

Better Hearing Australia

The National Spotlight

Placing the Focus on Hearing Loss



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

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Edition 5



Better Hearing Australia National Spotlight - Edition 5, March 2015

*Welcome to the March 2015 Edition of Better Hearing Australia's The National Spotlight.
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IMPORTANT DATE:

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 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.

Better Hearing Australia (National) Inc. 2014 AGM hosted in Adelaide

BHA Adelaide 2014 President Derik Ward, the Adelaide Branch Committee and BHA Adelaide members gave a warm welcome to BHA Board members, National delegates and observers who attended the 2014 BHA (National) Inc. AGM in Adelaide on Saturday October 4. The AGM was well attended by both delegates and observers, with all declaring it a success thanks to the organisational skills and commitment of the Adelaide Branch.

Adelaide Branch's generous hospitality was enjoyed by all, with Barbara Munn and her Committee providing a magnificent luncheon for 25. A dinner for over 30, starting with nibbles and some of that famous Adelaide wine was catered for by *Texas Bull Machine*. I am sure all remember the experience in Adelaide as one of friendships and enjoyable social activities, beautiful weather and an AGM where Branches shared their ups and downs in a supportive environment. BHA members wishing to receive the transcripts can do so by contacting Adelaide Branch.



LEFT L (-R) : Derik Ward (Adelaide President and Delegate), Haydn Daw (Canberra President and Delegate), Sr Mary Silk (Wagga Wagga Delegate), Joan Belle (Geelong Delegate), Michele Barry (National Vice President and Victoria Delegate), Tom McCaul (National Secretary), Julie Edmonds (National President and West Australian Delegate), Jaki Medford (National Treasurer), Sandra Keir (National Director) and at the rear you will just see Adelaide observers Marjorie Wellby and Pauline Crosby.

BELOW: (L-R) Roma Wood (Sydney delegate), Peter Massey (Brisbane Delegate) with his Hearing Dog Sandy (a real hit!), Shona Fennell (Head of SOAR), and Mandy from Captioning Studio.

BELOW: 'That' Luncheon.. Thankyou ladies !



Thank you Adelaide Branch

Better Hearing Australia (National) Inc. 2015 National Board



National President
Sara Duncan



National Vice President
Michele Barry



National Secretary
Tom McCaul



National Treasurer
Jaki Medford



National Director
Sandra Keir

Dear Better Hearing Australia Members and Supporters

I was honoured and humbled to be elected President of the Better Hearing Australia (National) Inc. at the AGM in Adelaide. I wish I could have been at the AGM to meet many of you however a longstanding family commitment prevented my attendance.

As the child of someone with a severe and debilitating hearing loss I understand the pain and isolation hearing related issues cause individuals and their families across Australia. I am committed to working with you all to:

Support and serve members and Australians who have a hearing related issue.

To improve the services for people across Australia experiencing hearing related issues.

To advocate and improve the profile of hearing loss in our communities.

Learn more about your branches and the issues you face, in particular the development of a strategic plan and local resources.

I come to the National Presidency following a year of working for BHA (Vic) Inc. This experience enables me to develop an insight into the issues facing all of our branches, as well as the individuals we seek to serve. I was proud to co-author the recently release paper "A Fairer Hearing", this paper is a key first step to improve the profile of hearing loss.

The board has been working hard meeting with key stakeholders in particular the Federal Government. We will also soon complete a draft strategic plan for consultation with members. I look forward to the 2015 Conference the WA Team are busy preparing.

I am hoping to meet as many of you as I can over the coming year and if you are coming to Melbourne I would love to meet with you.

Sara Duncan
National President



Three generations of same family receive gift of hearing

Over the last 9 years, one West Australian family has received the gift of hearing 3 times. Leslie French (67), daughter Jody Maitland (39) grandson Hayden Maitland (10) all suffered varying degrees of hearing loss, yet through the technology of cochlear implants at the Ear Science Institute Australia's Hearing Implant Centre in Subiaco, West Australia, they are now able to hear with clarity and understand words their loved ones speak.

PICTURED LEFT TO RIGHT: Professor Marcus Atlas, Jody Maitland, Leslie French, Hayden Maitland

With family history of hearing loss, Jody ensured her son Hayden had a hearing screening as a newborn. He passed the screening but to ensure potential hearing loss was picked up quickly, Jody had his hearing monitored 6 monthly. This regular testing meant Hayden's hearing loss as a toddler was quickly identified and it progressed to a need to be fitted with his first hearing aid at the age of four. Since then, Hayden's hearing loss further deteriorated to a need for a hearing aid in his left ear and a cochlear implant in his right ear due to severe to profound deafness.

The driving force behind the monitoring of Hayden's hearing loss was his mother Jody and due to the impact hearing loss had on her life. A cochlear implant recipient herself, Jody was born with hereditary hearing loss in both ears. She was diagnosed as having a hearing loss at the age of eight after her mother Kathleen persisted on having second opinions, knowing that something was wrong. However, it was not until the age of 32 that she received two cochlear implants, one in each ear, to assist her with looking after her two young children. Jody believes the impact of the years she lost to almost silence in the classroom was significant. *"If I was diagnosed earlier, I believe I would have performed better in school and gone on to further studies and university,"* Jody said. *"Hayden is at a crucial point in his schooling, soon he'll be going to high school and we've gone through the ESIA Hearing Implant Centre to get the best possible care and hearing outcomes for him so he can excel in his studies."*

Jody was motivated to receive her cochlear implants late in life after seeing the positive impact it had on her father Leslie French's life. Mr French had lived with significant hearing loss in one ear and total deafness in the other. He used hearing aids, but working in the building industry, he believes the loud noises contributed to his hearing loss.

