

Better Hearing Australia

The National Spotlight

Placing the Focus on Hearing Loss



Better Hearing Australia (National) Inc.
www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au

October 2015
Edition 7



Better Hearing Australia National Spotlight - Edition 7, October 2015

Welcome to the October 2015 Edition of Better Hearing Australia's The National Spotlight. In this Edition you will find –

Page 2	Message from BHA National President Sara Duncan
Page 3 – 4	The 67th National Better Hearing Australia Conference in WA
Page 5	Motherhood and Fatherhood By Marea Stenmark
Page 6 – 7	Fact Not Fiction – What Teachers Really Do By Sue Daw
Page 8	Stepping Out In Faith By Alison Cassell
Page 9	Experiences of an Octogenarian – Buying an Online Hearing Aid by Marjorie Wellby
Page 10	Beats of Cochlea by Felicity Bleckley
Page 10	Lost and Sound by Carol McGhee
Page 11	South Australia Shines with Updated National Training Manual
Page 11	Introducing Better Hearing Australia Hearing Loss Management Centre
Page 11	Stakeholder Engagement Gets Results
Page 12 – 16	News from our BHA Branches – Keeping in Touch Nationally
Page 17	Your Better Hearing Australia – Contact Us

IMPORTANT DATE:

Better Hearing Australia 67th National Conference in Perth, October 16th – 17th 2015

BHA is a national consumer led organisation, assisting all people with hearing loss. As a national body we work together through our Branches to deliver supportive services, and promote awareness and advocacy in Australia.

The Better Hearing Australia National Spotlight is the official publication of **BETTER HEARING AUSTRALIA (NATIONAL) INC.**, a National not for profit Incorporated Association with branches and members in each Australian State. We assist people in Australia with a hearing impairment and work to enhance wellbeing by developing good communication and life solutions through the provision of education, support and advocacy. Should you wish to be a financial member of Better Hearing Australia Inc., please contact your branch in your State. Details are on the last page of this publication.

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Message from BHA National Inc. President, Sara Duncan



Dear Members

I hope this edition of Spotlight finds you all well as we move into the final stages of 2015.

I would like to thank Michele Barry and the National Board for their support in taking the reins and keeping things moving while I was away caring for my infant nephew. I am now acquainted with Wiggles and nappy changes. My carer duties were due to an illness in my family that has been overwhelming and exhausting. I thank you for your patience and support during this time. I am happy back at my BHA desk beavering away, and look forward to finalising a number of things for our AGM and sessions at the BHA Conference in Perth. I send my support and thanks to the WA Team doing preparing for this event.

I also wish to thank you all for your continued work supporting your local communities, particularly during Hearing Awareness Week. I look forward to releasing our booklet highlighting this work, at the Conference. We are in the final stages of editing this publication; having taken longer than we hoped but I believe has given us a great outcome.

Meeting with Our Patron Professor Graeme Clark

Michele Barry and I were pleased to meet with our Patron, Professor Graeme Clark. (Pictured Right) This meeting provided us with opportunity to receive guidance on how BHA can build its profile and influence government policy. Professor Clark highlighted the most important action we as an organisation can take is to build unity within our organisation and across the hearing loss sector nationally. He indicated working towards a shared policy objective across the research, policy and service delivery sectors should be one of our priorities.



Meeting with Members

It has been my pleasure to meet with members over recent months, including John Steele and his team in Sydney, Peter Moore and his team in Central Coast, Dr Mary Allen in South Australia and Joan and Bob Bell in Geelong. It was also a great pleasure to meet with Haydn Daw and UN Bhati in Canberra to discuss their research work. I am disappointed I have not been able to get to Queensland to meet with Carol-Anne in Brisbane and Kevin in the Gold Coast. I have only been able to get around to half of New South Wales but am looking forward to visiting the rest of my new home state. I also look forward to meeting our Tasmanian and Western Australian members.

I thank members I have met with, and spoken with, for sharing their insights and views on Better Hearing Australia. Your understanding of our history and how we should approach the future are vitally important to the decisions the National Board makes, the direction of the entire organisation and our strategy for engaging with our stakeholders.

Stakeholder Engagement

It has been a busy time meeting with many people important to improving the lives of the four million Australians with a hearing loss. One important event over recent times was presenting at the Senate Select Committee on Health Hearing into Hearing Loss in Sydney in July. I was appreciative of the opportunity to provide BHA's views and answer the Senators questions. A full transcript of the Hearing is available on the Senate Select Committee on Health's website http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Health

Our Board Members have met with key stakeholders over recent months, some included representatives from the Office of Hearing Services, National Disability Insurance Agency, Deafness Forum, Independent Audiologists Association, SHHH, Office of the Assistant Minister for Health the Hon Fiona Nash, and journalists and communications specialist. If you would like further information please contact me. Details can also be found in the minutes of National Board Meetings.

Website

I hope you have visited our new website www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au. I thank Michele Barry and Jeannette Durlak for making the new website a reality. Please email your feedback, suggestions, upcoming events and additional content to national@betterhearing.org.au.

Volunteers

The national board is in the process of recruiting volunteers to assist with administration, social media and fundraising. If you know of anyone who has the appropriate skills and may be interested please let me know.

2015 National Conference

Our National Conference in Western Australia will be upon us shortly. The issues the National Board intend to cover include: NDIS, Aged Care Services, Teacher Training and Programs and Surveying our Members. Each branch will be given an opportunity to present their thoughts during this session. If there is anything you would like to have us cover please email national@betterhearing.org.au.

Thank you to Michele, Tom, Sandra and Jeannette for your support over recent times.

Sara Duncan
National BHA President

Better Hearing Australia National Conference 2015

Proudly sponsored by -



A phone solution for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment



An Australian Government Initiative



..... and The West Australian Community

The Western Australian National Better Hearing Australia (BHA) Conference is being held in the year of the **70th Anniversary** for BHA in WA. There are 2 days of interesting and thought provoking speakers and sessions. West Australian Deaf Arts will entertain you, and the WA Branch look forward to hosting this 67th BHA National Conference and Dr Harry Blackmore Conference Dinner.

Expect to be entertained, inspired, engaged, challenged, and participate in an experience unlike any other.

Regulation of audiology has become of increasing interest to the public, one in six of whom experience hearing loss themselves – and many more who are affected by disrupted communication in workplaces, families and communities that results from even one person within any group having difficulties hearing. Vice President *Independent Audiologists Australia*, Elaine Melville, will speak on this and the close association between for profit medical technologies such as implantable or wearing hearing devices.

Hear from the *National Relay Service* on their latest communication options. *Ear Bus Foundation* will give us a snapshot of conductive deafness in Aboriginal Australia. A *Debate* session will see a Panel of Professionals in the field, consumers and audience participation. Professor Harvey Coates AO will speak of research into tissue engineering new ear drums. Michelle Tan will discuss the importance of having resources to support the social and emotional development of young deaf children so they are empowered to live a well-balanced life, and how interactive media can play a role in this empowerment. More importantly, empowering the deaf children to have a say in what goes into a design so we can discover what is truly important to them and their perspectives.

