

Better Hearing Australia

# THE NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

Placing the Focus on Hearing Loss



Better Hearing Australia (National) Inc  
[www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au](http://www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au)

December 2015

Edition 8

# Better Hearing Australia National Spotlight

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Edition 8, December 2015

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## Message from your Better Hearing Australia Vice President



Michele Barry, Vice President, Better Hearing Australia – Guest Editor

As guest editor I am feeling energised by the Better Hearing Australia conference in WA “Better Hearing for a sound future”. A big congratulations to the organisational committee from WA for making us feel so welcome. The venue was wonderful and the speakers were world class.

Personal highlights for me included learning about the work of the Ear Bus Foundation in WA, a wonderful organisation that really does have a positive impact on the hearing health of indigenous communities. Dr Harvey Coates AO, presented a paper about surgical opportunities for ear drum surgery, I also loved the presentation by Elaine Melville, a WA independent audiologist who spoke about the way different audiological agencies operate and how consumers can participate and direct their hearing health

care.

David Brady, Chairperson from the Deafness Forum of Australia presented a piece on the need for a national campaign to raise the profile of hearing loss in the community. Sara Duncan, National President Better Hearing Australia, edified Better Hearing Australia’s commitment to an aligned approach to reduce stigma, and discrimination and to increase resources for and awareness of hearing loss effecting 4 million Australians.

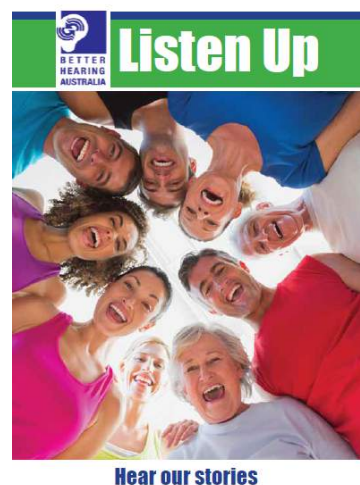
Much has been achieved across the branches, an innovative Rediscovering Music program from the ACT, a new edition of the National Teachers Manual from SA, as well as the launch of a Lip Reading app from WA. Beyond the wonderful presentations, it was great to catch up with friends and colleagues from across the country, sharing knowledge, experiences and resources.

A huge congratulations to Julie Edmonds, Barnard Clarkson and Margaret Furphy, we were all in awe of fantastic conferenced lead by an enthusiastic team. Julie Edmonds, the WA Branch President has kindly provided us with a transcript which is available on national website [www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au](http://www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au)

Since 1932, Better Hearing Australia has supported people with a hearing loss through local branches and activities. Through our local support and advocacy, we enable people with a hearing loss to build skills, make friendships, and reduce isolation which is so commonly associated with depression, and poorer overall health status.

At the WA conference, our National President Sara Duncan Launched “Listen Up – hear our stories” a collection of individual journeys. “Listen Up” is a snapshot of national stories about the positive impact BHA has made in the lives of many. We thank branches from around the country for submitting stories. We have also provided a pro- forma in each of the states’ stakeholder engagement kits, which was distributed as the conference. We encourage you to collect stories, so we can share the impact of what BHA can achieve and encourage more people to seek support to manage hearing loss.

As a Nationally based organisation, we align our ambition of reducing the impact of hearing loss we are a voice for people with a hearing loss and work with other advocacy and research organisations. The “Make it Ten” campaign lead by the Deafness Forum of



Australia is a great example of this collaboration. Together, we can build a better life for Australians with a hearing loss and end the stigmas so many people feel.

The Previous editor of the National Spotlight, Julie Edmonds, chose to resign from the role. On behalf of the National Board of Management, we sincerely thank Julie and recognise the work Julie undertook transforming the national publication to an electronic format.

The National Board will meet early in the New Year to discuss the appointment of an editorial team. As we plan for the future, I invite you to tell us what you would like from the National Spotlight

As guest editor, I thank everyone for your pieces; I have enjoyed reading contributions from around the country and am pleased to share all that is happening locally at Better Hearing Australia.

It's been a wonderful year and we look forward to more exciting things in 2016.

## Better Hearing Australia National Conference 2015

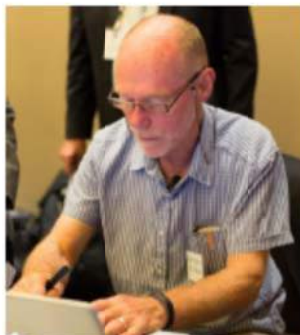
The Western Australian branch was the host for the National conference, Better Hearing For A Sound Future, which was held in Fremantle, WA from the 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> October. The conference coincided with the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BHA branch in WA. Congratulations to the WA Branch for their hard work in accomplishing a successful conference. Please see images from the conference below.



Images from Transcripts – Sessions – Saturday October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015

## CAST AND CREW

**MASTER OF CEREMONIES (MC)**  
**BARNARD CLARKSON**  
Vice Chair – Better Hearing Australia WA



**AV - TOM CLARKSON**  
**OPEN SYSTEMS SUPPORT**  
<http://opensystems.net.au>  
**MICROPHONES**

**JULIE EDMONDS - Chair**  
Better Hearing Australia WA



**PHOTOGRAPHY**  
**MICHELLE TAN**



**LEANNE DENHARTOG**



**MARGARET FURPHY**



**VOLUNTEER KIM WELCH +**  
**BHAWA SECRETARY BARBARA ALCOCK**



**WELCOME**  
**Sara Duncan - BHA National President**



**REDISCOVERING MUSIC PROGRAM**  
**Sue Daw and Peter Cianchi, BHA Canberra**



**TUTORS' HEARING LOSS  
MANAGEMENT SESSION +  
TEACHER'S TRAINING  
MANUAL UPDATE**  
**Shona Fennell, Head of SOAR**



**EFFECTIVE CLASS MANAGEMENT  
DISCUSSION Dr Barnard Clarkson**  
Better Hearing Australia WA

**NEW RESOURCES - John Novak and Michelle Tan**

Images from Transcripts – Sessions – Saturday October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015

## SPONSORS AND EXPO

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



An Australian Government Initiative

THANK YOU TO ANNABEL VASQUEZ OF NATIONAL  
RELAY SERVICE - CONFERENCE GOLD SPONSORS



THANK YOU TO



THANK YOU TO JILLIAN  
AND DANNY OF COCHLEAR



THANK YOU TO ANGELA WILLS  
OF SENSES



THANK YOU TO SAMIA OF  
'HEAR FOR YOU'  
AND DEAFNESS FORUM



THANK YOU ....