"I had hearing aids but they just made things louder. I couldn't understand what people were saying when receiving on the job training or in meetings. I know it impacted my career, I could have gone further if I had been able to understand what people were saying."

In 2005 Mr French received his first cochlear implant in his deaf ear after his GP identified he may have been a candidate for cochlear implants. *"I had been told before that I wasn't a candidate but my GP thought I might be, so he gave me a referral to Professor Marcus Atlas and it turned out I was a suitable candidate! "It was so great," he said. "I could hear sounds I had never been able to hear before, like birds chirping off in the distance or car horns honking. The clarity was unbelievable. I wish I had it done sooner."* Within two years, Mr French had booked in to have his second cochlear implant in his other ear and his daughter Jody received hers at the same time.

Professor Marcus Atlas was also of key importance to the family. Mr French had his cochlear implant surgery performed by Professor Marcus Atlas of the ESIA Hearing Implant Centre. When it came time for his daughter Jody to have her implant she also chose him. *"It was a natural choice to go back to him for Hayden's surgery,"* Mrs Maitland said. *"He knows our story and has been with us on this journey and he's the one I trust to do the surgery on Hayden."* Hayden's surgery was successful and he recently had the device 'switched-on' to activate the internal and external mechanism to work together to relay sound. He was surrounded by family, with his mother at his side as he became the third generation of his family to have his cochlear implant switched-on.

With the anticipation leading up to the event, Hayden, his mother and his grandparents became overwhelmed with emotion as the first sounds came through. He was able to keep his composure until he heard his mother's voice and the emotions became too much. Having gone through the experience herself, Jody was able to comfort her son and reassure him that he will get used to the new way of hearing as his ears will need to "learn how to hear." Quickly, Hayden was able to enjoy the experience and could identify different sounds and was keen to listen to his favourite song 'Everything is Awesome' from the Lego movie, a fitting song choice for a boy who has received the gift of hearing back in his right ear. Hayden and his family's story is a unique one given the three generations of cochlear implants and all by Professor Marcus Atlas of the Ear Science Institute Australia's Hearing Implant Centre.

If you believe you or your loved ones have a profound hearing loss, it is important to seek a referral for an assessment and you too, may be able to experience the clarity and joy of hearing once again.

Walk a Mile in My Shoes

By Alison Cassell

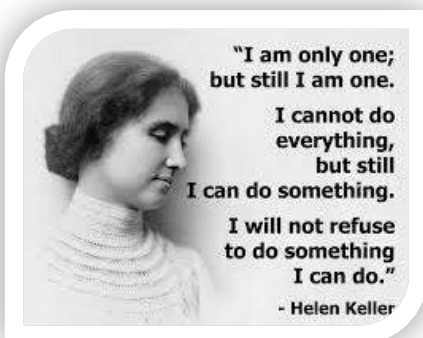
I've written previously of my husband Doug, and his 'Tenuous Trifecta', of life-changing severe hearing loss, tinnitus and Meniere's disease which suddenly and inexplicably beset him in 2008, presenting an incredibly steep learning curve. No aspect of life remained untouched, trying to manage this 'invisible' disability. We've been significantly impacted by this confidence-shattering entrée to the Hearing Impaired community, with considerable pressure on both partners. We were unprepared for the confusion, frustration and anger resulting from repeated stressful struggles with acoustic terrorism, of auditory deprivation and miscommunication, and the social isolation and cultural exclusion associated with hearing loss. There have been many tense, testing moments and we are constantly learning new coping strategies.

Add to that mix, a new chapter in my Dual-Disability Diary, with the terrifying loss of vision in my right eye a month ago, and the subsequent shock diagnosis of a 40% detached retina. Devastating news; this emergency situation required surgical intervention within two days, to prevent permanent loss of sight. Blessedly, immediate surgery averted that risk, the retina now perfectly reattached and my recovery progressing well, under the expert care of highly-respected Sunshine Coast Ophthalmologist, Dr. Ben Fleming. In a case of 'share and share alike', Doug has become 'my' eyes, while I remain 'his' ears!



PICTURE: Alison recovering from her emergency eye surgery

Day 1-5 post-surgery required I diligently spend 45 minutes of every waking hour resting my forehead on a pillow on the table, then only 15 mins 'up' per hour, coupled with an ongoing, rigorous regime of eye drops four times / day. Still wearing the ugly, uncomfortable shoes of temporary disability - my toes are pinched, my footsteps hesitant. I'm 'banned' from excessive exercise, physical work, bending, heavy lifting, gardening, exposure to dust, dirt and pets for a month, and from driving and flying until the gas bubble in my eye is absorbed. My focus is blurred, my balance compromised. I have mini-vertigo attacks, fortunately none as severe as Doug experiences during Meniere's episodes. Yet, for all the upset and inconvenience to date, I'm ever-mindful of those reassuring words, **'This too shall pass'**.



Not so, however, for Helen Keller, the world-famous, deaf-blind American writer, public speaker and prominent activist for people with sensory loss. The shoes of unjust affliction she put on, she could never take off, but wear them exceedingly proudly and well, Helen Keller most certainly did for her entire life. Helen's story is iconic - the healthy child born on June 27, 1880, left deaf, blind and unable to speak at the age of nineteen months, after falling ill with 'brain fever' (possibly scarlet fever). Growing from infancy to childhood, frustrations with her inability to communicate made Helen almost uncontrollable, but her 'new' life began when nearly seven years old; strong-willed Anne Sullivan coming to Helen's home as her teacher. Twenty year old Sullivan, a graduate of Boston's Perkins School for the Blind, had regained useful sight through a series of operations. Helen referred to this day, March 3, 1887, as her 'soul's birthday', the most important day in her life.