Other topics close to our heart will be the Aged Care and Acquired Dual Sensory Loss by Senses Australia Deafblind Consultant Angela Wills. The Chairman of Deafness Forum Australia will speak to us on Hearing being the 10th National Health priority in Australia and representatives from the BHA National Board and BHA Branches will enlighten us on new BHA resources and the work of BHA nationally. **The BHA Lip Reading App produced in WA will be launched !**

Don't miss out on this 2 day Conference in Western Australia; there are **limited places available**.



The Western Australia Branch of Better Hearing Australia looks forward to hosting this National Conference, and shining in our 70th Year. www.betterhearingwa.org

TELEPHONE - 04789 BHAWA
04789 25292

2015 Better Hearing Australia 67th National Conference
'Better Hearing for a Sound Future'
Fremantle, Western Australia, October 16th – 17th 2015

PROGRAM

Friday 16 October, 2015

9.00am	REGISTRATIONS OPEN
9.30am	WELCOME AND OFFICIAL OPENING OF CONFERENCE – <i>Sara Duncan, BHA National President</i>
9.45am	TEACHERS TRAINING MANUAL UPDATE – <i>Shona Fennell, Head of SOAR</i>
10.30am	Morning Tea
11.00am	TUTORS' HEARING LOSS MANAGEMENT SESSION – <i>Shona Fennell, Head of SOAR</i>
11.30am	EFFECTIVE CLASS MANAGEMENT AND DISCUSSION – <i>Barney Clarkson, BHA WA</i>
12.00noon	REDISCOVERING MUSIC PROGRAM – <i>Sue Daw and Peter Cianchi, BHA Canberra</i>
12.30pm	Lunch
1.30pm	NEW RESOURCE APP - <i>John Novak – Better Hearing Australia WA Branch</i>
1.45pm	LAUNCH OF THE BETTER HEARING AUSTRALIA WA 'LIP READING APP' – <i>PhD Student Michelle Tan</i>
2.15pm	NDIS OPPORTUNITIES - <i>Sara Duncan - BHA National President</i>
2.30pm	BHA BRANCH SESSION – <i>National BHA Board</i>
3.30pm	Afternoon Tea
4.00pm	BETTER HEARING AUSTRALIA INC. NATIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
4.30pm	BETTER HEARING AUSTRALIA WA BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
5.00pm	Close

Saturday 17 October, 2015

8.30am – 9.00am	REGISTRATIONS OPEN
9.00am	WELCOME TO WESTERN AUSTRALIA - <i>Julie Edmonds</i> WELCOME TO COUNTRY – <i>Whadjuk Elder, May McGuire</i>
9.15am	WEST AUSTRALIAN DEAF ARTS SIGNING CHOIR PERFORMANCE ' <i>From Little Things Big Things Grow</i> '
9.30am	CONDUCTIVE DEAFNESS IN ABORIGINAL AUSTRALIA – A SNAPSHOT <i>Paul Higginbotham, CEO Ear Bus Foundation</i>
10.00am	CLOSING THE GAP – TISSUE ENGINEERING NEW EAR DRUMS <i>Clinical Professor Harvey Coates AO</i>
10.30am	Morning Tea
11.00am	NEED AN AUDIOLOGIST? WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW! <i>Elaine Melville, Vice President Independent Audiologists Australia</i>
12noon	NEW WAYS TO HELP AUSTRALIANS STAY IN TOUCH – NATIONAL RELAY SERVICE <i>Annabel Vasquez, Education Co-ordinator (WA). Complex Communications Specialist (National)</i>
12.30pm	Lunch
1.15pm	THE DEBATE - WILL THE DEAF COMMUNITY NO LONGER EXIST IN 3 GENERATIONS WITH GENETIC ENGINEERING ? Facilitator – <i>Barry MacKinnon, President Deafness Council WA</i> Debate Team – <i>Clinical Professor Harvey Coates AO, Dr Stephen Rodrigues, Dr Walter Thompson AM, John Byrne</i>
2.00pm	EMPOWERING DESIGNS: LET THEIR VOICES BE HEARD - <i>Michelle Tan</i>
2.30pm	ONLY COCHLEAR™ CAN - <i>Jillian Becker</i>
3.00pm	ENDING THE ISOLATION: RESOURCING AND SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN AGED CARE WITH ACQUIRED DUAL SENSORY LOSS - <i>Angela Wills, Deafblind Consultant - Senses Australia</i>
3.30pm	Afternoon Tea
4.00pm	EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES – <i>Darryl Lynton-Brown – HEARMORE Sponsored Sessions</i>
4.10pm	HEARING – THE 10 th NATIONAL HEALTH PRIORITY IN AUSTRALIA <i>David Brady, Chairman Deafness Forum Australia</i>
4.30pm	A FAIRER HEARING - <i>Sara Duncan and Michele Barry, BHA Vic</i>
5.00pm	Close

7.00pm Dr Harry Blackmore Conference Dinner

TIMES AND SPEAKERS MAY VARY AT TIME OF CONFERENCE

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04789 25292

MOTHERHOOD AND FATHERHOOD

Dictionaries define a mother as a female parent. Although that's true, we all know she is much, much more. A mother, a human being, a woman, a nurse, a counsellor, a cook, a chauffeur, a philosopher, a teacher, a hostess, a cleaner, a homemaker, a listener, a talker, a social secretary and nutritionist – the list goes on.

In the eighties she probably had a full-time working position as well. Quite a job specification! All those duties without experience; one could say a starring role without a rehearsal. With almost no preparation, a new mother embarks on this huge role and generally speaking, makes a success of it. Many excel.

It is said that behind every successful man is a good woman, but think of all the mothers throughout history who have not only been behind, but beside, and even a step ahead of, their child. Through my long association with deaf and blind children, **I immediately think of Helen Keller**. As a little girl I had the privilege of meeting this remarkable lady when she visited my school. Unfortunately, then, I was too young to realise just what an exceptional person she was.

Although her greatest friend was her teacher, Annie Sullivan, nevertheless her mother played a huge role in Helen Keller's life. In **The Story of My Life**, which she began when she was only thirteen and which was published ten years later, she wrote, ***'My mother succeeded in making me understand a great deal, indeed I owe to her loving wisdom, all that was bright and good in my long night'***. Whilst of Annie Sullivan she wrote, ***'We both believe that life is a wonderful game, and we are determined to play to the finish, we believe that courage is a cure for every sorrow'***.