Images from Transcripts – Sessions – Saturday October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015

## VALE to previous members of the BHA family

**Peter Perry OAM**, Better Hearing Australia (Sydney) Previous President, Board Member and member

It is with great sadness that I have to advise of the passing of former BHA Sydney Branch President, Peter Perry OAM on 18 November 2015.

Peter made a great contribution to the Sydney Branch and also nurtured the 'Canberra Group' as they moved toward independence. His gentlemanly manner, combined with a great sense of humour, were greatly appreciated by the members in Canberra.

Peter attended a number of the Canberra functions and was always able to make all our members comfortable and regale them with interesting conversation.



**Ted Drowley**, Better Hearing Australia (VIC) Previous President, Board Member and member

It is with much sadness that BHA Victoria branch announce the passing of Ted Drowley in October.

Ted was a dedicated and much loved member, board member and President at the Victorian branch. Ted joined BHA Vic as a member of the BHA Heidelberg group, in the 1990s.

He was on the BHA Vic Committee of Management for a number of years, and 1998-2000 and 2009-2011 as President. Ted was also Vic President when we hosted the national conference in Melbourne 2010.

Ted was also National President from Sept 2001 to Sept 2004 and was awarded an Honorary Life Membership of BHA Vic in Sept 2010.

Our sincerest condolences to the families and friends of both Peter and Ted. They both made significant contributions to the branches of Better Hearing Australia and we are grateful for the contribution.

## Letters to the Editor

We welcome your feedback, comments and letters to the Editor. If you would like to contribute to the Editor please email [national@betterhearing.org.au](mailto:national@betterhearing.org.au)

Dear Sara,

Haydn Daw gave me a copy of *Listen Up, Hear our stories*. The publication has the attributes of being highly readable, attractive and concise. All those involved with this first rate publication deserve to be congratulated.

Your successful meeting with Hearing CRC was mentioned in dispatches, which portends well for a satisfying involvement of BHA in hearing research.

Wishing you continued successes,

U.N. Bhati  
Member, BHA Canberra

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Many of our members would have read a letter from SA member Marjorie Wellby, printed in the October 2015 edition of the National Spotlight newsletter. We would like to stress that this was Marjorie's personal opinion, not that of Better Hearing Australia.

When management at Blamey Saunders became aware of Ms Wellby's letter in the National Spotlight, she was immediately offered her money back, with the hearing aids to then be donated to the Better Hearing Australia (Vic) Hearing Aid Bank. This offer was declined. After further assistance from Blamey & Saunders, Ms Wellby's issue was resolved. A Blamey Saunders Audiologist made new moulds which fixed the whistling problem (at the expense of Blamey Saunders hears). Ms Wellby has since written to Better Hearing Australia stating she is satisfied with the hearing aids and the support Blamey Saunders hears has given her, and that the situation has now been rectified.

Blamey and Saunders have also written to the editor, and advised that at the time of the original publication Ms Wellby had contacted Blamey Saunders to request support for her hearing aids, even though this was offered as part of the program. Due to computer connectivity issues responses from Ms Wellby, to resolve the issues, were left for long periods of time. They also state that age is no barrier to using tele-audiology, however limited communication services can be. Prospective users of tele-audiology should assess their individual situation and as hearing aid users are aware, every hearing aid user, and their ears, are different and people will have differing experiences with the same technology.

Better Hearing Australia has been aware of Blamey Saunders hears and its products for some years and know it is not just an "online hearing aid company". Blamey Saunders hears offer full tele-audiology support in addition to on line services. All Blamey Saunders hears clients have immediate access to a team of experts and are encouraged to contact them immediately should they have any issues.

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Dear Ms Duncan

As a former patron of Better Hearing Australia I greatly enjoy receiving updates on the activities of the organisation. I look forward to reading of Better Hearing Australia's future endeavours.

The Hon Phillip Ruddock MP

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Earlier in the year a request from BHA Executive Officer Michele Barry to all BHA Branches was made for personal stories for a publication to be produced for Hearing Awareness Week 2015. These stories were to be about how individuals have been helped by BHA in the management of their hearing loss.

I relayed the request to the attendees in BHA Geelong Branch's Geelong and Drysdale Hearing Loss Management Sessions and immediately had three enthusiastic participants. These were David Thompson from the Drysdale group and Lorraine Ridgway and Jean Williams from the Geelong group. Their hearing loss and backgrounds differ which means that they have all benefitted from their HLM Sessions in various ways. They are all regular attendees and have been coming along to the sessions for many years. They have regularly encouraged those people that they meet with a hearing loss to come along too but have only had mixed success over the years. Nevertheless they know that they have received invaluable help, strategies to cope and friendship from the groups. Their stories in the Listen Up publication are a testament to this.

I congratulate Michele and the team on the booklet which is a positive and informative way to publicise the wonderful work that is being done by the various BHA branches.

Our booklets will be distributed to various organisations around Geelong including our local Victorian State politician with whom our committee are meeting next week and Give Where You Live, an organisation that raises and distributes funds for the benefit of many different Geelong groups and financially supports BHA Geelong Branch.

Joan Belle

Better Hearing Australia, Geelong Branch

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Listen Up is a wonderful way to show how BHA makes a life changing impact for us folks with hearing loss. It tells our stories.

Leanne, Melbourne

## Hear Our Stories

### AILEENE GILLARD 100 YEARS YOUNG

Boxing Day will be extra special for Aileene Gillard; she will be celebrating her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Aileene has been a long time member of BHA Tas which she joined to assist her late husband Walter who had a severe hearing loss. Aileene preferred the social activities, always first to put her hand up to model at our fundraising fashion parades, make a fancy hat to wear at our Melbourne Cup lunches and making sandwiches became a work of art with Aileene. Master Chef would benefit from her flair.

