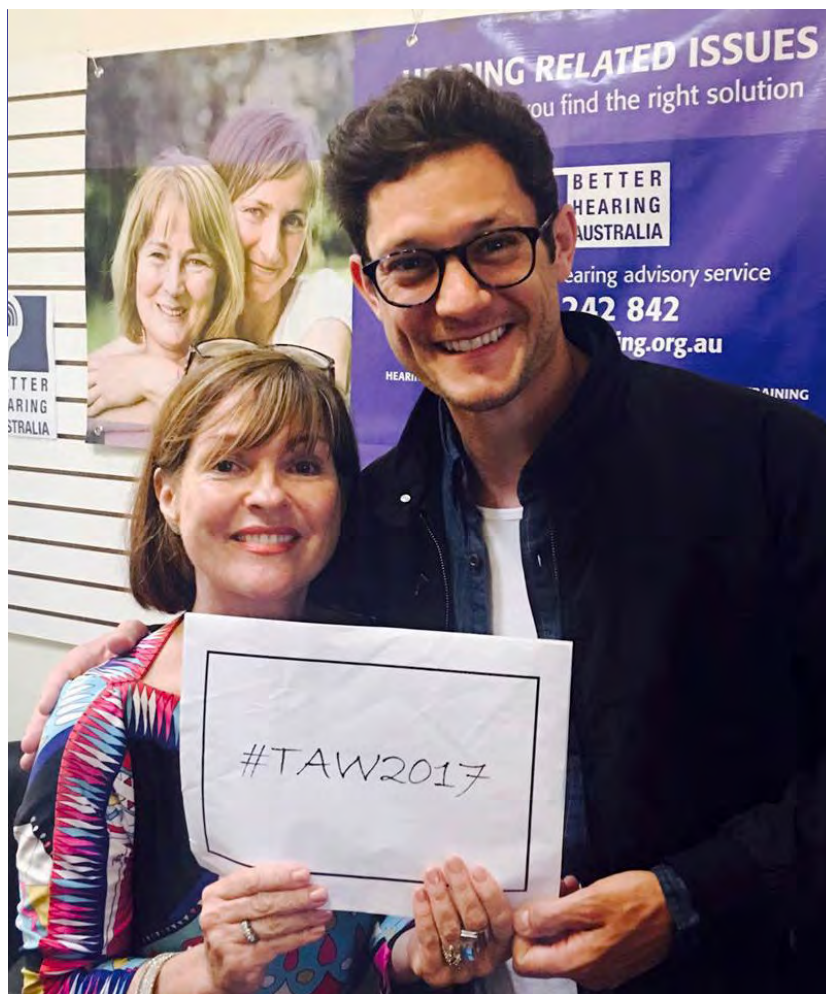


# the **NATIONAL SPOTLIGHT**



*placing the*  
**FOCUS ON  
HEAR  
ING  
LOSS**

MAY  
2017

Edition 13



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# NEWS FROM THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT

## It's been a busy start to 2017!

Our first major event was in February with the launch of Australia's first Tinnitus Awareness Week - #TAW2017. A big congratulations to the team and BHA Victoria for leading Australia's first Tinnitus Awareness Week. Two million Australians suffer from tinnitus yet we have no national approach to support people tackling this condition.

I hold immense admiration for those involved in forming these international relationships and launching a great PR campaign. You can read more about the activities that took place as part of this outstanding event on page 5 and in branch news.

The Victorian branch has also developed a fantastic website as part of #TAW2017.



**[WWW.TINNITUSAUSTRALIA.ORG.AU](http://WWW.TINNITUSAUSTRALIA.ORG.AU)**

Please share this link with anyone you know who may benefit, contacts are available on the website for more information. Thank you to the Victorian branch for taking the lead and their ongoing support for this campaign.

On World Hearing Day, March 5th, the ACCC launched its long-awaited report into Hearing Aid sales. The ACCC findings confirmed many things that BHA members have known and put the sector on notice. I hope the findings forming this independent report will highlight some practices and influence those who shape our National Hearing Services policies. For more information please see page 9?