Helen Keller also said, to my mind, an extraordinary thing: ***'A look can often say far more than words'***. A remarkable comment from someone who was **both deaf and blind from as young as two years old**. She went on, ***'I can remember something of my illness, especially the tenderness with which my mother tried to comfort me in my waking hours of restlessness and pain'***. She concluded, ***'I used to sit on my mother's knee all day long because it amused me to feel the movements of her lips and I moved my lips, too, although I had forgotten what talking was'***. What beautiful sentiments from one who had neither heard them expressed nor see them written.

On the subject of blindness and the ability to overcome the disability, we should remember **Louis Braille**, described by Jean Roblin as ***'one of mankind's greatest servants of all time'***. Louis' mother, Monique, was married to Simon-Rene Braille, the village saddler. The Braille family had been saddlers for over a century in Coupvray in France, son succeeding father. It was ironic, therefore, that in this workshop the accident occurred which deprived the three-year-old child of his sight.

His father determined that his son would continue with his education, used the tools he knew best to teach him and further his learning. He drove a number of upholsterers' nails into a wooden plank to form the letters of the alphabet. And these, Louis Braille patiently learned by touch. The round headed nails were the forerunners of the Braille method of raised dots. At the age of fifteen, he invented his alphabet genius.

When Louis gained a scholarship to the Royal Institute for Blind Children in Paris, he left home at the early age of seventeen. It was a dismal experience. The accommodation was so unhealthy that the death rate among the children was exceptionally high. He wrote to his mother during that time, ***'Well, let's keep smiling and get through the winter. Write to me and tell me how my brothers and sisters and friends are getting on. I hope to come and see you once winter is over. Until that happy time, I remain your loving son Louis'***.

His very name is now part of history, yet, at the time of his death in 1852, when only forty-three years of age, the Paris papers found him unworthy of mention.

The commemorative plaque fixed on his birthplace reads so simply, ***'He opened the doors of knowledge to all those who cannot see'***.

By Marea Stenmark

Fact Not Fiction: What BHA Teachers Really Do

Sue Daw OAM – BHA Canberra Rehabilitation Teacher

At the recent Canberra Hearing Awareness Week EXPO a lady came up to me and said “What does BHA Canberra do that is different from all the other organisations in the room?” “Well” I said, “BHA Canberra is a not for profit, non-funded organisation run completely by volunteers who have a hearing loss, or deep understanding of how to help people with a hearing loss.” I went on to tell her about our Hearing Loss Management Sessions and how we teach lipreading and other skills to help our members communicate better. I felt she was impressed with what we do.

When Julie asked for contributions to Spotlight I remembered the BHA Sydney conference in 2013, where I gave a presentation about “**Fact Not Fiction: What Teachers Really Do**”. I enjoyed reading it again and thought it would make an interesting article about what our BHA teachers do so well, which is unique to our organisation. The presentation was based on information I received from a survey I sent to our teachers. Out of 53 teachers and trainees who run approximately 39 Hearing Loss Management Sessions throughout Australia, 23 teachers and trainees responded. The teachers qualified between the 1970’s to 2010’s so from that information, on average these teachers have about 13 years BHA teaching experience.

Class Information: Class numbers ranged from 2 – 15 people, which resulted in an average class size of 8 members. Class duration varied from one hour classes, seventy five minute classes, and one and a half hour classes to two hour classes. Most teachers held a weekly 10 session term. A small number held fortnightly sessions, one took a four weekly short course.

What are the three subjects you enjoyed presenting. On top of the list was **discussion**. The next most popular components were: The speech movements, current affairs and memory exercises. In general the teachers said they liked the parts of the lesson they felt were successful, which the class enjoyed and when they felt they had made a real difference to a class member, seeing their face light up. **This is successful communication in action.**

What segments the class members liked as assessed by teachers? Joy Gullen commented in her survey that she once did a survey of the likes and dislikes of her class members and their favourite segment was “Afternoon Tea”. I was sorry I did not include that option in the survey! Again the majority of the Teachers said **discussion** was seen to be most liked followed by the speech movement, everyday situations and listening exercises.

Jean Clark from BHA Central Coast said: “It is important that the sessions be enjoyable and fun, positive, glass half full and include successes and challenges”. **Gillian Halliday BHA Newcastle** said. I regularly ask my class members what they enjoy and they respond with “We enjoy and benefit from all the information or we wouldn’t be here”.

What do you do when a New Members joins the group? Most teachers liked to have a chat to a new member before the session to find out the reason for them attending, their degree of hearing loss and if they wear hearing aids. Margaret Dengate likes to do that over a cuppa before the classtarts. They felt it important for a new member to feel comfortable. Many did this by asking each class member to give a brief explanation of their own hearing loss, which resulted in the new member realising they are not alone with their hearing loss. Some class members wear name tags, teachers may write the names of the class members on the board for a few weeks or allocate a ‘buddy’ till the new member settles in. **Kerrin Parry from BHA Sydney** gives special handouts to new class members.

How do you conduct your discussion segments? Some teachers stated this component has to be properly managed so everyone can follow and have opportunity to contribute. This can be difficult listening for some class members.

Discussion Topics: This could be on any topic of interest to the hearing impaired and range from personal stories, hearing aids, ALDs, speech movements, challenging situations and how they can do better, sharing the good and bad experiences, noisy restaurants, providers, how they feel about their hearing loss, hobbies, travel, childhood memories, people they would like to meet, interesting people they have met, and current affairs.

Where do you get your lesson material from? Some used the internet while others used the reference books from their resource library, the teachers’ newsletter, newspaper and magazines. 5 used power point. 10 said their classroom was looped, 2 had portable loops.

Team Teaching: Eleven teachers had or still used team teaching. One teacher said it important to **trust** each other to work together well. Others said not everyone is in favour of this method of teaching but some positive comments were raised: It challenges the class to get used to different styles of teaching, different voices and reading different lips when lipreading sentences. It gave variety to class material and reduced the workload of lesson preparation.

Signing Classes: Four teachers teach signing and three teachers did a little basic signing. It all depends on if the class members were interested.

I then asked if they had a **branch referral list for the hearing professionals** in their area. Surprisingly to me, only nine had a Branch referral document. In some locations like Wagga it was not necessary as Judi said "They are all in the main street". In Canberra they are scattered and I like to make my new members aware that Bloom and Connect Hearing are hearing aid outlets for Widex and Phonak. I include the independent audiologists on my list for their information too. I don't recommend one, as that is not my role, but our class members often do.

Do you have an ongoing relationship with Australian Hearing? Fifteen teachers stated they had contact with Australian Hearing. I asked if they had had an audiologist to speak to the class last year. Seven teachers said they had.

Have you been involved in Short Courses? Ten teachers had been involved but not all had run them each year. One teacher said it can be a lot of work if it does not attract more class members.

Do you speak in public promoting BHA, Hearing Awareness Training? Eighteen teachers said they had done so but some occasionally or rarely.