From the age of three, Aileene's grandparents brought her up. She learnt piano, sewing, typing, and attended local dances where she began her interest in ballroom dancing. On leaving school, she became a hairdresser. She told me a funny story about sitting in the window of Du Barry salon in Melbourne, modelling a new hairstyle. One side of her hair was permed and the other left natural. Can you imagine the surprise her grandparents must have had when they passed the window unexpectedly? That must have been in 1932.

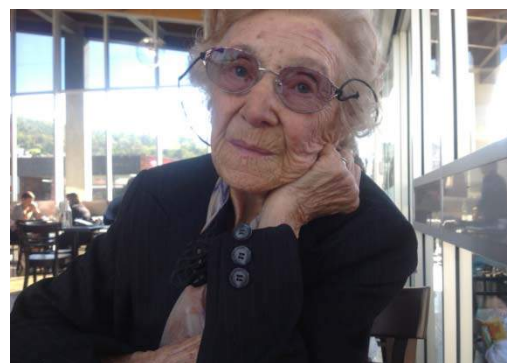
Before her marriage to Walter around 1943, Aileene was enjoying competition ballroom dancing and was a member of the Light Opera society in Bendigo.

Aileene and Walter have two children, three granddaughters and four great grandsons.

Aileene and Walter learned to sign at the Lady Rowallan School for deaf/hearing impaired children, Aileene signed with the same style as she did everything. Extra flourishes and when she didn't know the sign, she would make it up. When I visited them at their home, Walter wouldn't hesitate to tell me I was signing incorrectly. Unfortunately, I wasn't privy to their almost unique style of signing. We enjoyed many laughs, and as long as they were communicating that was what mattered.

Aileene lived alone after Walter died in 1998, and only gave up driving prior to moving to Moama to live with her daughter and son in law this year.

She caught up with her family most Christmases, either in Montreal where her son lives or with her daughter in Sydney.



Aileene usually escaped the Hobart winter by an annual pilgrimage to warmer climates of Coolangatta where she met up with her sister in law, who happened to be Will Anderson's Grandmother.

On one occasion when Will was performing at the Hobart Theatre Royal, Aileene was keen to attend his show and insisted I join her.

I was concerned the show would not have a PG rating. It was such an amusing evening as in her inevitable style Aileene dressed up for the special event.

When we arrived, young fans surrounded us; sitting alongside Aileene, a young man asked if she was a fan? Aileene was keen to let him and his three teenage brothers know she was Will's great aunt. They thought she was 'Cool' coming to his show.

Aileene is still a financial member of BHA Tas. We correspond regularly by phone, mail and email.

"What do you buy for someone who turns one hundred?" For Aileene I think something sparkly, fashionable & modern.

Carol McGhee, BHA Tasmania

## Hear Our Stories

### BETTER HEARING – A LIFE CHANGING ASSOCIATION

In 1981, while teaching in a Sydney Primary school and struggling with a hearing loss, I first heard of the Australian Association for the Hard of Hearing – AAHH, as Better Hearing was called then. I attended classes in Naval House in the city, but as I was still in denial, and expecting to be cured of this hearing problem, I made little progress.

The following year I was transferred to a country school and met Mavis Taber, who had brought the Association to the Riverina. Mavis had a severe hearing loss and through correspondence had become a lip reading teacher par excellence and had set up a group in Wagga, with classes in Lockhart added a year later. I attended weekly classes and through tuition and encouragement from Mavis also became a teacher within the group.

For over 30 years I had taught in Primary Schools in the Riverina and in Sydney and had thought that would be my life's career. However, as my hearing deteriorated, I became depressingly aware that my teaching skills were no longer coping with my increasing loss of hearing. I was fortunate in being able to move to administrative duties within the Presentation Congregation of which I was a member – and continue with lip reading classes, helping other people with a hearing loss.

During the more than 30 years that I have had the privilege of being a part of Better Hearing Australia, I have found constant support and encouragement from the members within the group and an on-going challenge to improve my lip-reading and take advantage of the technological aids now available. Hearing loss can put one at a disadvantage in the community, but membership of Better Hearing has shown me that it also allows one to grow in resilience and empathy with others who are deaf or hearing impaired.

I am immensely grateful to those who suggested that a lip-reading class would be the answer to my woes all those years ago and that AAHH/Better Hearing was a home away from home.

Mary Silk, Better Hearing Australia, Wagga Wagga

### FROG HOLLOW

Down the street from where I  
live  
there's large, flat valley land –  
Frog Hollow.

Mostly it's just green grazing fields for stock;  
or brown when the rains don't come;  
But when the river floods and the waters creep  
across the valley...  
Frog Hollow comes alive.

They say a hundred thousand frogs may have  
burrowed down below the ground,  
when last the land dried out;  
and now they surface, look for mates  
and tell the world, how grand is life.

And they croak and croak and croak.

The humans living near, close their windows,  
put plugs within their ears and cry out in self defence.  
But those happy jumping frogs  
just croak and croak and croak.

Or so they tell me – tis long years since  
I last heard the croaking of a frog...

But as the waters roll and churn round the trees and  
stumps

I know that life down there in old Frog Hollow  
is one great croak and jump and hop.

Mary Silk, Better Hearing Australia, Wagga Wagga



## Hear Our Stories

### ENJOYING THE FESTIVE SEASON WITH HEARING LOSS

The Festive Season is a time for family and friends to get together and have fun. For people with a hearing loss this can be a challenging time trying to keep up with the different conversations. Here are some strategies you might find helpful.

#### Cocktail Parties

It's best not to stand in the middle of the room as you will be surrounded by sound. I suggest moving to the nearest the wall. If there is a terrace go and stand there. You may find it easier in a group situation just to talk to the person standing next to you.

