



Headquarters
New Zealand Defence Force
Defence House
Private Bag 39997
Wellington Mail Centre
Lower Hutt 5045
New Zealand

OIA-2025-5256

12th February 2025

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear [REDACTED]

I refer to your request of 20 January 2025 to Veterans' Affairs New Zealand (VA), seeking *data on access of older people to government hearing aid funding and subsidy avenues to access hearing aids*. Your request has been considered by the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) under the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA) as VA is a business unit within the NZDF.

Information on the support available from VA for hearing aids and appliances is available via the VA website¹. Because of the way hearing-related support expenses are recorded, separate costs specific to the provision of hearing aids cannot be separated from other hearing-related support or treatment. The following figures therefore represent all costs for hearing aids and other appliances, maintenance, and treatment associated with hearing issues.

From financial year 2019/20 to financial year 2023/24 inclusive, 4,660 veteran clients of any age have accessed funding from VA for hearing-related issues at a total cost of \$21,256,244. Of these clients, 4,626 were aged 50 years and over and their proportion of the total cost was \$21,055,032.

Ethnicity is voluntarily provided by VA clients, and they may include more than one option. As a result, the following breakdowns by the ethnicity requested will not necessarily tally with the total number of clients provided above.

- 463 veteran clients over 50 included Māori in their reported ethnicity. This group accounts for \$2,297,973 of the total cost reported above.
- 10 veteran clients over 50 included Pasifika in their reported ethnicity. This group accounts for \$45,229 of the total cost reported above.

With respect to your request for similar data on *disabled people aged 50 plus*, support provided by VA is targeted to those who have suffered consequences by being placed in harm's way, and largely aims to compensate or treat illness or injury resulting from their qualifying service. Accordingly, it reflects a specific degree of impairment suffered by the

¹ <https://www.veteransaffairs.mil.nz/a-z/hearing-aids-and-appliances/>

individual veteran. Therefore, the information above for veteran clients aged 50 years and over is the only data available.

You have the right, under section 28(3) of the OIA, to ask an Ombudsman to review this response to your request. Information about how to make a complaint is available at www.ombudsman.parliament.nz or freephone 0800 802 602.

Please note that responses to official information requests are proactively released where possible. This response to your request will be published shortly on the NZDF website, with your personal information removed.

Yours sincerely

GA Motley

Brigadier

Chief of Staff

HQNZDF