

Better Hearing Australia

The National Spotlight

Placing the Focus on Hearing Loss



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

June 2014
Edition 2



Better Hearing Australia National Spotlight - Edition 2, June 2014

Welcome to the June 2014 Edition of Better Hearing Australia's The National Spotlight. In this Edition you will find ..

Page 2	Hear Today .. Gone Tomorrow by Alison Cassell
Page 3	Better Hearing Australia 2014 Lip Reading Competition by John Bath
Page 4	The Communication Research Registry
Page 5	Better Hearing Australia History Saved by Sue Daw
Page 6	2014 Better Hearing Australia Illingworth Award by Carole McCarthy
Page 6	2014 Better Hearing Australia Scholarship
Page 7	Letters to the BHA National Spotlight Editor
Page 8 - 13	News from our Branches – Keeping In Touch Nationally
Page 14	Where to find your local BHA Branch

IMPORTANT DATES –

Hearing Awareness Week 2014, August 24 – 30th 2014

Better Hearing Australia National AGM in Adelaide, October 4th 2014

Better Hearing Australia 67th National Conference in Perth, October 16th – 18th 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 all 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.

Opinions expressed in the BHA National Spotlight do not necessarily represent those of Better Hearing Australia (National) Inc. Publication of an advertisement does not imply endorsement by Better Hearing Australia (National) Inc. or its Branches.



Hear Today ... Gone Tomorrow ... By Alison Cassell

Question: What is painless, odourless, tasteless, invisible and toxic?

Answer: Noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL)

Of the 3.5 million Australians suffering some degree of hearing impairment, 37% have a hearing loss which could have been avoided – hearing loss resulting from repeated exposure to excessive, hazardous noise. I am sure we could all name some ‘Noise Nasties’.

Each day, we experience familiar sounds in our environment – noise from television, radio, household appliances and traffic, for example. Normally, even over time, sounds of less than 75 decibels are at safe levels which don’t damage our hearing, e.g. the refrigerator humming (45 dB), normal conversation (60 dB). But sounds are harmful when they are too loud and long-lasting. Exposure can occur at any age and can be temporary or permanent, affecting one ear or both. Whether immediate or gradual, taking a long time to be noticeable, the amount of irreversible hearing damage is related to the noise intensity and length of time exposed. These sounds make significant vibrations inside the ear, distorting and tearing the very delicate membranes and sensitive structures of the inner ear and cochlea.

While noise-induced hearing loss is preventable, the inner ear does not sense sharp pain and does not warn you. Most people mistakenly think: ‘no pain, no danger’. However there may still be damage if you are continually exposed to loud noise (85-90+ decibels) over a day. Extremely loud sound (130 dB) may stimulate pain fibers in the eardrum, signaling an earache. That one-time exposure to an intense ‘impulse’ sound at close range can rupture the eardrum or damage bones in the middle ear. Such **ACOUSTIC TRAUMA** is associated with acute noise of explosions such as bombs, alarm systems and sirens (120 dB), artillery fire or firecrackers (150dB).

Extreme noise exposure can also cause **TINNITUS** in one or both ears — a ringing, buzzing, or roaring in the ears or head. Tinnitus may subside over time, but can continue constantly or occasionally throughout a person’s life. Exposure to this ‘impulse’ noise may cause temporary hearing loss that disappears 16 to 48 hours later, yet recent research suggests although the hearing loss seems to disappear, there may be residual long-term damage.

Continuous exposure to harmful workplace noise over an extended period of time contributes to **OCCUPATIONAL HEARING LOSS**, as does exposure to some solvents and toxins. Employers are responsible for providing a safe environment and the wearing of activity-specific hearing protection devices near noisy machinery is mandated. This also applies to the **home workshop** and the possibility of exposure to noisy power tools, chain saws, lawn mowers and leaf blowers, which can erode hearing more slowly.