Did you know Helen spent eighty days in Australia in 1948, with her secretary and companion of thirty-four years, Polly Thompson? How I wish I'd been there, sharing the unforgettable scene as the Lord Mayor of Melbourne entered the reception room with Helen Adams Keller on his arm. Or been there when Helen spoke to 1,200 school children at the Adelaide Town Hall – they'd been told not to applaud by clapping their hands, but by stamping their feet, so she could feel the vibrations. What a thrilling experience, to be entranced as she spoke of her life.

I've always upheld Helen Keller in admiration and awe, for her courage, selflessness and tenacity, all the while radiating affection, confidence and hope. Disabled, yet never defeated, Keller is an inspiration to us all, her achievements, including travels to some thirty-nine countries to 'spread the word', an incredible tribute. From the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree she received in 1904, to the twelve books she had published, I'm encouraged by Helen's intelligence, cheerfulness, sensitivity and determination to overcome such overwhelming odds, and by her wisdom, compassion, and humanity, in her tireless efforts for the betterment of others.

Quoted as saying, **"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much"**, I've taken Helen's lead, continually 'banging the BHA drum'. As a beacon of acceptance and encouragement through outstanding advocacy and education for every Hearing Impaired Australian. **Better Hearing Australia, you do us proud!**

ALISON CASSELL

BHA BRISBANE BRANCH

Recently I had the pleasure of making Shona Fennell's e-acquaintance on her becoming ATLA's (Association of Teachers of Lipreading to Adults) first Australian member. Shona wrote a lovely piece for our members-only magazine telling us about the lipreading scene in Australia. It seems a very different setup.

Last year there were four lipreading teacher training courses running in London, Manchester, Scotland and Wales. Both Scottish and Welsh courses have no new students this year. There will be a new course running in Northern Ireland though, and others are mooted. We have less than 200 working lipreading teachers in the UK, but we only know numbers for those who belong to ATLA (which is our only professional association for lipreading teachers). However, we don't think there are that many who don't belong. We have six regional groups (as we are spread so far and wide) where we provide CPD (continuous professional development) training, swap ideas/lesson materials, and do a bit of bonding. The pay isn't huge, but being paid does reinforce that this is a profession. We feel our voice is growing.

Provision of lipreading classes is patchy, with some locations having free classes (nowadays a rarity). Some teach in colleges, some in hospitals, and some privately. We get set up wherever we find the opportunity. Awareness of the usefulness of lipreading is the most difficult obstacle we face. We started Lipreading Awareness Week in 2013.

I've just started my fourth year as a lipreading teacher. I gave up full-time work in 2007 and decided I wanted to do something part-time in 2009. The course was nearly two years at that time (now one year). It is very intensive, with a lot of written assignments and many hours' requirement (and much travelling around) for both observing a lot of different teachers working and doing our own teaching practice in a mentor's class.

Why did I become a lipreading teacher? My own hearing loss wasn't picked up until I was 22 years old. My voice wasn't affected (doctors have always found this puzzling) and I learned to lipread naturally. My hearing deteriorated gradually, with complete deafness at age 42. After a two-year wait for tests and funding, I received that wonderful Australian device - a Cochlear implant. My implant has been a huge success and I am very lucky that it works so incredibly well. The hospital tells me that my pitch perception is one of the two best people they have as patients. Quite lucky as my husband is a musician!

The search for a part-time job that was different to anything I'd done before resulted in my discovering a shortage of lipreading teachers. Hearing loss was something I knew about from the inside, and something I had never let stop me from integrating with hearing people. I *love* this job. I've met some lovely people, and being able to help those who've suffered isolation to re-engage with the world gives me a constant boost. I find that it isn't only lipreading practice that's important in our classes; it is learning techniques to deal with a hearing world and interaction with others in the same situation which give the people who come along such a lift to their spirits. I teach in two colleges and also run private groups. I find the groups are even more relaxed because the people don't feel they have to jump through educational hoops. In England we would love the health services to recognise that lipreading is a rehabilitation tool, but it is an uphill struggle.



I am currently a trustee of ATLA and my job is to edit the twice-yearly magazine. I enjoy doing this as it keeps me in touch with people from far and wide. We have a website <http://www.lipreading.org.uk/> (currently temporary due to a re-write). I hope if any of you reading this visit my part of the world you will make contact with us so that we can arrange to meet with you. It would be terrific to welcome fellow professionals from another country.

Maria Bayley

maria.bayley@btinternet.com



Cochlear Implants Take Quantum Leap With Wireless Technology

It is 1982 and Melbourne's Graham Carrick becomes the world's first person to receive a commercial Cochlear™ Implant. Fast forward to 2015 and cochlear implants have taken another massive stride, with the launch of their first true wireless accessories. The latest 2.4 GHz technology platform – same as used by Bluetooth® and Wi-Fi devices – has been incorporated into the new Cochlear™ Wireless Accessories, which include a Mini Microphone, Phone Clip and TV Streamer.

Clear sound with no cables

The three new Cochlear™ Wireless Accessories are designed to deliver clear sound without the need to use extra cables or neck-worn components. They give a clear secure connection without interference and signal drops associated with traditional wireless systems. You can hear more than ever before, where and when you want.