How do you advertise your classes? "Word of mouth" got the top score for attracting new members. Local paper articles and the branch website were also considered to be important.

What would you like more training in? Updates on latest research in hearing aid technology, public speaking, adult learning, power point, counselling, speech conservation and more interesting ways of presenting revision.

Do you assist the Branch in other ways? Seventeen said they supported their branch in other ways ranging from being President to cleaning the premises. Other positions were: secretary, publicity officer, cleaner of premises, fundraiser, promoting BHA at Expos and HAW, public speaking, conducting hearing awareness training sessions, training teachers, staffing the office, and writing reports for committee meetings.

How satisfied are you in your role as a BHA Aural Rehabilitation Teacher? I used a rating scale ranging from being extremely satisfied to not satisfied. The results were 6 **Extremely Satisfied**, 12 **Very Satisfied**, 5 **Satisfied**. This is a positive response from our teachers as many teachers in the school system indicate they do not find it satisfying.

Many teachers said they felt they made a difference in their class member's lives and that made them all feel good.

Ideas for the future: Offer a lipreading "refresher" course, encourage members to come return to talk about their experiences, pass on tips and provide encouragement to newer members. Do more training in the workplace. Have a course for younger people. Have more speakers talking about future deafness issues. Share lesson material. Attract high profile people to spread the word of what BHA does, hearing loss and speaking to the public.

Teachers' Comments It gives me great satisfaction to make a difference to the hearing impaired in my community. This would not be possible without the cooperation of so many including my family, BHA Vic and Australian Hearing.

Joy Gullen BHA Vic Colac Group

I have been volunteer teaching at BHA Brisbane for over 20 years and still enjoy the thrill of meeting such a diverse group and the challenge of bringing together and assisting groups to grow and learn comfortably and enjoyably together. **Cheryl Selvage BHA Brisbane**

I enjoy every minute of it and although at times I feel weighed down it only takes one member to say how much they enjoyed the lesson and it puts me on a high for another week. In all we have a wonderful family feel to our group and they are always appreciative of the work that goes in to preparing lessons. **Cynthia Dutton, BHA Bunbury Group WA**

I am lucky as I have a small group who all enjoy each other's company and are also very eager to do what they can to help each other as well as try things to help improve their lipreading skills. **Jean Clark BHA Central Coast Point Clare.**

I am finishing at end of the year and have enjoyed taking Aural Rehabilitation Classes. I will miss preparing lessons and seeing class members enjoying themselves. I've been a member of Geelong BHA for 40 years. **Muriel Hoggart BHA Geelong**

"I am here to help you survive in a hearing world and that is not a push over." **Oriel De Fina BHA Newcastle**

BHA is a GOOD organisation! **Mea Lee Khoo BHA Gold Coast**



BHA Teachers at 2013 Wagga Wagga Conference

BHA NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

Stepping Out in Faith

“Life is not meant to be easy, my child, but take courage: it can be delightful.” George Bernard Shaw

Readers of the *BHA Journal* and *The National Spotlight* may be familiar with my husband’s story. Doug’s shock hearing loss in early 2008 catapulted us both into a new ‘world’; one that’s definitely not been easy. The sudden, silent disability of hearing impairment came hand-in-hand with severe tinnitus and the debilitation of Meniere’s Disease, a Triple Whammy, as I say.



Things became dire by January 2015. Doug’s hearing had deteriorated markedly (profoundly deaf in left ear, 30% only in right ear), aggravated further by fluctuations in hearing levels characteristic of Meniere’s sufferers. His consequent social isolation had increased, he was frustrated and his confidence crashed. He was miserable; medical intervention was overdue. **My Husband Doug (right)**

The arrival of a wonderful, new Audiologist at Attune, Birtinya (Qld) opened up a promising door. By taking up Doug’s cause early this year, encouraging him to explore the life-changing possibility of Cochlear Implant surgery to enhance his communication potential, things took on a more positive spin. Kellie truly reflected Shaw’s empowering words above, that Doug’s wellbeing could be greatly improved with a Cochlear Implant.

In her unique, caring way, she inspired us with her extraordinary knowledge-based PHD findings, that there **WERE** significant gains to be had from a CI for Meniere’s patients. Her infectious enthusiasm and her genuine concern offered great support. I must pay heartfelt tribute to Kellie Walker, a ‘breath of fresh air’ and true blessing in our lives.

So began another step in Doug’s hearing journey. Many of you have travelled this road, knowing first-hand the rigorous Cochlear Implant suitability assessment protocols. Having considered a CI in July 2012, his hearing still too ‘good’ at that stage, I admire the motivation with which Doug has undertaken the latest daunting testing program. This time round, he DID meet the audiological criteria, so progressed to 2 full-on days of testing in August 2015.

Two sessions with a psychologist were needed to ascertain Doug’s alacrity and mental acuity, and his ability to cope with challenge and change. Then an MRI of the brain and CT Scan of Cochlear Spirals, and a final summation session regarding expectations, with Karen Pedley. We initially met with Karen in her role as Manager of the Attune Hearing Implant Centre, for an introductory Information Session. Eye-opening meetings with 2 friends, both CI recipients, ‘sealed the deal’ for us. The transformation in both Bob and Penny’s situations was amazing; the improvement in their hearing capability, incredible.

We remain committed, and confident of the outcome. Thursday September 17 will see Doug’s long-awaited, life-giving CI procedure become a reality, under eminent, Brisbane-based Otolaryngologist, Dr. Bruce Black, veteran of hundreds of Cochlear surgeries over many years. Working hand-in-hand, as he does, with Karen Pedley, whose efficiency, passion and dedication is truly impressive, it’s a First Class team. To them both we owe our wholehearted thanks.

And then our **‘NEW’** life will begin, as Doug joins more than 400,000 CI recipients worldwide, over 11,000 in Australia, and over 3,000 in Queensland. Of those, Attune Brisbane has done over 400 Cochlear Implants. While the ‘how and why’ of CI operation remains a mystery to me and beyond my ken, I’m grateful and overwhelmed by the life-giving hope the invention pioneered by our very own Patron, Professor Graeme Clark, will provide. His brainchild is indeed nothing short of a miracle.

Requiring ongoing mapping (programming the Cochlear Implant to Doug’s unique specifications and needs), the rest of 2015 has been ‘mapped out’ (pardon the pun!) for us. Switch-on is scheduled for October 19/20 - what momentous days they will be. It’s such an unimaginable, totally awesome and exciting prospect – though we know that’s when the hard work will begin: intensive, one-on-one, speech therapy and aural rehabilitation. Having been told just what to expect, we will hopefully be prepared for this ginormous, demanding effort. Make us, or break us, we’re determined to succeed, despite obstacles we know will be waiting. Doug’s progress remains paramount; our eyes focused on the ‘Finish Line’. As they say: “Watch this Space!” No doubt there’ll be lots to report along the way; good and bad – but I pray not too much of ‘the ugly’!