RECREATIONAL HEARING LOSS can result from repeated participation in activities involving motorcycles (95 dB) or motor car racing events, jet-ski riding, target shooting or hunting. Of most concern is the rapidly-rising risk of NIHL as young people (and not so young) expose themselves to high sound levels through popular leisure pursuits. The ‘Binge Listening’ epidemic manifests itself in alarming and widespread nightclub and rock concert attendances, and most commonly, in constant use of the ubiquitous iPod or MP3 player. Wearing personal ear bud stereos instead of using headphones increases the noise dose, because listeners turn them up to blank out background noise, increasing the risk of hearing damage. **An MP3 player/iPod at maximum volume: 105 decibels. If you are wearing such devices and the person beside you can hear the sound, then damage is INEVITABLE.**

So serious is the issue of potential damage from iPod ignorance and ‘manic music’ phenomenon, combined with reality of an ageing population, statistics project ‘1 in 4’ Australians will suffer some level of hearing loss by 2050, well beyond today’s ‘1 in 6’ figure. In this age of ever-increasing ‘acoustic terrorism’, it is imperative we understand the hazards of noise, and how to practise good hearing health to protect our hearing for life.

- Understand how your hearing works and know which noises are harmful.
- If you cannot avoid loud sound, wear correctly-fitted protective earplugs or ear muffs, available at hardware and sporting goods stores.
- If you can’t reduce the noise or protect yourself from it, then move away immediately.
- Give your ears frequent rest from noise.
- Have **YOUR** hearing tested if you think you may have hearing loss.

Say ‘NO’ to NOISE: TOO LOUD, TOO CLOSE, TOO LONG ... It is NOXIOUS!

Alison Cassell - BHA Brisbane Branch

Better Hearing Australia 2014 Lip Reading Competition

The WA Branch of BHA accepted the project of the BHA Lip Reading Competition for 2014. We were fortunate to be introduced to a creative film group – the U3A Film Group. It has been a wonderful journey discovering the ‘joys’ of working with teenagers, the challenges of different locations, and being blessed with the support of U3A Film Group. John Bath, U3A Director, speaks below about the experience.



We had a deadline to produce a twenty minute DVD for the Better Hearing Australia annual lip reading competition, by May 31st. Filming started in March and on May 21st we finished shooting. This left us ten days for the very exacting task of editing. As the WA Branch of BHA is hosting the National BHA Conference in Fremantle in 2015; we chose tourist attractions in Fremantle as the theme for the DVD.

The film has a cast of two attractive teenagers, played by Katelynn Thomas-Hall and Isaac Edmonds, who set off on a day’s outing riding bicycles to visit tourist attractions in and around Fremantle, ending at Cottesloe Beach in time to see the ‘Sculpture by the Sea’ exhibition held in March each year.

Filming involved taking the whole crew to many location sites. The Cappuccino Strip, Fremantle Arts Centre, The Australian Maritime Museum and Batavia Shipwreck Museum, The Round House, and finally ending at Cottesloe Beach for ‘Sculpture by the Sea’. Filming had to start in March due to the sculpture exhibition being insitu for only just over one week; meaning we had to begin at the end of our story.

We needed to apply for permission from Fremantle Council to film in the streets, from many individual organisations to film inside their premises, and even one private commercial outlet. The ice cream parlour in South Terrace was obliging and let us interrupt their normal business hours. Everywhere we went we attracted interest from passers-by and succeeded in causing congestion to pedestrian traffic on occasions.

Of course a visit to the beach meant our beautiful young people had to get into their swimming togs and cavort about in the surf for us. I might mention the Director was required to go for a swim too as we had to set up the cameras for the shot and couldn't use our actors for the set-up, or they would have appeared in the film with wet hair before entering the water.

Being a very new film group, each project U3A take on provides us opportunities to learn something new. As we had to film the faces of the actors close up for the benefit of the lip reading competitors, we came to a solution to build a studio with a blue screen as the background. The West Australian Foundation for Deaf Children provided us with a basement room at their Mosman Park premises. We created a simple design costing only thirty six dollars to produce. Our smooth blue background was such a success that one of our members thought we could use it to create chroma keyed backgrounds behind our talking heads.