"We're proud to offer our recipients leading technology that will bring enormous benefits," says Dr Chris Roberts, CEO/President of Cochlear Limited. *"True wireless freedom means an easier and enjoyable hearing experience, it helps recipients use modern technology so they don't miss out on what most of us take for granted,"*

Mini Microphone – hear with freedom

The Mini Microphone gives freedom to hear clearly in noisy situations or over a distance, such as classrooms, lecture halls, offices or restaurants. Clip it onto a companion or teacher's collar and speech is transmitted directly to the sound processor. Mini Microphone can also be plugged into other devices such as MP3 players and computers. The Mini Microphone helped seven-year-old Cochlear™ Implant recipient Quinten Buwalda shoot to the top of his class in spelling and comprehension. His mother Kirsten says that there's nothing holding him back now.

"I think this technology, for us and for him, is that last bit we needed to get him to reach his potential," Kirsten says.

Quinten's music teacher, Paul Myatt, says, *"He turns it on, I put it on my shirt, and he can hear me. I'd recommend the Mini Mic for a classroom environment. In a music class environment, like we teach here, it's essential. We wouldn't be able to do it without this device,"* Paul says. *"The cochlear implant made a difference to Quinten, but the Mini Mic is the thing that makes the class environment really work for him so well. Since he has come back to class and we've been using the Mini Mic, he has been just shooting ahead. It has been amazing."*

Phone Clip - hands free connection

The Bluetooth-enabled wireless capability of the Phone Clip gives the convenience of a hands-free connection to friends and family, and clarity of sound that gives them more confidence in using the phone. They can make calls, have conversations and even listen to music without having to take the phone out of their pocket.

For Cochlear™ Implant recipient Sam Thompson, using the Phone Clip made a difference to his work and home life. *"When I first picked up the Phone Clip I drove back to work and I was walking up the street from the carpark in the building and talking to my mum, because I wanted to see what it was like in a noisy environment,"* Sam says.

"There were several cars and people driving past, and it was fantastic. It blocked out the background noise, it just made it so much easier for me to hear her. And the same thing at work, when I've used a mobile phone before and it's hard because of the background noise. With the Phone Clip, it just cuts it all out and I'm able to hear the person talking on the other end of the line."

TV streamer – for an enhanced TV experience

The TV Streamer delivers clear stereo sound from your TV to sound processor, while still hearing conversation. You can have a personal volume without making TV too loud for others, and enjoy favourite shows, discussing them with friends and family. Six-year-old Elijah Porter has 2 Cochlear™ Implants, uses the TV Streamer to watch TV and movies.

"We've got it set up so that we can hear the TV and Elijah can also hear it through the streamer," explains Elijah's father Richard. *"It means that instead of it being a little bit jumbled, not perfectly clear, it changes to being exceptionally clear for him to be able to hear the TV".*

"In the mornings there's a half hour show Elijah gets to watch. We watch it with him, and he's now not mishearing words. It's amazing seeing the difference in his attention between when he can hear clearly and when he can't."

The new wireless accessories are the result of a technology partnership between Cochlear and GN ReSound.

2005 Deaflympians join today's sporting Stars at 2015 Deaf Sports Australia Awards



It was a who's who of deaf and hard of hearing sports stars at the 2015 Awards night held by Deaf Sports Australia (DSA) February in Melbourne. Deaflympians and volunteers from the 2005 Melbourne Deaflympic Games celebrated the 10 year reunion and were joined by current deaf and hard of hearing sportspeople to congratulate six 2015 DSA award winners. Familiar faces included DSA Life Member and former Chairperson of 2005 Deaflympic Games Bid Committee Anne Bremner, who reminisced about the Games. Caroline Conlon Event Manager of 2016 Australian Deaf Games provided memories of 2005 and Trish Tracey former CEO of the Deaflympic Games provided insight into the running the Games.

Current DSA President Phil Harper welcomed guests with Dean Barton-Smith AM, the former chairperson of the 2005 Deaflympic Games Organising Committee, four-time Deaflympian, Commonwealth Games and Olympic champion presenting 2015 Sport Awards. 2005 Deaflympic gold medal-winning javelin thrower Amy Lea-Mills attended the night.

DSA's annual awards night celebrates the achievements of athletes and those who are enabling the deaf and hard of hearing to excel in sport. This year's award winners included:

- Golfer **Jack Beasley** was awarded 'Male athlete of the year.'
- Triathlete **Melinda Vernon**, awarded 'Female athlete of the year.'
- **Brad Schofield** was awarded 'Coach of the year', having successfully coached five of Australia's key deaf athletes.
- **Murrumbeena Junior Football Club** won 'Organisation of the year' having successfully applied for a grant to have an Auslan interpreter assist two of their young brightest stars that are deaf.
- **Emma Cairnduff** was awarded 'Volunteer of the Year' who at the age of 25 has umpired hockey games at junior State and National level for the last 14 years and helped promote deaf and hard of hearing in the sport.
- **Stefan Armbruster** was awarded the 'Media award' for his SBS documentary on deaf athlete and refugee 14 year old **Sekou Kanneh**, highlighting the barriers Sekou has overcome to become one of Australia's fastest sprinters as he outshines his competition in mainstream sport.

'Rising young star' awards awarded to **Declan Campion** and **Jamie Howell** in athletics and **Alex Kirchner** in Swimming.

