such as the health practitioner's name, contact details, professional details and information regarding interactions with Ear Science, including participation in events convened by Ear Science.

This information is collected for the purpose of administration, management and operation of Ear Science's services.

2.3 John and Debbie Schaffer Surgical Training Lab students and program participants

When a person registers for a training course or educational program at the John and Debbie Schaffer Surgical Training Laboratory, Ear Science will request information to confirm their suitability for the course or program. This may include details of their professional position and qualifications.

Ear Science may use this information to inform participants of future programs which may be of interest. Ear Science may also store, collate and analyse the information in a de-identified format for the purpose of planning and management of future John and Debbie Schaffer Surgical Training Laboratory operations.

2.4 Donors and supporters

When a person donates, registers for an event or make inquiries about its activities, Ear Science may collect personal information including areas of interest and event attendance, donation history and payment information including credit card details.

Ear Science collects this information to send receipts as well as surveys, newsletters and information about research, education, fundraising events and other activities. Ear Science may use personal information to contact potential donors to seek financial support for medical research conducted at Ear Science. Relevant Persons may opt-out of receiving this information from Ear Science.

2.5 Partners and suppliers

Ear Science may collect personal information about individuals with whom Ear Science deal with on a commercial basis such as sponsors, suppliers, contractors and individuals in organisations to whom Ear Science provide goods and services or from whom Ear Science receives or acquires goods and services.

Ear Science may collect data such as name, position, contact details, licence or registration numbers, ABN, bank details and other information relevant to the capacity in which the Relevant Person is dealing with Ear Science.

2.6 Job applicants

Ear Science may collect personal information when Ear Science is recruiting staff and students. Generally speaking, Ear Science will collect personal information that is supplied as part of the process of assessing applications and proposals. The personal information collected will usually include educational/academic history and work history.

This privacy policy does not apply to employee records held by Ear Science relating to an employee or former employee of Ear Science.

3 Persons right to anonymity

Relevant Persons have the option of not identifying themselves, or of using a pseudonym, when dealing with Ear Science in relation to matters where it does not prevent Ear Science from conducting its functions and activities to a standard set by the organisation.

This option will not apply when:

- Ear Science is required by law to deal with individuals who must identify themselves;
- Government funding requires personal information for processing payments;
- It is impractical for Ear Science to deal with individuals who have used a pseudonym.

4 How does Ear Science collect information?

Personal information will normally be collected directly from Relevant Persons when they complete forms, questionnaires and surveys, when observations are taken, when information is provided to Ear Science staff about health status and in some cases by way of ear impressions and photographs taken for a clinical purpose. There may be occasions where Ear Science will need to obtain information from others, including from:

- a client's family;
- a client's guardian or responsible person (where practicable and necessary);
- third party health care providers (including a client's current or former doctors, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, psychologists, dentists, diagnostic imaging and pathology companies and other hospital and day surgery units);
- device manufacturers if a client receives a device as part of their care e.g. a hearing aid or cochlear implant manufacturer
- Medicare, Department of Veterans Affairs, Hearing Services Program, National Disability Insurance Agency and/or a health insurer; and
- the client's My Health Record.

Ear Science may also collect personal information about an applicant for a job or contract position from third parties and publicly available sources, including:

- recruiters;
- government departments, to verify the applicant's entitlement to work in Australia;
- police agencies to obtain the applicant's criminal history record;
- academic institutions to verify the applicant's academic achievements;
- the applicant's current or previous employers; or
- the applicant's referees.

5 Security and storage

Ear Science stores personal information in various forms, including hard copy and electronically. Ear Science takes all reasonable and appropriate steps (including organisational and technological measures) to protect personal information from misuse, interference and loss, as well as unauthorised access, modification or disclosure.

If Ear Science no longer needs to hold personal information or is no longer required by law to keep it, it will take reasonable steps to de-identify or destroy that information. These steps may vary depending on the nature of the information, the way it was collected and how it was stored.

6 Use and disclosure of information

Personal information will only be used and disclosed for the purpose of carrying out the functions and activities of Ear Science, unless otherwise consented to or authorised by law.

Ear Science may disclose personal information:

- to third party health service providers involved in a client's care (e.g. referring health service providers, GP, other medical professionals, hospitals, relevant clinical registries, pharmacy services, diagnostic imaging and pathology companies);
- to Ear Science staff involved in providing care or administrative support;