Chroma keying is the device used in sci-fi films like Star Wars to place actors in situations it would otherwise be impossible to film them. We investigated our editing suite and discovered it capable of chroma key. We then set about teaching ourselves how to do it. Now our finished product will not have to have a plain blue sky behind our talking heads, we can place them over shots of locations where they are supposed to be.

John Bath – Director U3A

U3A Film Crew - 2014 Better Hearing Australia National Lip Reading Competition

Peter Alcock – Producer, Principal Editor, Director of Photography
John Bath – Director, Script Writer
Peter Browne – Sound
Vicki Norman – Production Manager
Steve Thompson – Second Camera

The Communication Research Registry

Supporting hearing research in Australia



In 2013, leading researchers in the areas of hearing loss and other communication disabilities at The University of Queensland created the **Communication Research Registry** (www.crregistry.org.au) - a database of people who are interested in being involved in communication research. The Registry was established to provide people in the community with the opportunity to learn about communication research that is happening across Australia and to invite them to participate in research. Additionally, the Registry was created to give people with a hearing loss and other communication disabilities the chance to have their say about research that is important to them.

The aim of the Communication Research Registry is to support quality, ethically approved research that will help improve services for individuals and families affected by hearing loss and other communication disabilities.

Research is essential to learn more about hearing loss. Research can help researchers understand the:

- causes of hearing loss;
- impact of hearing loss on individuals, family members and friends;
- best options for assessment and rehabilitation of people with a hearing loss.

It is important that as many people as possible who are directly and indirectly affected by hearing loss and other communication disabilities are involved in research. This helps researchers to learn more about people's experiences and how different people respond to different rehabilitation options. Research outcomes are strengthened by large groups of people being involved in research and the likelihood of improving services for people affected by a communication disability is much greater. The Communication Research Registry provides a way for people all over Australia to become involved in research.

How does the Registry work?

For people who are interested in being involved in research:

People join the Registry by signing a consent form and providing some details about themselves and, where applicable, their communication history and what areas of research they are interested in. Registry members are provided with information about research projects that may be relevant to them and are invited to participate. Members are also invited to complete a yearly survey that tells us about research that is important to them. Each year, members receive a free newsletter discussing research outcomes.

For researchers:

Researchers across Australia can apply to recruit for their ethically approved research project through the Registry. Currently, the focus is building the Registry so that we can establish a large pool of people across Australia who wants to be involved in research.

For more information about the Communication Research Registry:

Visit the Registry website: www.crregistry.org.au .

The website has been designed in two formats. The Standard version of the website has Auslan translations.

The Easy English version of the website is for people who have difficulty reading.

Contact us: Emma Leach – Registry Coordinator

Phone: (07) 3365 2089 **Email:** crregistry@uq.edu.au

The Communication Research Registry project is led by a team at The University of Queensland, including:

Professor Louise Hickson – audiologist and researcher

Associate Professor Joseph Kei – audiologist and researcher

Professor Linda Worrall – speech pathologist and researcher

Professor Deborah Theodoros – speech pathologist and researcher

Associate Professor David Copland – speech pathologist and researcher

Dr Carly Meyer – speech pathologist and researcher

Dr Tanya Rose – speech pathologist and researcher

The Communication Research Registry is proudly supported by:



At the 2013 Sydney BHA National Conference Heather Hargreaves (Gwen Illingworth's daughter) and I presented Carole McCarthy (symbolically) with a set of the BHA National Coordinator of Teachers Network Newsletters from 1985 to 2013. I have had them, waiting to find a permanent home where they would be safe and secure. Recently I had given further thought to the preservation of the BHA National Teachers' Newsletters and had decided that instead of placing them in the BHA National Archives at Victoria Branch, I would offer them to the National Library of Australia where they will be preserved and accessible to the public. Haydn and I met with Fiona Orford - Manager, Australian Contemporary Publications, Australian Collection Management Branch, of the National Library of Australia. After looking at the newsletters she confirmed the National Library of Australia would be happy to add them to their collection. I was delighted by her decision and gave all 13 books to Fiona.