#### Outdoor barbeque entertaining

When attending outdoor social gatherings, if you find it too hard to follow the conversation, go and find the host who will most likely be in the kitchen organising the food. Offer to take around platters of food, they will be grateful. The bar area generates the most noise, it's best to avoid this area.

#### Entertaining at home

Don't dim the lights for atmosphere or use candles which look lovely but the flickering on the face makes it difficult for those lip reading.

Do not have background music playing. For people with a hearing loss it just adds to background noise. I like a round table as it is easier to see everyone face.

#### Restaurants

When eating out, pick a restaurant that has tablecloths, carpet and curtains because they absorb the background noise. If you go to a restaurant that has all hard surfaces, you will notice that the conversation noise just bounces off all the hard surfaces making hearing very difficult. The food section of the Canberra Times has local restaurant reviews which include a noise level rating. We encourage our members to support the restaurants that are quieter and have good food and service.

It's always best to sit against the wall and furthest away from noisy equipment or groups. When against a window you have the advantage of light shining on guests faces.

If the table is rectangular I like to sit at the end so it is easier to talk to the people near me. I can lip read people from the side if they have good lip movements but for the more challenging people to lip read, those with stiff lips, I have to give them a quick "How to speak to a hearing impaired person". I ask them to face me when speaking to me and maybe talk a little slower if they are a fast talker and get my attending by using my name if I am looking elsewhere.

Don't be shy, if you are struggling to hear, tell people that you have a hearing loss you have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

Following all conversations is hard work when you have a hearing loss. You are not only listening, you are lip reading, filling in the word gaps that you can't lip read to make sense of the conversation. You are also watching body language and visual clues to help you follow the conversation as well as thinking of your response. It is normal for people with a hearing loss to feel tired. So when this happens be kind to yourself, give your ears/brain some quiet time and take time out.

If you have other good communication tips please let me know and I will add them to the list and pass them on in future articles.

Enjoy the coming festive season, I know I will.

Sue Daw, Better Hearing Australia Canberra



## Hear Our Stories

### MY HEARING LOSS LAMENT - POEM

This lump of plastic in my ear isn't what it seems;  
It isn't decoration, it's my salvation, and it enables me  
to hear.

A friend once told me when she got her hearing aid,  
she cried;  
That's what it's like being isolated, a little part has died.

So don't treat me as an oddity; instead just speak  
clear.  
I would like to understand you; could you move a little  
near?

It embarrasses me to ask you, but I may need you to  
repeat, rephrase as well,  
But please do not tell me what you said was nothing, or  
just go to hell.

Of noise I am uncertain; some is overpowering, some  
is just unclear.  
The frustration is awful, it could make one shed a tear.

The noises in my head can bring me close to swearing.  
Don't ever think though, that I have gone past caring.

Talking behind my back is really rather rude.  
If I ask you to speak to my face, will you think I'm being  
crude?

Hesitancy occurs quite often but I don't want to be a  
bore.  
And ask you one more time, could you repeat that just  
once more?

Recall can be dodgy. Did I really hear that right?  
The possibilities are endless – it's no wonder people  
fight.

Social gatherings, though longed for, will often fill my  
mind with fear.  
Will I be excluded yet again, just because I cannot  
hear?

I give a lot of thought to you, although  
I suppose you do not know it.  
I need to rehearse what you have said; to be sure I got  
the hang of it.

My telly is too loud, or so they often tell me.  
But is it necessary I wonder, for them to yell at me.

The phone can be a worry and I know I don't do well  
with it.  
I mutter "Eh!" a lot, and I just can't seem to cope with it.

Of comforts others take for granted like just the usual  
sounds,  
I would give anything to hear the birds again, or when  
children's laughter abounds.

To sing and dance as I once did would give me so  
much pleasure.  
But keeping in tune and step is something I can't  
measure.

I wear my little badges so you know I have a problem,  
But I quake inside sometimes, wondering what you'll  
make of them.

My confidence is lacking, but is it me or is it you?  
For myself I know I have a problem, it's often hard  
getting it through to you.

A touch of humour we are told will often save the day.  
When I'm chortling at my muck ups, will you please  
see things my way?

Your patience, tolerance and understanding are  
needed in full measure.  
No need to lay it on too thick that will give me no  
pleasure.

To be accepted and respected just as I am,  
For all that I long for – hearing loss – damn!

Robyn, Former Member  
Better Hearing Australia Newcastle

## Hear Our Stories

### QUEST FOR SWEET SILENCE



I have had tinnitus for three years and whilst I live a full and happy life with my family, friends, dog Marley, I travel regularly and pursue many personal interests, I have to say that I continue to struggle with my tinnitus on a daily basis. But

thanks to Better Hearing Australia and their excellent counselling sessions I manage to get through those difficult days when my tinnitus is particularly disturbing. After many visits to doctors and ENT specialists, I discovered Better Hearing Australia and was very impressed with their professionalism, understanding and excellent tinnitus counselling service.

I was galled to be told by the medical profession that there was nothing that could be done to stop the ringing, so I decided to launch a campaign to help myself and the two million Australians who also struggle with this auditory torment.

Better Hearing Australia are focused on all areas of Hearing but really do want to add to that focus the plight of those with tinnitus. My Ear Rings for Peace was launched on October 21st this year and is supported by and, in aid of Better Hearing Australia (VIC) to help fund a Tinnitus Support Line, educate on hearing protection, and offer support and help manage those who suffer tinnitus.

Jan Logan, Australian celebrity jewellery designer has had tinnitus for many years. She understands the condition and has created a beautiful pair of earrings - The Arcadia Stud and Droplet with a percentage of sales from the earrings going to Better Hearing Australia to help achieve these goals.

Tinnitus is rarely talked about in the community as a major health issue, yet it affects One in Ten people in Australia and those who suffer tinnitus don't even have the luxury to suffer in silence. As I write this article I have a sound machine playing loud bird song noises and then I alternate to crickets chirping to help mask the similar sonic high pitched ringing in my ears.