American poet, Mary Oliver, beseeches us: **“Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”**

For Doug, his sense of surprise, awe and wonder is set to explode as he grabs what I hope will be joyous “Ah! Ha!” moments post-implant, brightening his days, expanding his socialisation experiences, and returning fun and freedom to his life.

ALISON CASSELL
BHA BRISBANE BRANCH

EXPERIENCES of an OCTOGENARIAN

- buying an On-Line Hearing Aid.

By Marjorie Wellby

After hearing Dr Saunders speak in Adelaide, I was convinced this was the way for me to go with my new hearing aid, especially as I heard the provider of my present aids was retiring. I seemed to tick a lot of her boxes. I live in a relatively isolated situation. Access to post and most other services required my driving myself, because bus, like communication services, are primitive in parts of the Adelaide Hills, although I live only 15K from the GPO.

Having familial hearing loss, I have worn aids for 20 years, upgrading them every few years as my hearing deteriorated. I have never had the need to return aids, because I have always felt they were satisfactory. In retrospect, the only BTH (behind the ear) aids prescribed were not the best. During the years I persevered I developed a lot of wax which had to be syringed by my GP. This was a problem I never had before, and suspected it was a reaction to the clear plastic of which the molds were made. However I realise now, although they would stay in place for some hours, in situations where I was straining to hear, I would push them further into my ear to improve my hearing. I believe now it was this unusual irritation which produced the wax. So the next pair I requested to be ITE, and the wax problem disappeared.

When I started communications with BS (Blamey and Saunders) I felt I had been able to communicate my possible problems to them. But my concerns were allayed when they wrote they could fit their aids to my current molds. It was my ignorance in thinking molds necessarily included the actual aid technology, which resulted in much confusion and my loss. I believe this could have been clarified by a face-to-face provider.

My first problem was I was unable to hear virtually anything on their on-line Speech Perception Test, and so I was disqualified. Not at all, according to their provider. I was to go and have a current audiogram performed and send to them. The audiology firm they recommended said they would charge \$200, so I had one done for free by Can Do Deaf. This was acceptable to BS and they emailed back their technology could accommodate my loss. Several months had gone by in laborious on-line communications, so on the strength of that I went ahead and ordered the top of their range.

Communications and mailings were prompt, except re the electronic transfer of payments, which seemed to take many days to clear. Eventually my new aids arrived, attractively packed with deceptively simple instructions, and plenty of spare batteries, and programmed to my hearing loss. When I first tried to wear them I knew that it was excellent technology and still believe that. I am not surprised about the accolades Dr Saunders has received. However the tips did not fit well and I could not get rid of the whistling, so set about downloading the program. Having spent about 8 hours alone and with an IT expert friend on Team Viewer, I eventually had to ask BS support service for help. This was willingly given, and soon the problem was diagnosed to be due to the fact that I have a Toshiba laptop, whose Bluetooth facility is incompatible with the Incus provided to download the controlling program. This was overcome, but it would have been reassuring if this information was included in the simple-looking booklet.

It was not possible to control the whistle without adequate fitting of molds, which was our next time-consuming exercise. The tips provided are all of almost translucent plastic, and difficult, I believe, for elderly fingers and eyes to handle. However we tried each of the varieties provided, but none would anchor in my ear for any length of time. Although my supporter was patient, this was time consuming and becoming frustrating. She suggested I must now have ear molds taken and sent to her. The original audiologist she recommended for this was about 30Km away, which was ridiculous for an elderly driver. It took a few emails to settle on a closer firm, who charge \$85 to make molds and post. I also requested to send my current aids, but, as I just could not function adequately without them, I sent some previous molds. I figured as they had my impression they would make molds the same as those for me. Eventually they arrived, but I sadly found they did not fit well enough to obviate the whistling.

The next step was to have my ears examined by an ENT specialist. Of course there were the usual delays and cost, and I was told I had a narrow out ear canal, but should be able to be fitted with an aid without problems. I sent the report to BS. It was only then they recommended I visit audiologist Craig Fisher, who was only 20 minutes drive away. At last I could SPEAK to someone who had some experience with BS aids, and has their program on computer. He did his best to ensure I was wearing the new molds properly and they were programmed properly. However I could never get rid of the whistle for more than a few hours. As soon as the mold slipped out a little (eating, conversation etc seemed to precipitate it) the whistle would come back.

It was when I began hearing the whistle when I did not have the aids in, I decided a year's perseverance was long enough and I would need to call a halt. I have been quoted less than the total package- plus- extras has cost me for my next set of aids, and will also have the convenience of personal help with adjustment nearby. I feel I have learned a lot, but it was an expensive exercise which I would like to share with anyone considering buying an on-line aid. I do not doubt the excellence of the technology, bar the fact that I have heard BS do not use the usual anti-whistling technology that most other brands use. However, buying on-line does have certain drawbacks, which probably will be improved with time. To consider when purchasing, one really needs to think of: are my fingers and eyesight good enough to handle very small equipment and controls? Am I happy to spend considerable amounts of time on the computer? Will I be prepared to send them back if I am not coping. The support service can go on with advice making considerable delays, so the possibility of refund is lost. I feel at the present THIS IS THE MAIN WEAKNESS and not fair marketing. Do the elderly need an ongoing available advisor.

The possibility remains that as I now own these aids, I may sell them on. However I do not know whether BS would continue to give support to a purchaser.

Beats of Cochlea

By Felicity Bleckley

When I received an email from Cochlear suggesting I might like to enter the Beats of Cochlea Music Festival, my first reaction was – I'm not good enough. But then I realised **this festival**

wasn't so much about being good enough but being able to do something which had been denied me.

With that in mind I sent a short clip of me playing "**Ballade pour Adeline.**" A significant piece as shortly after my implant switch on, it was the first music track I heard and recognised by name, without a prompt. I was surprised when I received a return email asking me for more information. This was exciting and I started to believe maybe I would be chosen to go to Poland. I practised every day just in case and in doing so remembered how much I enjoyed it. Two weeks before the Festival I received an email informing me I had been chosen. We flew to Poland a week later.

The first part of the Festival process was to audition in front of a jury of professors, professional musicians and dignitaries. Of the 30 people invited to Poland only 14 would play in the final Gala Concert. After all the auditions I was stunned and thrilled to hear my name called as one of those chosen to perform in the Gala Concert.



Photo by Mariusz Krysiak
Felicity auditioning before the judges
studio 3, Polskie Radio, Warsaw.



After a day of rehearsals it was time for the concert. Surprisingly I seemed calm and my turn came quickly. It was the first time I had played in public in 30 years. The concert was broadcast on Youtube live but due to the time differences around the world not many people in Australia watched it. It was taken down shortly after, edited and recently put back onto Youtube. I loved this experience and am honoured to be part of the Festival. It was an awesome' experience (and I never say awesome.)