I asked Fiona how the BHA Teachers' Newsletters would be accessed in the future and she replied with the following:

"In relation to how the newsletters will be made accessible we will create a catalogue record for the title with a summary of the holdings listing the issues you passed to me today. This record is not only then searchable from the Library's catalogue but also from the national bibliographic database Libraries Australia, and through Trove, a free search service which gives access to a huge repository of Australian resources. The Library's records are given a high relevance ranking by Google, so when someone searches for the Better Hearing Australia newsletter, our record will be the first one retrieved in the result set. So the record for the newsletter will be given high exposure via a search of the Internet.

As I mentioned this morning it may take several months before we get around to cataloguing the material as donated material receives a slightly lower processing priority than material coming in via legal deposit or through purchase.

If any of the early issues of the newsletter can be found I would be very happy to take these into the collection."

When compiling Gwen's Teachers Newsletters Heather was not able to find the very earliest copies of Gwen's newsletters. If she finds them, or should any of our members have copies of Newsletters 1 – 11 1983-84, we understand Fiona will be able to add them to the collection.

I also informed Fiona I have been in the process of writing the "*National Teacher Training History*". She stated when it is finished she would welcome that into the collection also.

This has inspired me finish this project. I will be asking for memory contributions from our teachers/members who attended the BHA Conferences in the days when they ran for 5 days, focusing on teachers' sessions and interesting matters such as social activities. I would also like contributions from teachers who have attended Conferences and teachers sessions of BHA Conferences in recent times. I have heard in the past about one Conference being held in a convent and the accommodation rather spartan, with very narrow beds. Also in those longer Conferences there would be a social day in the middle. I would like to know what happened on these social days.

There is a wealth of knowledge out there that I would like to capture in this history for future researchers on the history of lipreading in Australia.

Sue Daw OAM – Secretary BHA Canberra and BHA Aural Rehabilitation Teacher

2014 Better Hearing Australia Illingworth Award



Nominations for the 2014 Better Hearing Australia Volunteer of the Year Award are now open.

This is a call for nominations for the **Illingworth Award**, the 'Better Hearing Australia Volunteer of the Year' Award. Nominations must be made in writing, and forwarded to the Awards Co-Ordinator Carole McCarthy by August 1, 2014. Branches may nominate a person who has been nominated before, providing they have not previously been a winner of the Illingworth Award.

Nominees may be anyone who serves as a Volunteer for a Better Hearing Australia Branch or Group (or the BHA national organisation). As an example Board Members, Teachers, Branch Trainers, Speakers, Office Assistants, Social Co-ordinators and Volunteers holding similar positions, are eligible.

Submissions should include details of the nominee's functions, activities, and commitment to Better Hearing Australia. Please send submissions to:

Awards Co-ordinator

Carole McCarthy

Carole.mccarthy.bha@gmail.com

CLOSING DATE – AUGUST 1, 2014



Better Hearing Australia Scholarship

Applications are now open for the 2015 Better Hearing Australia Scholarship

The Better Hearing Australia Scholarship is to assist people with hearing difficulties by providing financial assistance for their educational needs. Hearing loss can result in a person's inability to maintain a long-term commitment to schooling, which can give rise to the prospect of lesser employment opportunities and possibly lead to isolation and depression. Access to financial assistance may be crucial to a young person managing difficulties and achieving success. The Scholarship will be open to children/youths under the age of 26, but may not necessarily be confined to this age. **Applications for the 2015 Better Hearing Australia Scholarship close 31st October 2014.** Please apply via the Better Hearing Australia National website.



word of mouth
technology

Better Hearing Australia is pleased to announce Word of Mouth Technology will be supporting the BHA Scholarship through the provision of Assistive Listening Devices.

HEARING awareness WEEK



**From
Sunday 24 August
2014**

The new Hearing Awareness Week logo was introduced last year and it is available to event organisers to help with promotion of their events. The Hearing Awareness Week website also has new content – sound calculators, event ideas, fact sheets and more.

Visit www.hearingawarenessweek.org.au

Pre-order your posters at info@deafnessforum.org.au



Check with your local Better Hearing Australia Branch for Hearing Awareness Week activities in your area.