There seems to be a school of thought that intimates that tinnitus will get worse if one talks about it. Best just to ignore it and it will appear to go away. But sadly, pretending tinnitus doesn't exist is an unacceptable 'prescription' in 2015. Imagine if people with failing eyesight were told to 'ignore it, accept it and get on with life as best they can'.

Oh, and 'please don't talk about your failing eyesight as it will only draw your attention to it'. People don't accept failing eyesight and simply habituate to 'not seeing'. They have demanded the right to see and with much research over the last fifty years, people who are severely vision impaired can now have operations and can wear incredible lenses in glasses to give them back their sight.

Why should we who suffer debilitating tinnitus say nothing and just cope without hope? It is our time to stand up and be heard and demand the peace we deserve. Hopefully the MY EAR RINGS FOR PEACE movement, together with Better Hearing Australia and Jan Logan, will start this long overdue conversation and help raise the funds for research into tinnitus, its causes, and with counselling and support, help those who suffer, learn to make peace with their tinnitus.

Please go onto our beautiful new website where you can donate or purchase your Jan Logan 'Ear Rings for Peace'. Two million Australians will thank you for it! [myearringsforpeace.org](http://myearringsforpeace.org)

Victoria Didenko, Board Member, Better Hearing Australia Victoria

## Better Hearing Australia Scholarship

Better Hearing Australia is delighted to offer students the opportunity to apply for the Better Hearing Australia 2016 Scholarship. The scholarship application closing date is the 31 January 2016. You can find details about the scholarship in our website at [www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au](http://www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au)

### ABOUT THE SCHOLARSHIP

Better Hearing Australia is dedicating funds raised by its members to supporting improving the lived experience of Australians living with hearing loss, through its scholarship program.

The purpose of the Better Hearing Australia Scholarship Program is to provide financial assistance to individuals with a hearing loss, to support them to undertake educational and personal development activities. Through this support Better Hearing Australia will enable individuals to improve their ability to participate in the social and economic activities of their local communities.

### ELIGIBILITY FOR SCHOLARSHIP

Applicants must be:

- Australian Citizen or Australian permanent resident;
- Completing the course in Australia;
- At least 18 years of age at the close of applications; with no fixed upper age limit. Preference may be five to applicants between the age of 18 and 35;
- Submit all applicant information
- Prepared to sign an undertaking to abide by the Conditions of the Scholarship.

We know that last year's Scholarship winner – Mathew Townsend flourished whilst at University and through the support that was given to him by Better Hearing Australia including goods from Word of Mouth Technology in Melbourne.



Mathew is currently completing a Master of Environmental Management - Sustainable Development (2015-16) University of Queensland, St Lucia and completed his Bachelor of Environmental Science (2010-12) James Cook University, Townsville.

Check out his blogs at:

Aspie's World <<http://matttheaspiesworld.blogspot.com.au/>>

Gazette of Sustainability - online blog <<http://ecomattgazette.blogspot.com.au/>>

## News from our Better Hearing Australia Branches

*'Keeping in touch nationally'*

Welcome to the Branch News Section which includes branch and group updates and provides a wonderful opportunity for other members and branches to find out what has been happening.

### BHA Canberra

Since the magnificent conference in Fremantle, which was attended by 12 people from our Branch, we have been polishing our trophies and getting shields engraved and in general basking in our glory. Congratulations to our own Peter Cianchi and also to Peter Moore of Central Coast for sharing the Illingworth award. This is the most prestigious award to receive within BHA. I encourage all branches of BHA to make nominations of deserving members in June 2016.



David Brady, Peter Cianchi and Haydn Daw

At the Conference, Sue Daw and Peter Cianchi presented a session on the Rediscovering Music program (sponsored by Cochlear and presented by the Canberra Symphony Orchestra) which we are proud to be associated with. This session was well received and the idea may provide other Branches the opportunity to introduce or take part in similar programs. We understand that the program funding is uncertain but the program will definitely continue in 2016

Our organisational year is from Jan to December and we have just had our Christmas Party (last Tuesday in November) and

it was a wonderful way to end the year. 56 members and friends of BHA Canberra sat down to a tasty three course meal provided by the Hellenic Club. This year we did not have a guest speaker but it gave everyone a chance to have a pleasant chat. We awarded four 15 year membership medallions this year and Graham Savage and Helen Bridge were present to receive them in person. Gay Jennings and Carole McNally were unable to be there on the night. What an achievement and we are very proud of our long term members who have contributed to our success as an organisation.

We are thinking about next year and one activity we would like to present is a workshop for hearing impaired people and their partners/spouses/family member. We have had planning meetings and are looking forward to presenting the program in the first half of the year. Our members have shown some interest and it would be an open session for the public.

Haydn Daw, Better Hearing Australia Canberra



Graham Savage and Helen Bridge with 15 year medallions

## BHA Central Coast

A recent hospital visit to the Day Surgery Clinic at the Central Coast Day Hospital resulted in a positive experience by Joyce Munday, a member of BHA Central Coast branch.

Joyce had a day surgery planned. From the initial appointment, Joyce and her husband advised hospital staff of her hearing impairment and the need for staff speaking to her would need to face her directly on the same level, speak slowly and clearly without exaggerating or shouting. This would assist her greatly as Joyce is able to lip read quite well. To Mrs Munday's surprise everyone who spoke to her followed these simple directions from reception staff, nurses, anaesthetists and surgeons.

Mrs Munday was extremely delighted with the support and care provided by all hospital staff as this made her visit trouble free as she easily understood information provided to her and also what was required of her. The concern shown by staff made her time in h hospital a positive experience. The team at Better Hearing Australia Central Coast branch decided to give the Central Coast Day Hospital a Certificate of Appreciation.



Anne Walker RN, Mrs. Joyce Munday & Beverly Bailly RN

Better Hearing Australia Central Coast Incorporated Committee, made a presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation to the Central Coast Day Hospital in response to the exceptional care and consideration given to Mrs Joyce Munday who is profoundly deaf.

The Certificate was received by nurses, Beverly Bailly RN and Anne Walker RN who were Joyce's nurses during her stay. All three were delighted to see each other again. BHACC wishes to thank the hospital for their united effort in ensuring that Mrs Munday's deafness needs were addressed so readily.