BHA was delighted to be included as part of several newspaper articles, radio and even TV interviews in three states. A big thank you to the many members who assisted and participated in media activities, it was wonderful to have so much support from across the country.

The National Board has also had a busy month preparing for our presentation to the Senate committee on hearing health and wellbeing. A big thank you to my peers on the National Board for your dedication. A copy of all presentations will be available on Hansard. It's our goal to remind our parliamentarians about the impact of acquired hearing loss which should not be ignored. The burden of hearing loss in cost and social terms generated by adults is significant and continues to impact other health care conditions.

## Hot off the Press

Prof Anthony Hogan has new data, demonstrating the impact of hearing loss and the economic costs which should not be ignored.

*A full article will be included in the next edition of Spotlight, but here is a snapshot:*

- One in four people aged over 50 rates their hearing as being fair or poor/having a hearing impairment.
- On the extent to which 'hearing aids solved all their hearing problems', hearing aid users reported an average score of 6/10, indicating that hearing aids somewhat addressed their hearing problems, but far from solved them.
- Of hearing aid owners, 39% reported difficulties listening to the radio or TV, 29% reported difficulties hearing in a car, 25% reported difficulties hearing at the movies and 40% reported difficulties hearing when socialising with friends. As such, a device-alone model does not address the hearing support needs of hearing impaired people. **In this sample, non-device use sat at 24%.**
- People aged over 50 who identify as hearing impaired are 16 times more likely than others to own a hearing aid. The self screening question of rating hearing problems thus serves as a

good indicator of those who have problems and seek assistance for them. This data adds support to the thesis that hearing is associated with significantly higher than average impact to health care costs and this factor alone warrants further investigation. The short answer from the research is that it doesn't matter who you see or what you pay - you get about the same result in social terms. Better Hearing Australia members appreciate that successful hearing management is dependent on time spent, rehabilitation, and ongoing support. This continues to be the essence of what our branches provide around the country.

I hope you enjoy this edition! Closing date for contributions is 1 June 17.



**MICHELE BARRY**

### **Letter from reader Eileen Bloomfield (BHA Tasmania)**

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I first joined BHA to learn lip reading, after it was suggested by my audiologist. Like most of my classmates, I felt nervous at first but soon settled in and not only enjoyed learning a new skill but became friends with my teacher Carol and the other students. We all feel so lucky that there is never more than eight of us in each class. Carol does a lot of preparation and each lesson is geared for every student's individual needs which makes the lessons interesting and enjoyable.

We're encouraged to share our own stories about our lifestyles, hobbies and our families. To my surprise, I found out that my daughter and Carol's goddaughter attended the same school where Carol taught film making as a volunteer in the late 70s. Speaking of film, or I suppose DVD nowadays, I hope we are going to have another lip reading competition...this is such a good way of testing our skills! A personal highlight was receiving a most improved one year and I'm sure there must be many others like me who joined BHA to learn lip reading.



# #TAW2017

## TINNITUS AWARENESS WEEK

6-12  
February



**A joint partnership between the British Tinnitus Association, the American Tinnitus Association and Better Hearing Australia.**

This is the first time that a focus on this condition has been addressed in Australia under a network of collective medical and allied health organisations. The British Tinnitus Association directly approached BHA (VIC) to be involved and we are thrilled that we can all be part of this global effort with three branches hosting events.

Congratulations to everyone behind the scenes for creating important national/international alliances and being part of the Australia's first Tinnitus Awareness Week. A big thank you to Red Media who offered BHA pro bono support and have been a vital part of an amazing media and public relations campaign. Stay tuned for the global celebration of Tea For Tinnitus month later this year!

As part of the Tinnitus Awareness Week launch, a Tinnitus Australia alliance has been formed, as well as a website to house support information and advice for sufferers. ([tinnitusaustralia.org.au](http://tinnitusaustralia.org.au))

This is a great opportunity for Better Hearing Australia to be associated as leading the way in tinnitus awareness and use the brand advantage of our long-standing national entity.