For further information on Hearing Awareness Week 2014 visit:

www.hearingawarenessweek.org.au

Better Hearing Australia

The National Spotlight

Placing the Focus on Hearing Loss

'Your Feedback'



Thank you to all our readers who wrote to the Editor with feedback on our 1st Edition of the BHA National Spotlight. Below are extracts from some of the mail received.

RE: THE NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

I must say I, and our Gold Coast Branch, were sceptical and at the 2013 AGM in Sydney voted NO to a version of our wonderful magazine we had known for decades, going to an email version to be read on our computers. But this did happen, we were outvoted.

When the 1st Edition of The National Spotlight appeared in our email addresses, our wonderful member Kevin Hobbs down loaded and copied the new BHA National Spotlight. He then printed and bound a number of copies for members who required this as they did not have the technology required, or some members require copies.

We had NO member complaints (not even me) to this new version of our special magazine we so looked forward to over many years. The special article on the change over 20 years of communication, presented by Sue Daw, reinforced the need for change of our own BHA magazine.

Congratulations to our National BHA members for this special 1st Edition of The National Spotlight.

Kerry Campbell - Secretary/Treasurer
Gold Coast QLD

I have just received my National Spotlight and love it ! Congratulations to all on an excellent job. The Spotlight is full of info and looks good too!
Carole McCarthy

This is the first opportunity I have had to sit down and really read through The National Spotlight. Congratulations to all concerned, it is so good to have it an electronic format and will be easier to keep and refer to in the future. Well done BHA - a very good decision and smart new product. Roxie of Canberra.

Thanks for the new Spotlight magazine good content, and much better than paper. Thankyou!
Neil Sloan – Canberra

'A fantastic magazine with a really great range of articles. I love it.'

Steve Williamson - Chief Executive, Deafness Forum of Australia

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE NEW SPOTLIGHT..... WELL DONE!

If this is to replace the posted Better Hearing Magazine, please cancel posting my copy out to save money! Well done again to all concerned in this new initiative! Victoria Life Member.

Just wanted to congratulate you on the excellent 'new look' e-Journal: The National Spotlight.
Alison Cassell.

During the week I received in the Post a copy of the Inaugural National Spotlight. I read it thoroughly with great interest. Thanks and congratulations to all concerned with a revised/updated Journal format. Brisbane Branch Member

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.

National Better Hearing Australia AGM - October 4, 2014 in Adelaide.

Adelaide BHA is well advanced with plans for the National AGM scheduled for Saturday October 4th, in our regular meeting room at SACOSS (South Australian Council of Social Services) building conveniently located near the Adelaide city square. We were successful in obtaining a grant from Deafness Foundation to provide on-line captioning from the Caption Studio and the room has an audio-loop.

Branches/National Council delegates and National Board, received communication re starting times and program outline, following the successful pattern introduced two years ago by Brisbane Branch. We are hopeful AGM participants and observers/partners will be able to stay overnight in Adelaide to attend an informal social evening on the Saturday to network and also have a rare meeting with Adelaide members.

Adelaide receives no regular government funding but has been successful with occasional community grants for equipment and has its own unique fundraiser. The sale to members/family/friends of our own labelled red and white wines has been successful in providing necessary financial support since our Branch was established some 12 years ago. The formula is to choose top wines, with the support of a tasting panel, design interesting labels and for our members to label and market the wines. So far, so good, and the release of more than 100 dozen wine cartons each year is welcomed by our many buyers.



Adelaide's Hearing Loss Management program continues to attract support and our once a month **Coffee Mornings**, a combination of speakers and visits, is a popular diary date for members, a wider audience of friends and the hearing loss community. Recent Coffee Mornings included a visit and presentation by Melbourne based Dr Elaine Saunders from **Blamey Saunders hears** on self-fitting hearing aids, (as a result two people are now buying her aids) and a walking tour (photo left) led by Derik Ward, through **Adelaide's Botanic Garden** with lunch in the café.