"Every year it is an honour to award athletes who excel in their chosen sport, but also those supporting and enabling deaf and hard of hearing to achieve in sport," said Garry West-Bail, General Manager, Deaf Sports Australia. *"It was wonderful to see athletes who competed in the Melbourne Games 10 years ago, many have gone on to continue to support the deaf and hard of hearing community in some way. We have over 70 athletes preparing for the upcoming Asia Pacific Deaf Games in Taiwan where we aim to finish in the top three medalling countries. Many athletes are preparing for the Australian Deaf Games in Adelaide in January 2016 with both events showcasing the tremendous sporting ability of our deaf and hard of hearing athletes. We look forward to seeing our athletes dominate with records broken and extraordinary talents unveiled."*



The Asia Pacific Deaf Games will run from 3 to 11 October 2015. The Australian Deaf Games will be held in Adelaide from 9 to 16 January 2016. More than 1,000 deaf and hard of hearing people from all over Australia and neighbouring Pacific nations are expected to participate. www.austdeafgames.org.au

Main photo left to right; Amy-Lea Mills (for Melinda Vernon), Declan Campion, Jamie Howell, Alex Kirchner, Dean Barton-Smith, Brad Schofield, Emma Cairnduff, Ian Cleasby, Jerome Barbalace and Gavin Balharrie (for Jack Beasley).

DOUG PETERSON – 90 YEARS YOUNG!

On behalf of all members of our **Better Hearing Australia** family, hearty congratulations and warm wishes for Doug's wonderful 90th Birthday milestone (celebrated on September 7, 2014) are sent to this exemplary BHA Ambassador, Doug Peterson. Now living in Bundaberg (Qld) with his lovely wife Esther, who herself turned 90 in August, the pair celebrated with family and friends at a joint Afternoon Tea function.



PICTURE: Doug with his wife Esther

Newer members may not be aware of Doug's energetic, outstanding service to **Better Hearing Australia** over many years. Joining BHA Brisbane in 1972, Doug attended his first lip-reading class in June that year. From there, he was **Foundation Secretary of BHA Ipswich** (Qld) Branch in 1975, then **Ipswich Branch President**.

Always keen to remain involved, Doug accepted the position of **Honorary Executive Officer, BHA Brisbane Branch**, in 1996, coming out of semi-retirement at the local level to successfully lead resurgence in the work of Better Hearing Brisbane, at a consumer level, organising operations on a day-to-day basis. Doug took a major role in both purchasing suitable premises and overseeing the total refurbishment of the building. The BHA Brisbane Branch Headquarters was occupied in August 1999, a suitable point for Doug to finally take a well-earned rest.

A dedicated and gifted educator in his professional career, culminating as **Principal of the-then Ipswich Opportunity (Special) School**, that love of learning saw Doug begin teaching sessions in 1974, and complete BHA Diploma Teacher requirements in 1980. He established an Introductory Course in 1986, whilst Co-ordinator of Teachers. At BHA National level, Doug introduced and formulated the concept of a **National School of Aural Rehabilitation**, and was its foundation Head in 1994, organising the **National Certificate Teacher Training Course** in modular format and collating the **Hearing Adviser Course** modules offered nationally in 1996. **Convenor of the National Examination Panel** and **Education Task Force**, were other 'strings to Doug's bow'.

From 1986 to 1990, Doug travelled around Queensland, conducting record-breaking training programs for resource people, with an emphasis on country centres. Locations visited on a regular basis included Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Maryborough, Kingaroy, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, and the Northern Rivers of New South Wales. Doug continued involvement on Brisbane Branch Council, being variously **President, Vice President, and Secretary, as well as delegate to National Council**.

Doug's enthusiasm and fervour saw no bounds, a staunch advocate, passionately promoting BHA in the wider forum, as **President of the Australian Deafness Council** (Qld), ACROD (now **National Disability Services**), the **National Working Party on Captioning**, and with various government departments, both State and Federal.

In 2004, yet another milestone for this modest 'quiet achiever', when Doug was accorded the honour of **BHA National Life Membership**, in recognition of his dynamism and amazing achievements, mirroring lifelong dedication as a champion of the Hearing Impaired cause.

Colleague, close friend and supporter to BHA members for decades, Doug Peterson, we salute you and your stellar contribution to our beloved organisation. A remarkable, yet truly humble man with a genuine heart of service, we admire and respect your wisdom, warmth, insight and integrity, your incredible inner strength and perseverance, your compassion and zeal. Above all, we offer heartfelt gratitude as we acknowledge your deep-seated love for, and commitment to, your fellow man.

THANK YOU.

It's a true blessing and privilege to call you a friend, Doug - a mere 'youngster' at 90!

Congratulations Job Well Done!

Alison Cassell
BHA Brisbane Branch

2014 Better Hearing Australia Illingworth Award

Congratulations Julie Edmonds



Congratulations to Julie Edmonds, from BHA WA, the 2014 Volunteer of the Year for Better Hearing Australia. Julie was announced as the winner, and awarded with the prestigious Illingworth Award, at the 2014 Annual General Meeting Awards Presentation held in Adelaide in October.

The BHA Victoria members of the National Board nominated Julie following input received from BHA WA members, and had the following to say in their submission:

Julie is a passionate advocate for people with hearing loss in Western Australia, and has demonstrated this through her volunteer work for BHA WA over the past few years. She places her clients' issues first and supports them and their families in their efforts to overcome difficulties related to hearing loss. Her acts of compassion inspire a great deal of loyalty from those who have received it.

It is due to Julie's efforts, and the support she has engendered of BHA members, that BHA still exists in WA. Incorporated as Adult Better Hearing WA Services Inc, it is known as Better Hearing Australia WA Branch. The Bunbury Group has now joined this Branch. These results have been achieved while engaging in some very complex and groundbreaking legal disputes in the non-government sector.

As well as supporting and developing the branch in WA, Julie has been a member of the National Board for 2 years, taking on the role of Vice President for the first year and then National President the second year.

Some of the enterprises Julie has undertaken at branch and national level include production of the **2014 Lip Reading Challenge**, Co-ordination of the **2015 BHA Conference**, work on an innovative **Lipreading App**, building a **BHA WA Website**, accessing **Grants** for the WA Branch, and other not for profit organisations where she volunteers. Since 2012, she obtained \$252,000 in grants for hearing loss services and projects, and over \$100,000 for other charities she supports.