# TAW ACROSS BHA

**GEELONG** *held a tea pouring demonstration and talk*

## VICTORIA

Launching Tinnitus Awareness Week – Together for Tinnitus was a huge honour and privilege and I believe Better Hearing Australia (Vic) did the world proud by what we achieved with a very short lead time, considering both the international associations had a year or more to plan for the event.

Better Hearing Australia (Vic) managed, with the pro bono support of the wonderful RED Media agency, to achieve at least five radio interviews, one ABC 24 News TV interview, get press exposure in two local Leader newspapers, host a morning Tea for Tinnitus for 40 people and launch the Tinnitus Australia website. A big thank you to the wonderful staff of Better Hearing Australia (VIC) for all their work, particularly Carol Wilkinson and Agnieszka Kosidlo for their many media appearances.



And if anyone is wondering with fearful anticipation how much money we as a not-for-profit organisation spent launching Tinnitus Awareness Week, then I can put your minds at ease. \$280, give or take a few dollars (this is my rough estimate at the time of typing this report).

Thai Tran, our webdesigner extraordinaire, worked pro bono in creating this informative and important Tinnitus Australia website. To Thai, we remain eternally grateful for all the work and personal hours spent creating this website. I thank my colleague Harry Goksan for his invaluable input and advice in creating the website and making it look so beautiful. Thanks also to James Caws for organising a privacy policy and the terms and conditions for the site, as well as pertinent advice and social media management.

A million thanks to the alliance of organisations who have collaborated to support this Tinnitus Australia initiative!

I have high hopes to be able to educate doctors to use this website as a tool of reference when they diagnose a patient with tinnitus as well as encouraging the tinnitus client to use the site to glean more information about the condition and find further help and support if needed.

Whilst the campaign has not brought thousands of tinnitus sufferers knocking at our doors, it has raised awareness and had enough clout to attract media attention and garner wonderful new relationships within the hearing and tinnitus arena.

Better Hearing Australia (VIC) is now seen as an association which is earnest and passionate about supporting those who struggle with tinnitus and I feel we have earned the respect of many of our peers in the industry, both in Australia and overseas.

This is just the beginning. We have Hearing Awareness Week to work towards and another Tea for Tinnitus in July.

Thank you to everyone who worked so very hard to make #TAW2017 the great success it was.

***Victoria Didenko***  
***BHA (Vic) Board member***

## QUEENSLAND

Queensland's inaugural Tinnitus Awareness Week event was held at the BHA Brisbane offices on February 7th. Adopting the international theme 'Together for Tinnitus', members and guests enjoyed presentations from a number of speakers including: Nolene Nielson (independent audiologist and President of the Australian Association for Audiologists in Private Practice), John Farraway (Australian Tinnitus



**Guest speakers - Nolene Nielson and John Farraway**

Association member) and Michele Barry (BHA National President).

The morning tea was a huge success and presentations by speakers were engaging and informative. Most importantly, the event gave us the opportunity to draw attention to the issues surrounding tinnitus, the help currently available for individuals and families and the work being done by BHA and others to improve service responses.

The event was well supported by a number of key providers in the sector and we look forward to hosting 'Tea for Tinnitus' in July!



**BHA Brisbane President and event host, Carol-Anne Greensill**



# ACCC

## HEARING AID SECTOR

***Better Hearing Australia National commends the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) report into the hearing aid sector.***

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The ACCC launched its report in the hearing aid sector on World Hearing Day - 5th March. We thank the ACCC for this investigation and confirm that the findings are consistent with the experience of many BHA clients across the country.

The report highlights the following:

1. Sales may be driven by commission and other incentives rather than consumer need
2. Cost/performance of hearing aids
3. Treatment of vulnerable consumers

A major concern of the ACCC is that commissions, incentives and other mechanisms used to drive sales in hearing clinics can create a conflict with clinical independence, professional integrity and the clinician's primary obligation to consumers. This is especially troubling given that consumers who require hearing aids are often disadvantaged or vulnerable due to their hearing loss, age, other medical conditions, disability or income level, and may be susceptible to persistent sales techniques.