Adelaide's recent marketing initiatives include new 2014 brochures, presentation to a nursing home community and hearing loss communication advice sessions for medical students via the Adelaide Hospital. **Medical Student Session Objectives** included gaining an understanding of issues involved in communicating with hearing impaired people, to develop awareness of strategies to improve communication with hearing impaired patients, and practice of strategies to improve communication.

Shona Fennell – Vice President and Tutor, BHA Adelaide Branch

Canberra Branch, ACT

This has been a busy period for Canberra and we are chasing our tails trying to keep up. On the 10th May we met for our first AGM attended by 12 people, including one of our Expert Panel. All went smoothly and we have a 'new' committee, however all the faces remain the same.

Our major announcement at the AGM was the makeup of our Expert Advisory Panel which we have put in place to ensure that when we say something in writing we have a solid basis for doing so. The following talented people have agreed to be on the Panel: Adjunct Professor William (Bill) Gibson who needs no introduction, Dr David Ryugo who researches hearing loss and the brain, Rachel Tyson (psychologist), Anne-Marie Crowe (audiologist and manager of SCIC Canberra), Dr Louise Skelt (hearing loss and communication) and architect Eric Martin who is an expert in access. Eric attended our AGM. We thank all our Expert Advisory Panel.

Music seems to be a theme also. We have experienced our best ever 'Rediscovering Music' program with Tangoz, a trio of competent musicians; Rachel on clarinet, Steve on the guitar and Anton on piano accordion. These musicians had a great understanding and captivated the audiences afternoon and evening with a terrific program. This series is presented by Kristen Sutcliffe on behalf of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra with sponsorship From Cochlear Ltd.



PHOTO: Piano accordionist Anton Wurzer and our oldest member Irene Copping (95) at the recent rediscovering music concert.



PHOTO: the Tangoz group, Steve Allen guitar, Anton Wurzer piano accordion, Rachel Best Allen clarinet and presenter Kristin Sutcliffe.

Sue and I attended the International Cochlear Symposium in Sydney on Sunday 11th May and were fascinated by the speakers. It appears many of the approaches we use now in the Rediscovering Music, which we found by trial and error, are well known to researchers. For people trying to 'rediscover music' it is important to start with simple tunes, preferably known to the listener, have a small number of instruments (we introduce each instrument individually) and to present music with a good beat. We learnt that lyrics can be a great help when listening. Listening practice is important like many other things in life. The musicians love these sessions too.

Sue and I visited the National Library to see if they would accept the almost complete set of the BHA 'Teachers Newsletters' that we have had bound. Fiona Orford, Manager Australian Contemporary Publications was very pleased to receive them. They now have a permanent home and will be protected and available for loan.

Haydn Daw – BHA Canberra Chair

Newcastle Branch, N.S.W.

During **Senior's Week 2014** we held a highly successful and well attended Open Day/ Morning Tea. Publicity was provided through Newcastle City Council's publication distributed throughout the local government area. After listening to several speakers talk about the services offered by our BHA Branch, and what happens in our hearing loss management classes, guests were treated to a delicious morning tea which included mouth-watering chocolate sponge made by our committee member Dennis Rees, and delicious slices made by our office manager Kay Lloyd. Perhaps we should incorporate cooking classes in our programs.



After the success of the day, plans are under way to hold more regular **morning tea functions**.

We are also planning a letter box drop and poster campaign at the local shopping village and the retirement villages close to our Branch.

The 1st Edition of the **BHA National Spotlight** was distributed to our members through email, post, or by hand in classes. Members have been encouraged to contribute articles to future editions of the **BHA National Spotlight**.

At present NSW Branches are undergoing an accreditation process which involves compliance with the NSW Disability Standards, it is a large undertaking and currently taking up many hours of checking policies and procedures, updates to keep in line with legislation changes, development of new policies, brochures and information kits. I would like to give thanks to Sue Brown and Brisbane Branch for their advice, assistance, and sharing of information which helped us in Newcastle with the process. We had our first assessment in April and were pleased to pass this first hurdle, however now we are required to work through the recommendations before our next assessment later this year. It is still not known if our funding will continue after 30.6.2015.