BHAWA provides services to working age people in order to maintain eligibility for government funding. Julie formed strong bonds with this group and established two support groups for them - WADA - West Australian Deaf Arts and SODA - Social Support of Deaf/Hard of Hearing Adults. Julie did the back of stage management of WADA's successful *Cabaret* performance in July 2013. Julie's strong sense of the importance of the BHA National Body and support of the values of BHA, led to her commitment to her role as the President of National BHA, in establishing, editing and publishing the new electronic version of Better Hearing's magazine, **The National Spotlight**.

Hearty congratulations must also go to the remaining nominees for the 2014 Illingworth Award. Although each is worthy in his or her own right of winning this award, there can be only one winner.

MALCOLM MINTER was nominated by BHA Sydney for his more than 20 years' volunteer service to the organisation. As well as manning information booths at Expos and regularly giving presentations to hospitals, Probus, the Australian Red Cross and other organisations, he organizes social events. An important initiative that Malcolm developed is BHA Sydney's Volunteer Service Program, establishing a team of volunteers to assist people with hearing loss to attend appointments.

PETER CIANCHI was nominated by BHA Canberra for his excellent volunteering work since he joined the Canberra group 17 years ago. His main area of expertise is with Assistive Devices and his knowledge and enthusiasm have been invaluable to many people when hearing aids are not enough. As a Cochlear Implant recipient, Peter also volunteers to counsel prospective CI recipients. He also promotes the use of the T-switch, audio loops and captions and has worked on committees to promote the use of captions. For BHA Canberra Peter is an unsung hero.

GILLIAN HALLIDAY is a teacher in BHA Newcastle. She has undertaken this volunteer role diligently for many years and her group members are enthusiastic about the sessions that she presents and the constructive guidance that she provides.

A call for nominations for the 2015 Illingworth Award will be sent out in mid-2015.

Carole McCarthy
Awards Coordinator



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

Better Hearing Australia WA Branch
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2015 Better Hearing Australia 67th National Conference *'Better Hearing for a Sound Future'*

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

Abstract submissions for the 2015 Better Hearing Australia 67th National Conference in Fremantle, West Australia, are Open. If you have any queries in regard to the abstract submission process please contact bhawa2015conference@gmail.com

KEY DATES

Conference Dates	16 – 18 October 2015
Date for Presentations	17 October 2015
Abstract submissions open	01 March 2015
Abstract submissions close	01 May 2015
Notification of Abstract acceptance	15 May 2015
Conference Registration Opens	01 June 2015
Early Bird Registration Closes	01 August 2015
Registration Closes	01 October 2015

INFORMATION REQUIRED WITH ABSTRACTS

Your Abstract text should be no more than 1 page, include your name, position, Title of Abstract, Theme, duration, contact details and confirmation you are available to be in Fremantle West Australia on Saturday 17 October 2015 to deliver your presentation. Your abstract should be emailed to bhawa2015conference@gmail.com

Vale Keith McRitchie (1925-2014) by Haydn Daw

Keith McRitchie was not known personally to me but his works and reputation were. Keith lived in Sydney for many years, growing up in the depression, and much later in life moving to the Central Coast.

His work for **Better Hearing Australia (BHA)** was significant. This was most noticeable in BHA Sydney where he achieved so much including service on the Committee and also as President. Keith left his mark on BHA with his published works. The major contribution to our organisation was the editing of the **BHA Aural Rehabilitation Course** manuals which were edited by Keith and Carol McCarthy in 1998.

Keith also wrote '**The Better Hearing Rehabilitation Handbook**' published by BHA in 1986. Although it is nearly 30 years old, it is still used by grateful BHA Aural Rehabilitation Teachers in their work today. He also wrote '**Exercises for Developing Synthetic Lipreading Skills**' published by BHA in 1994. These publications were needed then and still are.

Once he had a cochlear implant in 1987 Keith also saw the need for a publication developing confidence in the use of the telephone. He wrote the '**Telephone Practice for Hearing Impaired Adults**', a manual that was published by BHA. The Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre had also approved the program and recommended it to their implant clients. The two copies of this publication required were sold from National Stock for \$10.

Keith also produced the **BHA Lipreading Competition** videos in 2000 and 2001. He looked after the BHA National Stock for many years whilst in Sydney.

Keith was born in 1925 and died in December 2014. His writing was not only for BHA readers. He also wrote a booklet '**My Sydney in the 1930s**' which for those of us with a few miles on the clock makes very interesting reading. My great loss was that I did not know him personally but Sue talks of him with great admiration. We members of BHA owe him a huge debt and I am the poorer for not knowing him.



Haydn Daw (with help and encouragement from John Steel and Sue Daw)

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.

After the excitement of the National BHA AGM we held our branch AGM on 18th October. We have had some changes as Derik retired as President and Shona retired as Vice President, leaving the committee without major officers. However we have been able to adapt to the new situation. Dr. Mary Allen, who has been associated with BHA Adelaide for many years, has taken on the job of Co-ordinator, our Treasurer Graham Day agreed to continue and Stan Gray agreed to run classes. The rest of the members are forming a collective Committee and will contribute where they can and are needed. This allows us to meet the Constitution requirements. We are having one class on the first Wednesday of each month and one coffee morning on the third Wednesday of each month.