"Not being able to hear well can mean not being able to communicate or participate in activities of choice. People with unsupported hearing loss

are denied full participation in our community which adversely impacts on their wellbeing," said Michele Barry, National President of BHA National. "There are many great audiologists and hearing practitioners who are amazing in supporting people to manage hearing loss - the right device with the right expertise enables many to get on with life."

As raised in the report, it is also our experience that some people are not receiving good audiological care. Barry agrees, "Many people tell us stories of high pressure sales techniques and a lack of follow up care. This is not in line with the principles of patient-centred care."

BHA would like the launch of this report to be an opportunity to discuss the need for client centred approaches for all hearing health care. All hearing providers should be accountable for hearing outcomes via external evaluation. Ideally, the sector should be able to demonstrate the outcomes it achieves and have an independent rating.

The ACCC have produced a two page set of guidelines for hearing health consumers. A copy is included here - please share this with a friend.





Australian  
Competition &  
Consumer  
Commission

# Hearing aids and devices— information to help make an informed choice

## Shop smart and do your research

Choosing the right hearing aid and provider can be difficult. Before you buy a hearing aid you can protect yourself by being a smart shopper.

Always do your research first. Compare offers, ask questions, read independent online reviews on the hearing aid or hearing clinic, and take your time to make the right purchasing decision.

There are a variety of hearing aids and devices available at a range of price points. Not all of the features and benefits may be necessary for you. For example, if you simply want to better hear the telephone or television, there may be a device available to assist you.

Think carefully about the hearing problem you would like to address. Before you buy a hearing aid or device you can protect yourself by doing some research and asking the right questions.

If you need assistance, a trusted friend or relative may be able to help you do your research.

## Be aware the hearing clinic is a business

Hearing clinics are usually profit-making businesses like any other store. Some hearing clinics:

- encourage clinicians to sell more expensive hearing aids by setting sales targets and other performance measures
- pay clinicians commissions and other incentives for selling hearing aids
- have arrangements that favour certain brands or types of hearing aids
- are owned by companies that manufacture hearing aids.

These factors could influence the price, type, and brand of hearing aid that a clinician recommends to you. Don't feel pressured into purchasing a more expensive hearing aid unless you are satisfied that you need it and be sure to ask lots of questions.

## Before your appointment

Before visiting a hearing clinic, you should discuss your hearing concerns with your doctor to make sure that your hearing is not impacted by a treatable medical condition.

You may wish to arrange for a trusted friend or relative to join you at your hearing clinic appointment.

## During your appointment

If you need a hearing aid, here are some suggestions to help you make the right choice:

- ✓ Ask the clinician to explain your audiogram so that you **understand your hearing loss**.
- ✓ Ask the clinician to discuss the range of **hearing aids and devices available** and what the **different prices are**.
- ✓ Ask the clinician about the **different features** of the hearing aid. While some hearing aids may have more features or functions than others, **you may not need or want them**.
- ✓ If a clinician recommends a hearing aid, **ask why**. If you don't understand anything, ask the clinician to repeat or clarify the information until you do understand. You have the right to ask the practitioner if they are paid more to sell particular hearing aids, or why they only sell certain brands or types of hearing aids.
- ✓ Take notes if you think you may have trouble remembering important details (or ask your support person to take notes for you).
- ✓ Ask for a **copy of your hearing test results**, including the audiogram. Having copies of test results will make it easier to shop around to find the best deal.
- ✓ Ask for a **quote, including the type and cost of any recommended hearing aid**.
- ✓ Find out if the hearing clinic offers a **free trial period**. Be sure to ask for the conditions of any free trial period, including its end date.
- ✓ Take your time to make a decision and **remember it's ok to say no**. You should never feel pressured or rushed into making a decision and you do not have to agree to anything on the spot.

## After your appointment

- **Shop around for the best deal**, compare the offer you are looking at with others, and choose what's right for you. You may also want to ask about the rehabilitation and support services offered by the clinic.
- If you don't feel comfortable with the information and recommendations from a clinician, get a **second opinion** from a different hearing clinic.
- **Keep all the paperwork**. Whenever you buy something, keep a copy of the receipts and anything you sign. Make sure you keep any paperwork in a safe place where you can find it again. You have the right to ask for a receipt for anything you buy or pay for.
- You have the right to expect that what you buy does or performs as it is supposed to. If a problem arises with your hearing aid or it does not perform as promised, you may be entitled to a **repair, replacement or refund**.