The DVD material is available at:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4cRiELOM5pNbC2nxHGj_L0YOyKeXakIv – Part I
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4cRiELOM5pNbC2nxHGj_L0YOyKeXakIv – Part II

I perform about 37 minutes into Part I.

Pictured Right - The things I needed to be in the Festival: My music, glasses, membership cards and the magnificent Beats of Cochlea statue presented to all participants.



Lost and Sound

Directed by Lindsey Dryden

This insightful documentary asks the audience to consider whether deaf people can find music again. Nick, a music journalist who has lost all hearing in one ear, Emily a dancer deaf from birth, who recently had a cochlear implant, and Holly, a little girl who lost her hearing after meningitis but is now an accomplished pianist.

The film is about music and deafness, and how we make sense of what we hear using our brains. The DVD is subtitled. This 75min DVD is well worth purchasing for your library. To purchase a copy visit www.lostandsound.org/shop

Carol McGhee – Tasmania Branch

South Australia Shines with Updated National Training Manual

Hearing loss management groups are the cornerstone of Better Hearing Australia. The resources we have to support these services are vital. I therefore would like to congratulate Shona Fennell, from the South Australia Branch on her outstanding work in updating the national Better Hearing Australia, **Hearing Loss Management Program and Training Manual**. This task has taken Shona many hours and utilised her extensive knowledge of the hearing loss management training, as well as her years of experience as a teacher. I would also like to thank those other teachers from around the country who support Shona in this important project. **New manuals are available to branches through Shona.**

It is also my great honour to thank Shona for her time as the Head and National Registrar of the School of Aural Rehabilitation. Her skills, time and dedication has been appreciated by the National Board, all our local branches, members, trainee teachers and most importantly our students.

Introducing Better Hearing Australia Hearing Loss Management Centre

New Name for SOAR

The National Board recently decided, in consultation with key members, to update the name of the School of Aural Rehabilitation. This decision was made to support Better Hearing Australia and its branches to update its resources and activities in line with changes in policies, services and community expectations.

The National Board resolved at its August meeting to rename the organisations national training body to the Hearing Loss Management Centre. The role of the HLM Centre is to provide training courses for the organisation’s resource persons. The HLM Centre will take a continuing interest in all training conducted by branches to ensure that standards are maintained throughout Australia. The National Board has also taken the decision to combine the role of SOAR Head and National Registrar into the single role of HLM Centre Coordinator. Following the AGM in October it is intended that a definitions of the HLM Coordinator and the National Training Coordinator will be developed in collaboration with the membership. The National Board is looking forward to working closely with the HLM and its coordinator over the coming year.

Stakeholder Engagement Gets Results

One of our national strategic priorities is awareness of the organisation with the broader community, media and all levels of government. We took a step towards achieving this strategic goal recently with the publication of an article by News Limited’s National Health Edition Sue Dunlevy. This article *“People with hearing problems upsold hearing aids they don’t need so audiologists can profit”* highlights concerns we as an



organisation have been aware of. It was an opportunity to highlight the investigation and survey currently underway by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission. This article was a good outcome for BHA and for the four million Australians who have a hearing loss.



Sara Duncan, National President, Better Hearing Australia says her organisations hears the same concerning stories from consumers around Australia. “Any organisation providing services to the public must be accountable,” she said.

“It is time that governments stopped ignoring this issue and act to ensure consumers are protected and receive trustworthy and appropriate services. The four million Australians with a hearing loss deserve a fairer hearing,” she said.

Sara Duncan
National President

Better Hearing Australia News from our Branches - 'Keeping in touch Nationally'



Welcome to the Branch News Section of the BHA National Spotlight, where our BHA Branches and Groups share member news and experiences. Contact your local Branch to become a member, and support Better Hearing Australia assist the Australian community with a hearing loss.

Adelaide Branch S.A.



Congratulations to Stanley R. Gray who received his SOAR Tutor's Certificate in August at our annual Winter Lunch. The Branch also presented Stan with an engraved pewter goblet to mark the occasion.

Stan is a wonderful asset to the Adelaide Branch and we wish him many years of happy and fulfilling teaching.



During hearing awareness week we had 2 speakers talk about hearing aids and relevant information. Ian Mawby, well known in the hearing industry and area Manager for Widex, and his daughter Kylie Dicerri who is an audiologist running her own business with her husband, gave us a useful insight into costs of hearing aids and the commissions given to audiologists by the major manufacturers. (There was an article in the media recently about this). Ian also explained the direction that hearing aids were likely to take in the future and the way in which technology was likely to affect them. It was a very interesting event. About twenty people attended.



For our monthly Coffee Morning in September, we visited the Migration Museum in Kintore Avenue. This Museum gives the history of the story of migration to South Australia since 1837 and highlights the traumas and successes of some of the migrants. It also gives information about the cultures of the migrants and traces some of the lives. It makes one feel that migration has never stopped and people today are still experiencing some of the trauma and triumphs of people in the past. We had coffee and a light lunch in the nearby cafe after and people chatted.

These orchids are grown by one of our members. Aren't they beautiful! **Thank you to Bob for taking the photos.**



Canberra Branch, ACT

This last three months seems to have been busier than usual (or is it I am getting older!). Even the organisation of our hearing loss management sessions, collecting fees, recording and banking takes time.

We launched our new badges. Not knowing what would appeal to the public we decided to look at 3 basic messages and the phrase 'I have a hearing loss'. With each message we put 'I have a hearing loss' at the top or bottom of the badge. We also offered badges with a magnetic clip or a pin closure. What we found is the badge with 'I have a hearing loss' with 'please speak clearly' on the next line has been most popular, the reverse wording next and the 'please face me' 'I have a hearing loss' combination next. Magnetic closures are outselling pin closures by 2:1.



For Hearing Awareness Week (HAW) we participated in the ACT Deafness Resource Centre (DRC) HAW EXPO. The CEO of the DRC commissioned the painting of a Bogong moth by indigenous artist Norma Chidanpee Benger from the Northern Territory (NT) who was accompanied to Canberra by her partner Eddie Janama Kitching. In the NT the mothers would catch a dragonfly in their hand to make a noise in newborn babies' ears to test their hearing. Who said newborn screening was a modern activity. In our region the Bogong moth was used, hence the subject of the painting. A reception was held the night before the EXPO where Aunty Agnes welcomed us to country in a moving speech, the commissioned painting was unveiled and a range of other paintings were available for perusal and sale. This was a wonderfully inclusive event and well attended. We congratulate the DRC for their flair in instigating such a commission and arranging the event.



Norma Bender with her unveiled painting of the Bogong Moth being applauded by Sue Daw (left of picture) after Norma's explanation of the story.