All this happened after meetings with our members and much discussion. Everyone wishes BHA Adelaide to continue. Our members are delightful people but are getting older and are unable to commit as they used to. We noticed at the National AGM some branches were having similar problems. We do not have current financial difficulties and this is a help. Our meeting rooms are comfortable and available for hire for as long as we need. We still run our medical student communication program and do the things we have usually done, but at a slower pace. Mary has described this as a 'fallow' year. It also gives members the opportunity to do other things and to have more input if they wish.



Lip reading:

We were delighted when Mary Allen (pictured right) scored third equal place in the lip reading challenge, and Barbara Munn (pictured left) scored 16th equal place. They are first and second in our Branch grouping. We had eleven people enter. Congratulations to both and to all who took the Challenge.



Our next coffee morning is going to be about questions we need answered about Smart Phones.

We are pleased to see that Julie is now back in harness and hope that she will look after herself with care.

Adelaide Branch

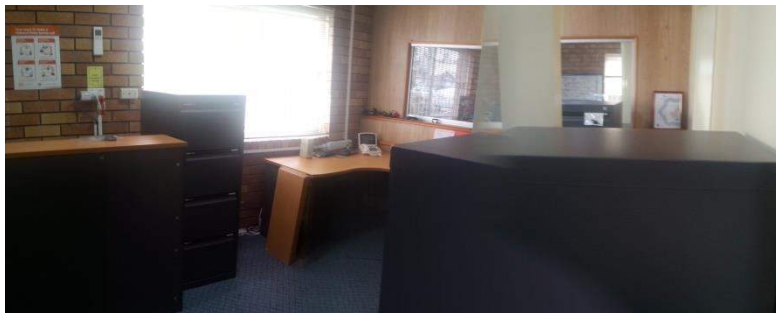
Brisbane Branch, Queensland

2014 was a year of change for Better Hearing Brisbane, as we endeavour to move toward self-funding by the end of 2015. We decided that we needed to update our premises at West End and make them more professional. To help progress our transition, we undertook renovations with some funding that we secured for this purpose.

To create a reception desk at the front entry, we used some of the meeting room space. Our friendly, smiling staff can now greet people as they arrive in more professional surroundings. What was the administration office is now a consultation room that can be used for hearing screening, counselling and/or other professional services that are needed by hearing impaired clients. Assistive Hearing Devices can be displayed in the office and information placed on show for people to peruse. We still have our large meeting room for classes, Board and social activities.

Funding was also used to purchase an Audiometer, a hearing loop for the consultation room and better furniture.

With our new look, BHA Brisbane is now better equipped for the challenges ahead.



BRISBANE NEW OFFICE



NEW OFFICE COUNTER WINDOW

Canberra Branch, ACT



At the 2014 AGM Canberra sought to advance the image of BHA, by suggesting we become more focussed on the field of hearing research. One of our members U.N. Bhati (pictured with wife Shanta) put forward a proposal to form a group of interested BHA people to advance the concept of consumers having a role in research proposals. We could then go to research organisations and offer a service to scientists working in this field. Bob Belle (Geelong) and Marjorie Wellby (Adelaide) had volunteered to be in the group. If there were up to three more BHA members that were prepared to offer their services to join the group I think that would be a good thing. Email BHA Canberra if you are interested.

Our popular Rediscovering Music recommences on the 10 March with a session on 'exploring the recorder'. Please book in if you intend coming along.

We are likely to reprint the 'In Case Of Emergency' (ICE) cards this year, any Branch of BHA interested in having these cards branded to your requirements please BHA Canberra now. There will be a further occasion to make a bid later in the year. These cards cost \$100 for 500 in 2011 and we may not be ordering so many this time so they may be marginally more expensive (It is up to you!). We may also be printing a pamphlet or booklet on 'The Hearing Friendly Home' and you could also register advance interest if you think your Branch would be interested. With modern printing copies can be 'badged' with your contact details. This is likely to be printed in the latter half of the year.

Cochlear produced an interesting pamphlet on BHA Canberra Member Jill Hodgson's success with her Cochlear implants. Jill suffered from otosclerosis and her bilateral implants 'allow her to do more than ever before.' Cochlear will have a copy on their website or Sue can send you an electronic copy (contact BHA Canberra)

Our three Hearing Loss Management classes have recommenced and our evening class is overflowing. Those people that work or who have commitments during the day appreciate the evening sessions.

HAYDN DAW

Geelong Branch, Victoria

A Mini Expo was held at the Geelong branch of 'Better Hearing' on Monday 27th October 2014, where free information and support was provided for hearing loss sufferers and their families. Brochures on various conditions such as Tinnitus and Meniere's disease were on display, along with information on how to recognise and manage hearing loss. An information video on cochlear implants was available for viewing, with certain foods to aid health & wellbeing also on display. There was a steady stream of people passing through and it was deemed a great success.



Our end of year celebration was held at the Telegraph Hotel in Geelong West on the last day of Term 4, where committee members and tutors enjoyed a lovely meal, and relaxed. The Drysdale group celebrated their end of year breakup at the 'Jack Rabbit Winery' down on the Bellarine Peninsula.

Our Lipreading sessions for Term 1 commenced once again at our Geelong West premises on Monday 2nd February 2015, with the Drysdale group recommencing on Wednesday 4th February at the Drysdale Community Health Centre. Unfortunately this room in Drysdale will be unavailable in Term 2 due to renovations being carried out to the building, so we are in the process of sourcing alternate temporary accommodation until these renovations are completed.

We hope to conduct another 4 week 'Short Course' in the month of March, where information on communication strategies, assistive devices, and the general management of hearing loss will be provided.

Dot of Geelong Branch

Newcastle Branch, N.S.W.

2015 the start of a New Year and a challenging year ahead for our Branch.