## Speak up if something goes wrong

The ACCC can give you information about your consumer rights and obligations, and suggest possible courses of action you can take. In some cases the ACCC or your local fair trading agency may also be able to investigate and take action when a seller or clinician fails to meet obligations under the Australian Consumer Law. Visit [www.accc.gov.au](http://www.accc.gov.au) or call the ACCC Infocentre on 1300 302 502 for further information.

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## TIPS FOR FUND RAISING SUCCESS

BY WENDY BROOKS

### *Do you deserve it?*

A wise and experienced fundraising manager once told me that organisations get the funding they deserve. At the time I thought that this was a bit harsh.

I was an enthusiastic fundraiser with only a few years of experience. I'd just started working for Orchestra Victoria at a time when government funding was declining and there was little philanthropic support.

We were putting in place a great program of free community concerts and regional music camps. Surely we were deserving – so where was the funding?

Over the years I have developed my own list that tests whether an organisation is deserving of funding. You might find the following questions helpful:

Are the organisation's programs and activities making an impact in the community? Do you have information, stories and data that validate this impact?

Do you have clear and concise 'cases for support' for your organisation and for each of the programs?

Do you have a business plan for each of your key programs with timelines and budgets that you can explain to supporters and use as the basis of funding applications?

Is the organisation run in a business-like manner? There is no mission without a margin and no one will fund a deficit.

Does your organisation exude aspiration and success – everyone wants to back a winner!

Are you regularly communicating the impact of your programs and activities to the people that matter (your staff and board, your ambassadors and patrons, your supporters, your community)?

Does your leadership (board and team) understand the importance of your supporters and know who they are?

Do board directors support the organisation with the four T's of philanthropy – time, treasure, talent and ties? Nothing like leading by example!

Have you identified and categorised your supporters into key market segments? Do you understand the different methods of engagement for each segment?

Have you analysed your income streams? Do you know where you are currently getting the best return on investment and where there are opportunities for growth?

Do you treat your supporters like your investors? Do you engage with them regularly and make them feel indispensable? Do you respectfully thank them in a timely manner? Do your board directors personally thank your key supporters in writing and when they see them at events and at meetings?

Who are your allies (internal and external) in implementing your fundraising plan?

If you can answer the above questions you will be well on your way to attracting the funding you deserve.

Being deserving takes a 'whole of organisation' approach. You can't achieve this on your own. How do you get the 'whole of organisation' involved in the fundraising program? Remember the story of the Little Red Hen. No one wanted to help her pick the grain, grind the grain into flour or bake the bread but everyone wanted to eat it. There were many steps involved in producing one loaf of bread.

Your job is to get everyone involved. When the fundraiser starts asking people to do things, this can often be perceived with suspicion. Why should we change what we are already doing? Haven't we been doing our best? Will this mean more work for us? Do I have to do things differently? Maybe people in your organisation are already complaining of being time poor. Right? Everyone is busy.

To get everyone involved you will need to hone and practise your "sales" skills.

But firstly, you will need to develop a clear tactics plan. You can base this on the 12 questions for funding success. When you have developed your tactics plan, you need to share it. Make sure you have clear actions and that you designate those actions to specific people. Set out the tasks in clear and easily digestible ways. Break down the tasks into bite sized pieces.

Once you have set the scene and expectations, then you need dogged determination and perseverance to make sure the actions are completed. Don't be afraid to review the actions and make changes. But try to stick to the overall plan and encourage others to stick to their side of the bargain.

It is really helpful to get some early adopters and early wins. The early adopters can become your best allies in convincing the others in the organisation to get with the program.




For example, it may only take the Chair of the Board to make one donation for the rest of the board to join in. Or a program manager might be prepared to help you with developing one business plan that results in funding. A few well-celebrated wins in attracting funding will propel your plan. It is amazing how quickly more people will want to assist you when they see results. Fundraising success happens when you energise your organisation. You want your organisation to exude ambition for the cause and optimism.