The next day at the HAW EXPO we manned our display and chatted with many hearing impaired people about their problems and concerns. If you think you are doing it tough, imagine having a stroke in your 40s and losing your language completely, and having to relearn English again in a new area of your brain. This situation was not being helped by some loss of hearing. This story was communicated to me early in the day and I realised I was out of my depth. Fortunately Professor Peter Blamey (of Blamey and Saunders), was present with his display and I was able to connect our person with him for a professional view, which was useful to the person.

Our display was complemented this year by some 'BHA Canberra hearing loss survival kits' made by Carol Taloni which went like hot cakes, Carol also gave tinnitus advice to sufferers on the day. We had bags for our information with our contact details on them. Our volunteers were there to assist the passing parade where necessary. We also had a number of presentations from experts and sponsors during the day, with people able to listen in a looped area. All in all it was judged to be a successful day and well worth the effort.

Haydn Daw, Sue Daw, Liz Swanton, Carol Taloni and Margaret McKenzie 'manning' the BHA Canberra display. Note the BHA Canberra hearing loss survival kits in some hands.



Canberra Branch, ACT – continued ..

We farewelled Bev and Keith Grieve who have been members for 14 years. They were presented with a collage record of their involvement over that time at a farewell afternoon tea catered for by Carol Taloni. Bev and Keith have been great supporters of BHA Canberra and will be missed as they relocate to WA.

Sue Daw farewelling Keith and Bev Grieve with a pictorial record of their involvement with BHA Canberra.



Early August we enjoyed our third Rediscovering Sessions for the year called **“Singing Extravaganza”** where we explored “the voice”. Soprano Susan Ellis was accompanied by three talented musicians playing flute, violin and keyboard. We learned all about the different types of soprano’s and listened to a variety of beautiful music and even were encouraged to sing along with word sheets provided.

Peter Cianchi and Sue Daw will be speaking at the Conference in Fremantle W.A. about their experience as hearing impaired people attending Rediscovering Music Sessions, arranged by the Canberra Symphony Orchestra (CSO) and sponsored by Cochlear Limited. They will talk about how beneficial it has been to everyone who has attended these sessions facilitated by Kristen Sutcliffe, a Bassoon player with the CSO and an Australian Hearing Audiologist. Peter and Sue are looking forward to sharing these very special experiences at the Conference.

Sue Daw, Veronica Bailey (CSO), Zelda and Peter Cianchi, Bryan Griffin (rear) and Stephen Fitzgerald (CSO) at the Exploring Percussion concert.

We also joined Sydney Branch at dinner at the Irish Club during their Floriade visit to Canberra. See if you recognise familiar faces in this photo.



These two well-known BHA Sydney identities in Canberra for a Floriade visit in September

(Roma Wood and Malcolm Minter)

Haydn Daw

Newcastle Branch, N.S.W.

As we head into school holiday time, it is hoped when classes resume our students will return to a new classroom.

Repairs and renovations to our storm damaged building are coming along nicely, a sparkling red colourbond roof replaced old tiles and hopefully will weather future storms, painting is nearly finished, and a wall has removed to make the area open plan. A new kitchen, carpet and new furniture next. It is hoped all will be completed for the new term.

We were unable to plan anything for Hearing Awareness Week 2015 due to renovations taking place, however we were pleased to hear Australian Hearing earned a spot in the Guinness Book of Records with the Big Aussie Hearing Check which took place at Port Macquarie.

We will be hosting a demonstration of the CapTel phone on Thursday 15th October at 2 p.m. and invite anyone to come along and see how the phone works.

We received the first round of our 2015-2016 funding which secures a future for our Branch for another 12 months.

Karen Dempsey



Tasmania Branch

Congratulations to the Tasmania Branch as we celebrate our 70th Anniversary this year. It's a special milestone for the Branch and will be celebrated at the TV/Radio Clear Speech Awards on 23 September.

The Tasmania Branch was formally declared on 4 April 1945 under the name of the "Tasmanian League for the Hard of Hearing" and adopted the rules and regulations of the "Victorian League for the Hard of Hearing". One of the founders of the League was Dr Hiller who became National President in 1946 which was a great honour for the Branch.

In 1951 Mr Carroll was elected President and one of his achievements was to obtain from the then Premier, Robert Cosgrove, (later Sir Robert) an annual grant of 200 pounds, which equates to \$400, to enable the work of the Association to continue. Over 60 years later we now receive a grant from the Department of Health and Human Service for \$5000 to undertake the complex work of the Branch. The first female President was Hobart accountant, Mrs Rosalind Fedurek, who was interested in the affairs of the Association and joined due to her fear of the onset of deafness.

In 1979 Carol McGhee became President and is still President today. Carol was a young woman with perfect hearing and joined due to May, her Mum's, hearing loss, and the desire to help other hearing impaired people in the way her Mum had been helped. In the July issue I expanded on Carol's achievements but one of her major accomplishments was fundraising that included seven major car raffles in six years.

A small legacy left to the Branch by one of the original lipreading teachers, Miss Irene Salvado, was used in conjunction with money raised from the car raffles to buy our own premises. This was a major and positive change as classes and all other services and activities could be held in a suitable environment. Until then we had classes in a rented cottage, prior to that in a community centre and meetings could take place in parks, private homes or any venue available. We've now turned the circle and are once again renting a venue appropriate for classes and meetings.

Enormous social and technological changes, improvement of hearing aids, and cochlear implants have all been impressive. Despite this there is still a need for hearing impaired people to learn communication skills to complement their improved and superior hearing aid.

An example of the marvellous advances of technology is emphasised in the Radio interview given by BHA member Catherine Pile, where she takes us through her hearing lost and found journey. Follow the following link for a transcript of the interview. <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/earshot/hearing-lost-and-found/6646462>

The TV/Radio Clear Speech Awards will be held at the Rosny Barn, results and photos will be in next issue of Spotlight. Kath Venn OAM has been invited to present the winner of the 2015 Clear Speech Award with the Kath Venn trophy.

The Barn is a small multi-purpose Arts venue on the Eastern Shore of Hobart. The Barn c1818 is situated in the beautiful Rosny Farm and has been refurbished to reflect its colonial heritage. The Farm also incorporates the School House Gallery which is a replica of an 1890 schoolhouse that was built in Osterly in central Tasmania. Rosny Cottage is located within the Farm complex. The Barn will be a perfect venue for the Awards with its superior acoustics and easy access. We appreciate the donation by the Clarence Council of the venue for the function, and the assistance and support of the staff at Rosny Barn prior to the Awards.

The Tasmanian Branch prize winners of the 2014 National Lipreading Challenge will also be presented with their trophies by the Acting Mayor of Clarence, Jock Campbell. Results and photos will be in the next issue of Spotlight.