In January, the 4 NSW Branches of Better Hearing and their funding body the BHA NSW State Council Inc underwent an assessment process, to ensure service providers such as Better Hearing were complying with the NSW Disability Services Act in every day service delivery to our service users and members.

The NSW Standards were streamlined from ten to six standards and each standard includes a number of practice requirements which service providers must adhere to. The work involved meant that our Policy and Procedures Manual had to be practically rewritten and many changes needed to be made with even more paperwork!

The assessment took place at Newcastle Branch on 15th January, with representatives from each NSW Branch and two assessors in attendance. We are happy to report we received a favourable outcome from the assessors with some minor improvements requiring action before we can receive our Verification certificate. We got through the assessment due to the enormous amount of work put into the process by Newcastle Branch Secretary Karen, who worked well and beyond the call of duty over the past 10 months to make sure our Policy and Procedures were compliant, up to date and relevant to the standards.

We now face a challenging period to become self-supportive and continue to provide services to the hearing impaired members of the community, as our State government funding will soon cease when the National Disability Insurance Service gains momentum throughout NSW and Australia.

Classes have resumed with enthusiastic members returning for another year of learning. Our Waratah classes were postponed for a week due to asbestos removal taking place in surrounding buildings. Newcastle Branch has a new Chairperson; Judith Delbridge will be our Acting Chairperson until the AGM. Judith has much experience in executive roles in other organisations over the years and we look forward to her leadership in the coming months. We are also hoping to recruit some new trainee tutors, members and volunteers with a publicity campaign being planned for the next few months.

Kay Lloyd
Newcastle Branch

Sydney Branch, NSW

Better Hearing Sydney had another successful sausage sizzle at Bunnings in Ashfield on Saturday, 10th January. It was a holiday period and we were low on volunteers, those that were there were happy with the result and the funds raised. Holidays meant we had more people come than we had catered for and expected, but our willing volunteers coped. We did have to replenish the drinks on three separate occasions by sending for more, but this is great, as it means more money is earned from our efforts and our branch gains the advantages of this.



Our "Hearing Loss Management" course and classes began for the year in early February. Sydney is having increasing difficulty in getting promotion and publicity for our courses. We welcome back to teaching Alison Russell, who had a brief break last year, but is back with enthusiasm. We, at Sydney, are blessed as well with a small number of trainees.

Various local newspapers used to include our "Community Announcements" about our classes automatically, but are becoming reluctant to place these in their local newspapers, due to their papers struggling to make a profit, and requiring more paid advertising. Our branch is working on seeking the support of the radio stations around Sydney, (both the commercial stations and the community stations), and negotiating with them to have Community Announcements over their stations, for the last two weeks before the State school terms start, which is when our classes start. We are asking the various radio stations with talk shows to consider interviewing one of our people, to talk about hearing loss, and our classes, which are our core activity. If we receive this opportunity, we will promote Better Hearing more widely.

We, in Sydney, would love to hear how other branches promote their activities, especially their classes, and how they obtain their support. We are all branches of the one national body, and a sharing of information and experience may well help other branches. This can be done through our National Spotlight, and by keeping in touch occasionally, or regularly, with the other branches, as well, of course, as through our national conferences.

May I express the hope that all our branches will have their best year yet, and that it lays the foundation for even better things to come in each succeeding year.

Andrew D'A. E. Bush

Board Member and Promotions and Fundraising Officer

Victoria Branch

It's been a busy start to 2015.

We thank the Deafness Foundation for awarding us a Grant to purchase a new laptop and programming software for the Victorian Hearing Aid Bank. We are so grateful for this support.

Demand for our Hearing Aid Bank continues to increase as we meet an unmet need and offer people an alternative to the restrictive nature of the federal funded programs.

Better Hearing Australia Vic Inc, continues to see many people each week through our hearing management service, our education sessions and our hearing aid bank. Our hearing advisory staff include specialists including audiology, audiometric and tinnitus management, with two of our staff having recently undertaking masterclasses through the British Tinnitus Association. We offer services at our office site in Prahran and have regular sessions across the state. We have recently commenced a monthly hearing session at the Eastern Community Health Centre in Ringwood.

In response to ongoing requests for services we have introduced some new "fee for service" items, in this changing environment it's important we continue to respond to our community's needs. These services being -

Pre-employment screening and Children's audiology screening.

Hearing aid re programming.

Professional Development.

Further information about our services can be found on our website.

MICHELE BARRY

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BHA NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT

Western Australia Branch



The Western Australia Branch is 70 years old this year!



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

WA Branch has recommenced classes for 2015 and are now preparing for the 2015 National Conference - **'Better Hearing for a Sound Future'**. Page 11 of this National Spotlight has the 'Call for Abstracts' and other information about the Conference. Keep the Conference dates free in your calendar, and an eye on those airline fares! The June Spotlight will hold further information on registering, costs and the programme. What a wonderful way to have our Eastern State friends and supporters attend and help celebrate this 70 year milestone.

The **Lip Reading App** is well underway in WA and we not only secured young and varying talent, we had the support of ABC Newsreader Pamela Medlen.



PICTURED LEFT: (sitting) is Pamela Medlen of ABC News, with Michelle Tan (right) and some of the talent. Michelle Tan is co-ordinating, filming and producing the Lip Reading App as a volunteer for BHA WA. The filming was done in 1 night at Edith Cowan University.

BELOW : Pamela Medlen in action



LEFT: Setting up the Lighting and Cameras



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 June Edition, which is May 15, 2015.** Please send contributions to jedmonds.betterhearingwa@gmail.com and keep articles and news to 600 words or less as an attached WORD document, with any images attached separately.

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Maryborough Group - Email judyra48@gmail.com

Logan Group – meet at Logan North Library

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