Geraldine Plumb, Better Hearing Australia Central Coast

## BHA Newcastle

After many months, the renovations to our storm damaged building have been completed, classes have resumed and our students now have a sparkling new classroom, fully insulated, beautifully painted and carpeted with new comfortable chairs, large table, new kitchen, fridge, microwave and even a coffee maker! Although no-one has quite mastered how to use it yet.



Better Hearing Australia Newcastle Branch recently held a CapTel phone demonstration which was well attended. Several people purchased the CapTel phone for their homes and we have installed one in our Better Hearing office so we can demonstrate to everyone how easy it is to use. If you don't have broadband internet in your home it can be connected via a modem and an internet broadband stick.

Classes will finish at the end of the month and each group is preparing for their annual Christmas party, it's hard to believe just how fast this year has gone. We have several new students in our classes and we hope they will continue on next year.

Two of our Branch Honorary Life Members, Val Hallinan and Iris Regan-Donald who are also Honorary Life Members of Better Hearing Australia National Inc have recently reached the age of 96 and are now spending their remaining years in nursing homes in Newcastle and Port Macquarie. A wonderful age for two ladies who have dedicated many, many years to Better Hearing Australia.

Next year will be a challenge for our Branch as we look at alternative ways to keep operating once our funding agreement expires in June 2016 and the NDIA gains momentum throughout Australia. I registered with NDIA as a participant when it first began in Newcastle, well before the cut off age of 64. I've had two interviews but I have to say I am quite disappointed in what has transpired so far with very little information being provided to me as well as lack of follow up contact (18 months between first and second interview and only after I initiated contact) and the fact that the office has no set up such as an audio loop to provide assistance for people with a hearing loss. I am like several people and have my doubts about whether the NDIA is going to be the success the government expects it to be.



The NDIS will be a new challenge for many of our clients. We will continue to support people with hearing conditions and continue our dialogue with the agency.

Karen Dempsey, Better Hearing Australia Newcastle

## BHA Geelong

### Mini Expo 2015, Geelong

Better Hearing Australia Geelong branch staged it's second 'Mini Expo' on Tuesday October 20<sup>th</sup> as their contribution to the 2015 'Seniors' Festival' organised and sponsored throughout the month of October, by the City of Greater Geelong.

The purpose of the Expo was to create a greater awareness of the vital work of Geelong's 'Better Hearing Australia' branch, and the free support it offers to hearing loss sufferers, their families and friends, in the daily challenges they face.



Hospital Kits, Hearing Help cards, BHA's Aural Rehabilitation Program brochures, history of Better Hearing Australia and Geelong sheets, communication tactic sheets, and BHAG information pamphlets were on display. Our thanks to Sue Daw for her help with much of this!

We wanted to highlight the various organisations in the community which provide assistive devices designed to help hearing loss sufferers enjoy a happy, confident and safe lifestyle at home. The Country Fire Authority was asked to bring visual safety devices, alarms, doorbells.

- Vic Deaf audiologist Matthew Grounds came from Melbourne and demonstrated the latest in assistive listening devices supplied by 'Word of Mouth Technology'.
- Telstra Disability Service Geelong demonstrated various types of telephones, and the National Relay Service supplied excellent brochures and posters. One of our members who use this service explained the procedure.
- A member who has a Cochlear implant discussed her experiences, and the difference the implant has made to her life. A most informative brochure was made available to us by the Eye & Ear Hospital, Melbourne.
- Tinnitus Victoria and Whirled Victoria also supplied us with the latest informative brochures, handout sheets, and a DVD. Members whose husbands suffer from these debilitating conditions discussed experiences and problems.
- Free hearing tests were offered by Australian Hearing, and the Geelong Hearing Clinic. These were very popular!
- Relevant You Tube videos on the hearing process, Cochlear implants, Meniere's and Tinnitus played at computer stations. Charts featuring the history of hearing aids, hearing loss statistics, and the latest information on the challenges, advances, costs etc of hearing loss, were displayed.
- Two dietitians discussed the benefits of nutrition, a balanced diet, healthy lifestyle, exercise and wellbeing in relation to hearing loss.

An afternoon tea which broke all the 'healthy' rules but provided great enjoyment and much laughter as everyone munched on scones with jam and cream, decadent slices, and sandwiches. Thanks to Geelong Volunteering for the wonderful volunteers who coped so efficiently with serving and washing up.

Pat Cairns, Better Hearing Australia Geelong



## BHA Sydney

On Saturday, 14<sup>th</sup> November, Sydney held its annual general meeting at its premises, 29 Burwood Road, Concord. The Guest Speaker was David Brady, the Chairman of Deafness Forum Australia, which has its own AGM on the 28<sup>th</sup> November. David Brady is also the Chief Executive Officer of Hear for Your, and organisation that mentors young people with hearing loss. The mentored young people are very impressive.

Most of the existing office bearers were re-elected. John Steel continues to be our President, Leone Sperling is our Vice President, Marion Malins our Secretary, Carmen Malins our Treasurer, and Andrew Bush an ordinary member of our Board of Management. Malcolm Minter, resigned due in part to health reasons. Malcolm was ever practical and helpful and has made a huge contribution to Better Hearing Sydney over many years. Malcolm's very sensible, and often wise approach, and his willingness and hard work for Better Hearing Sydney, will be very sadly missed. We need more Malcolm Minters.

Promotion of Better Hearing Sydney, and particularly of our classes, continues to be a challenge. BHA Sydney has been interviewed on a number of occasions by local radio stations, which was a great opportunity to promote the services and support available in Sydney.

Volunteers are an extremely important part of Better Hearing Australia, Sydney and we have broadened out our potential use of volunteers. Better Hearing Sydney is looking for more volunteers to help with promotions, a volunteer or three who can take responsibility for fundraising, which needs to become more professional in its approach, and for volunteers for a number of other challenges, projects, and responsibilities. Please contact the Sydney office if you are interested or know someone who might be able to offer volunteer support.