Survey forms will soon be sent to all our members for their feedback about the services Newcastle Branch offer and how we can improve on those services. We are also seeking our members help in developing future planning and policies, and suggestions for fundraising activities.

We are attending seminars and forums for the National Disability Insurance Agency and still coming away none the wiser of how people with a hearing loss fit the criteria to access support and funding through the NDIA. Several of our members under the age of 64 have applied, but do not appear to meet the requirements. Hearing loss does not seem to be considered a big enough disability.

Early planning has begun in Newcastle for **Hearing Awareness Week 2014**.

Karen Dempsey

Sydney Branch, N.S.W.

In January Sydney held a planning meeting to discuss the future direction of the Branch and formulate a work plan in accordance with NDIS guidelines, especially with the possible loss of government funding in 2015. The morning session covered identifying the needs of hearing impaired people in the community, short courses, volunteers, membership and fees. The afternoon session discussed funding and fundraising, training of volunteers, promotions and the revamping of our website. It was a long but productive day with some very good ideas being floated.



Our premises were painted during the Christmas holiday break and during the course of this exercise; some major building defects were discovered. The complete floor area needs to be replaced plus the outside front area is collapsing and requires levelling. We anticipate carrying out the most urgent work in stages with the front office being recently completed. A Building Restoration Fund has been launched to help defray some of the ongoing costs.

Hearing loss management classes are still being held at a number of venues in Sydney and we have acquired ten new members since January, however attendances in general have declined steadily. We have been in discussion with NAL concerning the possibility of holding classes at the Hearing Hub and are pleased to announce that classes will commence there on 19th June. This should generate some good publicity for the Branch and the work we are doing.

Social activities include a monthly Craft Circle, where members can learn and improve their skills at various crafts such as folk art, water colour painting, card making and bonsai. Another popular activity is the monthly Coffee@Concord morning where members can listen to interesting and entertaining speakers after enjoying a delicious morning tea.

Monthly outings this year included a lunch at Ultimo TAFE College Apprentice Restaurant, Yum Cha at the Sky Phoenix at Centrepont, High Tea at the Queen Victoria Building, and a trip to the Edogawa Japanese Commemorative Garden and Art Gallery at Gosford.

In early June, BHA Sydney will man an information stand at the Rotary International Convention at Sydney Olympic over 20,000 visitors expected to attend so it is another great opportunity to promote the work of Better Hearing.



Two fundraisers are planned for later in the year - a sausage sizzle at Bunnings in August, a craft, toy and plant stall in October and over the Queen's Birthday weekend in June, BHA volunteers man the entry point at the annual Epping Model Railway Exhibition. For this enjoyable and painless exercise, BHA receives a share of the money raised during the three days the exhibit is held.

Marion Malons

Victoria Branch

April and May were a busy time for Better Hearing Australia (Victoria) Inc. We launched a new look Newsletter and Website. We also survived our quality audit and continue to spread the word about the benefits of supporting people to manage hearing loss.

Not being able to hear well can mean not being able to communicate or participate in activities of choice. For many it is an isolating and debilitating experience. Hearing loss impacts on the emotional, mental and physical wellbeing of the individual with hearing loss, their family members, and significant others in their lives. Individuals transitioning from being 'hearing' to 'having a hearing loss' need support to help minimise the impact. Each year BHA supports thousands of Victorians to manage hearing related conditions.

We have been meeting with a range of politicians, peak bodies and officials to promote awareness of the impact of hearing loss. With recent policy announcements of keeping people in the workforce longer and the review of Federal Hearing Services, it is vital BHA continues to be part of evolving policies and changes. We welcome the opportunity to improve the reach of Hearing Services to more people, support people to manage hearing related conditions, and improve awareness of hearing loss in the community.

Our Tinnitus seminars continue to attract good numbers and we have extended our reach to new groups by developing community partnerships. We have commenced working with Red Cross to reach refugees and asylum seekers who may have undiagnosed or untreated hearing loss due to childhood illness, or the trauma of war. Through support these clients will acquire important skills such as learning English.