I joined Better Hearing in 1987, and for me the people I've met at Better Hearing have been a bonus. So many have had a profound influence on my life and I appreciate the unique friendships that have been formed. So many have passed away – May and Jock McGhee, Shirley Horlock, Maureen Fulton, Paul Tapp, Glennis Bricknell, Jacqui Stee, Joan Etherinton and a past Treasurer, Wal Gillard leaving behind a contribution to our organisation.

Others are alive and well, eg Max Burgess who was Treasurer for many years and gave a lot of his time and skills to the Branch and has now passed on the role of Treasurer to Eileen Bloomfield and Claire Gay who has spent many hours working on market days and selling raffle tickets. Another long term member is Tina Williams who I first met at a Weekend Work at Penna, one of the highlights of my years at BHA is alive and well, and still working behind the scenes. I was nervous when attending the Workshop but Tina's kindness and compassion immediately put me at ease and I appreciated her thoughtfulness. Aileene Gillard (a member with her husband Wal) is now our oldest member at 99 years young, who I thought had so much style and essence she must be French. There are many other people who I've met via classes, social functions and other activities who have enriched my life and those of others in some way.

Gaylene Dale



Victoria Branch

Hearing Awareness Week in Victoria

Activities included public displays and free hearing tests at Federation Square in the CBD, as well as a Hearing Awareness Week Forum. This was an opportunity to engage with local consumers and discuss lack of access to public funded services and the transition to the NDIS.

Better Hearing Australia appreciates the support of Tony Clark ALP, candidate for Deakin for hosting a local hearing forum as part of Hearing Awareness Week. Also present were Doug Cameron and Nick Champion to discuss opportunities to improve hearing outcomes for all Australians. At this community forum; local health professionals, services providers and consumers were able to discuss key policy issues about the delivery of hearing services in Australia. This forum created an opportunity for direct dialogue with politicians who influence federal policy.

The Federal government currently offers support for people up to the age of 26 and over 65 years of age.. There is a great opportunity to improve hearing outcomes for many Australians.

The evidence is clear; people with a hearing loss are more likely to have poorer health, and poorer education levels. Thus, many are limited with employment opportunities and many are underemployed, this means many working age people miss out on support as they cannot afford the private market. It is hoped the NDIS will support many who currently go without, a great opportunity – we need to make sure everyone who requires support in the community is able access what they need.

Victoria Branch has been involved with the Barwon NDIS trial site and has some concerns about the lack of access that many create barriers for many who require support to manage their hearing. Hearing levels for entry into NDIS need to be an average above 45dB over the 4 frequencies of 500, 1k,2k,and 4k Hertz. This will create a barrier for many people who have problems and **do** need assistance with amplification.

Public Forums

Our public forums continue to attract good attendance. Our most recent topic was “Caring for your ears.” We appreciate Shelly Straw from Crystal Clear leading discussion about the importance of ear wax and caring for your ears.

The next topic is “Assistive Technology” which is attracting great interest.

For more information about our latest news and events, please see our website www.betterhearing.org.au

We look forward to catching up with branch representatives at the WA conference next month.

Michelle Barry



Western Australia Branch



The Western Australian Branch is 70 years old this year! We look forward to seeing our BHA friends at the Conference in October.

**Better Hearing Australia WA Branch
Celebrating 70 Years supporting our
West Australian Community 1945 – 2015**



Contributions for the ‘BHA National Spotlight’

Branches, Members and Better Hearing Australia supporters are encouraged to contribute articles to BHA's national publication, the BHA National Spotlight. Informative articles, Letters to the Editor, ‘Opinion’ pieces, poems, and personal stories are welcome. **Please send your contributions before the closing date for the December Edition, which is November 15, 2015.** Please send contributions to jedmonds.betterhearingwa@gmail.com and **keep articles and news to 600 words or less as an attached WORD document, with any images attached separately.**

Your Better Hearing Australia

ACT

CANBERRA

P.O. Box 546, Jamison ACT 2614
Sue Daw, Phone/Fax: (02)62514713
Email: hdaw@bigpond.com
Website: canberra.betterhearingaustralia.org.au

NEW SOUTH WALES

SYDNEY

29 Burwood Rd, Concord NSW 2137
Phone: (02)97440167 Fax: (02)97447492
TTY: (02)97440124
Email: bhasyd@ozemail.com.au
Website: www.betterhearingsydney.org.au

Grenfell Group

Email: pjillh@yahoo.com.au
Phone: (02)63431166

CENTRAL COAST

59 Mann St, Gosford NSW 2250
Phone: (02)43210275 Fax: (02)43210682
Email: bhacc@harbourisp.net.au
Website: www.centralcoast.betterhearingaustralia.org.au

NEWCASTLE

PO Box 275, Waratah NSW 2298
61 Christo Road, Waratah NSW 2298
Phone/TTY: (02)49688050 Fax: (02)49688663
Email: bhanewc@gmail.com

GROUPS:

Coffs Harbour Group

Taree Group

WAGGA WAGGA

PO Box 5156, Wagga Wagga NSW 2650
Phone: (02)69252002
Email: bhawagga@lizzy.com.au

QUEENSLAND

BRISBANE

21 Vulture St, West End QLD 4101
PO Box 5334, West End QLD 4101
Phone/TTY: (07)38445065 Fax: (07)38465260
Email: bhabris@bigpond.com
Website: bhabrisbane.org.au

Maryborough Group - Email judyrax48@gmail.com

Logan Group – meet at Logan North Library

GOLD COAST

Po Box 3667 Australia Fair, Southport QLD 4215
Phone/Fax: (07)55728186
Email: bhagoldcoastinc@gmail.com

Tweed Heads Group – Contact, Margaret Attwood

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

ADELAIDE

C/- SACOSS, 47 King William Rd,
Unley SA 5061
Email: admin@betterhearingadelaide.com.au
Website: www.betterhearingadelaide.com.au

TASMANIA

TASMANIA

4/32 Bayfield St, Rosny Park TAS 7018
PO Box 962, Rosny Park TAS 7018
Phone: (03)62445570
Email: betterhearingtas@iinet.net.au

VICTORIA

VICTORIA

5 High St, Prahran, VIC 3181
Phone: (03)95101577 TTY: (03)95103499
Fax: (03)95106076
Email: victoria@betterhearing.org.au
Website: www.betterhearing.org.au

GEELONG

PO Box 7332, Geelong West VIC 3218
Phone: (03)52788300
Fax: (03)52788233
Email: bhageel@ncable.net.au
Website: www.betterhearinggeelong.org.au

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WEST AUSTRALIA

PO Box 347, Floreat WA 6014
2015 Email: bhawa2015conference@gmail.com
Website: www.betterhearingwa.org
Bunbury Group – meet at St Augustine Uniting Church, Bunbury Email: jrjilley@aapt.net.au

NATIONAL BHA

Email: national@betterhearing.org.au
Website: www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au

NATIONAL OFFICERS

Patron: Professor Graeme M. Clark
AC, FAA, FRS, (Hon) FRCS

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