With Christmas and the New Year just around the corner, Sydney would like to wish all branches and their people a very enjoyable and happy Christmas and a great New Year where your many achievements are above and beyond your aspirations, dreams, and hopes. May 2016 be your best year to date.

Andrew D'A. E. Bush, Better Hearing Australia Sydney Inc.

## BHA Tasmania

### Tassie's Triple Treat

On 23<sup>rd</sup> September, the Tasmanian branch enjoyed a triple celebration with the presentation of the TV Newsreaders Clear Speech Awards, the 2014 Lip reading Challenge presentations and our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We had a spectacular morning at Rosny Barn with approximately 60 people attending. The Clarence City Council kindly donated the use of the Barn.

Carol welcomed everyone, thanked them for attending, and emphasised the purpose of the day. She spoke about hearing experiences, e.g. a café visit she had with Tina Williams and I where the music level was unbearable, and how it affected negatively on our time there.

Carol asked me to speak about the history of the Branch and my personal story. I spoke about how the branch was formally declared on 4 April 1945 and was called the Tasmanian League for the Hard of Hearing. Past office holders and members were mentioned, and drew attention to the Government Grant, which has increased, from \$400 to five thousand dollars in 70 years.

The winners of the TV Newsreaders Clear Speech Awards were presented with their trophies. Carol presented the Sports Award to Brent Costelloe,

Win TV who accepted with delight. Carol also announced that the TV Enunciation award went to Rachel Williams, Southern Cross who unfortunately could not be present. Kath Venn OAM presented the trophy



Carol McGhee OAM, BHA Tasmania

as well as the Kath Venn Perpetual Trophy for the TV Newsreader Clear Speech Award to Georgia Love, Win TV.



Kath congratulated Georgia, who when accepting her Award said how chuffed she was to receive it and how pleased she was that she was able to do something to help others by speaking clearly. It was interesting to learn that her grandmother had a cochlear implant 15 years ago.

Kath continued with her speech and congratulated Carol on her commitment and hard work for the branch. She spoke highly of how Carol kept the Branch running smoothly and professionally, including her advocacy activities for the hearing impaired. She stressed the importance of the Branch's work and how essential it was to the community.

The Acting Mayor of Clarence, Alderman Jock Campbell was invited to present the Tasmanian branch prize winners of the 2014 Lip reading Challenge with their trophies, also making mention Carol was the overall winner nationally. Prizes went to Carol McGhee OAM, Patricia Connolly, Tina Williams, & Eileen Bloomfield.

Kath Venn OAM, presenting the Kath Venn Perpetual Trophy

In lieu of a trophy, Carol received a book voucher and was presented with a beautiful bunch of flowers by the committee to thank her for her dedication and hard work.

Laurie Upton organised the drawing of the raffle. Louise Jarvis won the main prize of a magnificent hamper of gourmet goods donated by the committee. Kath Venn won two prizes and chose the fruitcake baked by Eileen Bloomfield and a box of mugs donated by Ruth Nogajski. Charmaine Barwick from Shamali Café won a beautiful crocheted blanket donated by Alma Reid. Carol thanked everyone again and we enjoyed morning tea from Relish Catering. The Clarence City Council kindly shared the expenses with BHA

The event featured on Win TV News as well as a featured article about Carol's success in the Eastern Shore Sun Newspaper.

PS After winning the hamper Louise sent the branch a most beautiful card of thanks and compliments about the branch and its activities, so impressed she asked to become a financial member. Another guest, Kathleen Ferguson made a generous cash donation after the event.



Gaylene Dale, Better Hearing Australia Tasmania



Georgia Love, Win TV and Brett Costelloe, Win TV

## BHA Victoria

### Additional locations

Better Hearing Australia (VIC) commenced seeing clients for hearing tests, hearing health information, Hearing Aid Bank and support in locations other than Prahran. We have commenced sessions at Lynbrook Community Centre and Broadmeadows Community Hub. The centres are an integrated multipurpose community centre designed to be a place where people can meet and build relationships and engage in a range of activities, programs and services.

Although we only visit the Outreach locations one day per month we hope that this will increase, and find additional support locations, over the next twelve months. At this stage we are now visit five Outreach locations including Epping, Lynbrook Community Centre, Broadmeadows Community Hub, Ringwood and EACH Ringwood.



Broadmeadows Community Hub



Lynbrook Community Centre

### Better Hearing Australia Victoria AGM

The Annual General Meeting was held at Better Hearing Australia's office on Tuesday 13 October. A new board was introduced by Chief Executive Officer, Michele Barry. Congratulations to President Georgie Stayches and the new board members. We look forward to working with you in the upcoming year to continue to grow and provide support to members of the community with hearing health issues. See our website for our Updated Board of Management page. <http://www.betterhearing.org.au/about-us/board-of-management/>

Thank you to previous board members who have chosen not to renominate including Lucienne Harrison, Kartik Natarajan, Craig Ball, Bill Trumble and Hellen Broadbent. We wish them all well and thank them for their support over the previous years.

NAME	POSITION
Georgie Stayches	President
Sandra Keir	Vice President
John King	Treasurer
Vacant	Secretary
James Caws	Board Member
Victoria Didenko	Board Member
Kaye Gooch	Board Member
Josie Sidoti	Board Member
Peter Young	Board Member

## New employee – Agnieszka Kosidlo, Audiologist



Agnieszka joined the team at Better Hearing Australia VIC branch in May. Agnieszka graduated from the University of Melbourne with a Masters of Clinical Audiology in 2009.

Before joining Better Hearing Australia, Agnieszka has worked as an Audiologist in both public and private sectors; focusing on audiological assessments and hearing rehabilitation.

She has also spent some time performing hearing assessments for children in a private hospital whilst working with an Ear Nose and Throat specialist. As the latest addition to the Better Hearing Team, Agnieszka is also involved in the Victorian Hearing Aid Bank, and provides consultation in relation to general hearing loss and tinnitus management.