In May Better Hearing Australia Victoria Branch hosted a delegation from Indonesia, here as part of a training program concerned with the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Indonesia has now ratified the Convention and the "fellows", mainly from the Ministry of Social Affairs, will have key roles in the implementation.

The key focus of this program is on the needs of people with sensory disabilities, intellectual disabilities and disabilities arising from mental illness. We were excited to be part of this special study tour.

PHOTO LEFT: Michele Barry with Indonesian Delegates at Better Hearing Australia Victoria Branch

This month we also farewelled Gwen Rosengren. After 12 years of service Gwen has retired from BHA. Over the years Gwen has supported thousands of people to manage hearing loss across the state. During her time at BHA she has been the Team leader for our Hearing Advisors, acted as the Executive Officer, and participated in partnership programs to improve the lives of many people. One program in particular was Gwen's work with the Centre for Farmer Health, which was recently the Libby Harrick's Oration at the Deafness Forum Summit in May 2014.

Gwen, from BHA and the many people who have worked with you, we say **thank you** and we wish you well for your next adventure.



Michele Barry – CEO Victoria Branch

West Australia Branch

The Better Hearing Australia WA Branch (BHAWA) are continuing with all classes and services at our new location 53 Curtin Ave, Cottesloe.

In WA we are piecing together our history, 2015 will mark the 70th year BHAWA have provided services and support to the West Australian community. Any members who may have records they are willing to share please contact us. Contact with BHAWA can be made through our website :

www.betterhearingaustraliawa.org

We are pleased filming has finished for the 2014 Lip Reading competition and the DVD has now entered the editing phase. WA look forward to hosting this national Competition this year. It is anticipated DVD's and Information/Competition packs will be posted to all BHA Branches in July 2014.

BHA NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN PERTH WA 2015

Preparations for the Better Hearing Australia National 67th Conference in Perth 2015 have begun! The Conference Venue is booked and we look forward to an informative and professional Conference with National Delegates and support of the WA Community. The Conference will run from Friday 16th – Sunday 18th October 2015 inclusive.

The venue is the Esplanade Hotel Fremantle, located in the heart of Fremantle, overlooking the parklands and harbour. 20 minutes' drive from central Perth, this hotel offers 2 heated pools, 3 outdoor spas, a sauna and a fitness centre.



The hotel has 2 on-site restaurants with a great selection of international cuisine. The Atrium Garden Restaurant buffet serves a variety of special dishes, whilst The Harbour Master can serve grilled dishes, local snapper or seafood chowder. The Marine Lounge Bar is a great place for fine wine or cocktails.

Guests enjoy a choice of spacious and comfortable guest rooms and suites, most with private balconies overlooking parklands, Fremantle city or the resort pool. A number of the rooms include a spa bath.

The Esplanade Hotel is within easy walking distance of local shops, restaurants, markets and museums. Perth International Airport is a 30-minute drive away. The WA Branch are excited at the opportunity to showcase some of our State's attractions and hope all delegates will share social activities with us.

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 September Edition, which is August 15, 2014.** Please send contributions to bha.national@gmail.com and keep articles and news to 600 words or less as an attached WORD document, with **any images attached separately**.

The BHA National (Inc) Annual General Meeting will be held in Adelaide October 4 2014. Please contact your local BHA Branch for more information.

The next Better Hearing Australia National Conference will be held in Perth 16 – 18 October 2015.

Your Better Hearing Australia

ACT

CANBERRA

P.O. Box 546, Jamison ACT 2614
Sue Daw, Phone/Fax: (02)62514713
Email: bhacanberra@gmail.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: bhacc1@bigpond.com
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 judyrax@tadaust.org.au

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
Murray Bridge Group - Phone: 0410399273

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

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

WEST AUSTRALIA

PO Box 347, Floreat WA 6014
Email: jedmonds.betterhearingwa@gmail.com
Website: www.betterhearingaustraliawa.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
AO MBMS PhD FRACS FRCS

President: Julie Edmonds

Vice President: Michele Barry

Secretary: Tom McCaul

Treasurer: Jaki Medford

Director: Sandra Keir