- to the relevant Government Departments to check a client's funding eligibility or obtain a Hearing Services Program Voucher;
- to private health insurers, Medicare, Hearing Services Program, National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) or other Government Departments to process claims or payments made about client treatment including for device replacement and parts; and as part of the relevant funding body auditing, compliance and accreditation procedures;
- to the manufacturer of the client's device(s) to purchase the device; to improve the accuracy of registration information held by the manufacturer about recipients of their device; to facilitate device adjustments, repairs and upgrades; for device warranty monitoring; to enable the manufacturer to identify recipients who may be interested in receiving information about products or promotions; and to support the prompt payment of claims for reimbursement including private health insurance claims. (Note that the manufacturer may also liaise with the hospital where the client's procedure has been undertaken and the client's private health insurer);
- the client's next-of-kin nominated on the admission paperwork (e.g. if Ear Science needs a decision to be made about client care and the client does not have the current capacity to make the decision for themselves, or to let the contact person know when the client is ready to be collected to go home);
- to My Health Record, unless directed not to;
- to courts or government departments where Ear Science is legally required to do so (e.g. subpoenas, mandatory reporting of child abuse or other matters, notification of certain communicable diseases);
- to medical defence organisations or insurers to meet Ear Science's obligations to those institutions;
- to Ear Science suppliers (including service and content providers engaged by or for business purposes such as accreditation or the provision of IT services), other service providers, contractors, professional advisors, dealers and agents;
- when it is necessary to lessen or prevent a serious threat to a person's life, health or safety of public health or safety, or it is impractical to obtain client consent; or
- where the client has consented.

Ear Science will not disclose personal information to anyone outside of Australia without client consent.

7 Direct marketing

If a Relevant Person provides consent, Ear Science may use personal information to identify a product or service of potential interest and inform them about that product or service. The Relevant Person may opt-out of direct marketing at any time by notifying Ear Science, for example by unsubscribing from the mailing list using the link embedded in the direct marketing communication, or otherwise advising Ear Science via phone, in a letter or email.

8 Access to and correction of information

A Relevant Person is entitled to request access to, or correction of, the personal information Ear Science hold about them by contacting Ear Science.

Ear Science will normally require the request be in writing. Ear Science will need to verify identity before responding to a request. Subject to any applicable exceptions or requirements, Ear Science will provide access to the personal information requested within a reasonable time and usually within 30 days. Ear Science may impose a charge for photocopying or for staff time or other associated costs incurred in processing the request. Ear Science will inform the Relevant Person of any likely costs prior to incurring them.

Access to and correction of personal information may be declined in special circumstances. The Relevant Person will be notified in writing where Ear Science is not able to provide the requested information or undertake the correction as requested.

Any refusal to correct the personal information as requested will be notified in writing with the stated reason for the refusal and the mechanisms available to complain about the refusal. The Relevant Person may also ask Ear Science to hold a statement of the claim of inaccuracy and link it to the statement so that it is apparent to users of the information.

Access can be denied where:

- to provide access would create a serious threat to life or health;
- there is a legal impediment to access;
- the access would unreasonably impact on the privacy of another person;
- the request is frivolous; and/or

- the information relates to anticipated or actual legal proceedings and the person requesting the information would not be entitled to access it in those proceedings.

9 Collection of information via Ear Science website

When accessing the Ear Science website, Ear Science may use embedded software (such as Javascript) and may place small data files (or cookies) on a computer or other device. Cookies are small files that store information on a user's computer, mobile phone or other device. They enable Ear Science to recognise a user across different websites, services, devices and/or browsing sessions. A user can disable cookies through their internet browser.

Ear Science use cookies to collect information about which pages a user accesses, how they are reached, user activity on visited pages, the length of time a user remains on the page, search engine referrals and the internet protocol address assigned to the user's computer and how Ear Science performs in providing content. The Ear Science website may use Google Analytics features, which track a user's internet usage and discloses this to other members of the Google Ad network. A user can opt out of Google Analytics by clicking on Ad Settings.

A cookie does not identify individuals personally, but it does identify computers. Ear Science's web pages may contain electronic images, known as web beacons. These electronic images enable Ear Science to count users who have visited certain pages on the Ear Science website. Web beacons are not used by Ear Science to access personal information; they are a tool Ear Science uses to analyse which Ear Science web pages are viewed, in an aggregate number.

10 Links to other Ear websites

Throughout Ear Science web pages, Ear Science provides links to other servers which may contain information of interest to readers. Ear Science takes no responsibility for, and exercises no control over, the views or accuracy of the information contained on other servers. Creating a text link from a user's web site to Ear Science's site does not require permission.

11 Amendments to this privacy policy

Ear Science reserves the right to amend this privacy policy at any time. If Ear Science decides to amend this policy, Ear Science will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the Privacy Policy (this policy) is updated on its website as soon as practicable.

12 Feedback and Complaints

Ear Science take complaints and concerns about the privacy of personal information very seriously. If a Relevant Person has a complaint, they should contact Ear Science's Privacy Officer using the contact details provided at Section 13 with details of the complaint.

Ear Science will respond within a reasonable period to acknowledge the complaint and provide information on the next steps Ear Science will take in dealing with the complaint.

If the Relevant Person is not satisfied with Ear Science's response, they may complain to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (**OAIC**) via the OAIC website, www.oaic.gov.au.

13 Contact

If any person has questions or comments about this privacy policy or wishes to make a complaint about Ear Science's dealings with personal information, please contact Ear Science's Privacy Officer on:

Phone: (08) 6380 4900

E-mail: enquiries@earscience.org.au

Postal address: Ear Science Institute Australia, Suite 1, Level 2, 1 Salvado Road, Subiaco, WA 6008