## Better Hearing Australia and Jan Logan Jewellery launch 'My Ear Rings for Peace'

BHA Victoria Board Member and Tinnitus sufferer Victoria Didenko and Better Hearing Australia (VIC) is taking a creative approach to raising the profile of the debilitating condition of Tinnitus by launching My Ear Rings for Peace - a collaboration with leading Australian jewellery designer, Jan Logan. My Ear Rings for Peace was officially launched on Wednesday 21 October, with a private in-store event at Jan Logan's flagship Melbourne store.



Michele Barry, Chief Executive Officer of Better Hearing Victoria, says: "The My Ear Rings for Peace campaign will talk about a serious disadvantage one in ten Australians have. To have someone of such esteem such as Jan Logan kindly donate her time, energy and a percentage of sales towards this cause is an amazing opportunity for our organisation and those we endeavour to help."



Founder and Director of namesake business, Jan Logan represents the one in 10 Australians who suffer from Tinnitus, experiencing the onset of a constant ringing in her ears following an intrusive ear operation, age 18. Jan became almost deaf in that ear and began to suffer what is today known as Tinnitus.



Rob Mills, Jan Logan and Michele Barry, CEO Better Hearing Australia (VIC)

The public will be able to show their support for My Ear Rings for Peace by visiting [www.myearringsforpeace.org.au](http://www.myearringsforpeace.org.au) and purchasing their very own pair of [9 carat gold, white gold or silver Arcadia Stud earrings](#) with proceeds donated to Better Hearing Australia (VIC).



## ACT

### **CANBERRA**

PO Box 546, Jamieson ACT 2614

Sue Daw, Phone / Fax: 02 6251 4713

Email: [hdaw@bigpond.com](mailto:hdaw@bigpond.com)

Website: [canberra.betterhearingaustralia.org.au](http://canberra.betterhearingaustralia.org.au)

## NEW SOUTH WALES

### **SYDNEY**

29 Burwood Road, Concord NSW 2137

Phone: 02 9744 0167 Fax: 02 9744 7492

TTY: 02 9744 0124

Email: [bhasyd@ozemail.com.au](mailto:bhasyd@ozemail.com.au)

Website: [betterhearingsydney.org.au](http://betterhearingsydney.org.au)

Grenfell Group

Email: [pjillh@yahoo.com.au](mailto:pjillh@yahoo.com.au)

Phone: 02 6343 1166

### **CENTRAL COAST**

59 Mann Street, Gosford NSW 2250

Phone: 02 4321 0275 Fax: 02 4321 0682

Email: [bhacc1@bigpond.com](mailto:bhacc1@bigpond.com)

Website: [centralcoast.betterhearingaustralia.org.au](http://centralcoast.betterhearingaustralia.org.au)

### **NEWCASTLE**

61 Christo Road, Waratah NSW 2298

PO Box 275, Waratah NSW 2298

Phone / TTY: 02 4968 8050 Fax: 02 4968 8663

Email: [bhanewc@gmail.com](mailto:bhanewc@gmail.com)

Groups

Coffs Harbour

Taree

East Maitland

### **WAGGA WAGGA**

PO Box 5156, Wagga Wagga NSW 2650

Phone: 02 6925 2002

Email: [bhawagga@lizzy.com.au](mailto:bhawagga@lizzy.com.au)

## QUEENSLAND

### **BRISBANE**

21 Vulture Street, West End QLD 4101

PO Box 5334, West End QLD 4101

Phone / TTY: 07 3844 5065 Fax: 07 3846 5260

Email: [bhabris@bigpond.com](mailto:bhabris@bigpond.com)

Website: [bhabrisbane.org.au](http://bhabrisbane.org.au)

Groups

Maryborough - Email: [judyra48@gmail.com](mailto:judyra48@gmail.com)

Logan – Meet at Logan North Library

### **GOLD COAST**

PO Box 3667 Australia Fair, Southport QLD 4215

Phone / Fax: 07 5572 8186

Email: [bhagoldcoastinc@gmail.com](mailto:bhagoldcoastinc@gmail.com)

Groups

Tweed Heads – Contact Margaret Attwood

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA

### **ADELAIDE**

C / SACOSS

47 King William Road, Unley SA 5061

Email: [admin@betterhearingadelaide.com.au](mailto:admin@betterhearingadelaide.com.au)

Website: [betterhearingadelaide.com.au](http://betterhearingadelaide.com.au)

## TASMANIA

### **TASMANIA**

4 / 32 Bayfield Street, Rosny Park TAS 7018

PO Box 96, Rosny Park TAS 7018

Phone: 03 62444 5570

Email: [betterhearingtas@inet.net.au](mailto:betterhearingtas@inet.net.au)

## VICTORIA

### **VICTORIA**

5 High Street, Prahran VIC 3181

Phone: 03 9510 1577 Fax: 03 9510 3499

TTY: 03 9510 6076

Email: [victoria@betterhearing.org.au](mailto:victoria@betterhearing.org.au)

Website: [betterhearing.org.au](http://betterhearing.org.au)

### **GEELONG**

PO Box 7332, Geelong West VIC 3218

Phone: 03 5278 8300 Fax: 03 5278 8233

Email: [bhageel@ncable.net.au](mailto:bhageel@ncable.net.au)

## WESTERN AUSTRALIA

### **WEST AUSTRALIA**

PO Box 347, Floreat WA 6014

Email: [jedmonds.betterhearingwa@gmail.com](mailto:jedmonds.betterhearingwa@gmail.com)

Website: [betterhearingaustraliawa.org](http://betterhearingaustraliawa.org)

Groups

Bunbury – Meet at St Augustine Uniting Church, Bunbury

Email: [jjrjilley@aapt.net.au](mailto:jjrjilley@aapt.net.au)

## **BHA NATIONAL**

Email: [national@betterhearing.org.au](mailto:national@betterhearing.org.au)

Website: [www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au](http://www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au)

### **NATIONAL OFFICERS**

**Patron:** Professor Graeme M Clarke

AC, FAA, FRS, (Hon) FRCS

**President:** Sara Duncan

**Vice President:** Michele Barry

**Secretary:** Sandra Keir

**Treasurer:** Vacant

**Director:** Peter Miller