It takes commitment, energy, drive and determination to get things done. Don't try to do it all on your own. Influence as many people as possible to get with the program. If people forget that it was you behind the transformation of the organisation, then you are well on your way to success.

Stay tuned for more ideas on each of the twelve tips to fundraising success.

**Wendy Brooks**

BMus, LLB, AMICDA, MFIA



News from our branches

# AROUND AUSTRALIA

## BHA CANBERRA

2017 has started well for BHA Canberra! Our three Hearing Loss Management classes are well attended and the evening class is so popular it

has a waiting list. With members renewing their membership and new people joining our classes, our membership is looking good. Our youngest member is Leo French who is aged 10 and our oldest member is Irene Copping who has just celebrated her 98th birthday.

Visit to the National Gallery Versailles: Treasures from the Palace exhibition  
Phil Harper from Conexu organized an Open Access Tour at the National Gallery 'Versailles: Treasures from the Palace' exhibition in March. This event was very well attended with 28 in the group. We all appreciate the access to the captions and Auslan that Conexu APP gives the hearing impaired and Deaf. When you are going to attend an exhibition in your art gallery or museum, it is worth checking the Conexu site to see if they are captioning that event. Download the tour onto your smart phone or tablet at home using the APP before you attend. The galleries or museums may have their own tablets for loan.

food cupboard and expect us to be able to hear what they are saying. This can be very frustrating for everyone when the message is not heard. To help solve these communication problems, we are holding our first 'Partners' Workshop on **Saturday 20 May 2017 from 10am - 2pm at the Grant Cameron Community Centre, 27 Mulley St, Holder.**

Retired audiologist, Louise Skelt, is going to be very involved in presenting these sessions. She is an expert in this special communication field. Haydn, Carol and I will also be assisting. There will be opportunities for family members who do not have a hearing loss to discuss their communication



**Open Access Tour at the National Gallery 'Versailles: Treasures from the Palace' exhibition**

#### Partners Workshop

Over many years we have often had discussions in class about how family members and friends do not understand the special communication techniques needed when speaking with people who have a hearing loss. They often speak from another room or talk with their head in the fridge or

problems, while those with a hearing loss will be in another room discussing their problems. After morning tea, we will meet together for a session to help solve some of the problems raised. After lunch, Glenn Vermeulen from the Deafness Resource Centre will be presenting on Assistive Listening Devices that will help in the home.

We are planning a very positive and informative workshop. We encourage all hearing impaired people to attend if you can. For more information, please contact Sue on 6251 4712 / email [sdaw@bigpond.com](mailto:sdaw@bigpond.com) or Carol 0410 463 761 / email [carol.taloni@gmail.com](mailto:carol.taloni@gmail.com).

In addition, we will be launching a new 16p booklet: 'Communication with the Hearing Impaired, Particularly at Home'.

Pioneering Bionic Ear surgeon Bill Gibson's biography launch  
Haydn and I attended the CICADA launch of the biography of Bill Gibson in Sydney. Bill is on our expert panel and we have known Bill and Alex since we met many years ago at a conference in Broken Hill run by Cathe Bonnes.

#### Julie Greenfield and Bill Leane



#### Seniors Week Expo

This year, the Seniors Week Expo was held at Exhibition Park where we have the Canberra Show. We were sharing a booth with the ACT Deafness Resource Centre. Glenn had asked for a quiet spot so we were surprised to find that we were positioned right near the stage. In reality, it was not too noisy and we had the opportunity to see

Sue Daw, Prof  
Bill Gibson  
and Haydn  
Daw



It was a very uplifting occasion seeing the room full of people with cochlear implants chatting together, all having had their hearing restored by Bill. Everybody in that room loved Bill and Alex who spoke to them all. We had our book signed by Bill which we will be putting into our library for all our members to read. We also joined a table of BHA Sydney members for lunch, which was very enjoyable.

some very entertaining acts. Talking to the public made me realise once again how reluctant people are to own up to the fact that they have a hearing loss and seek help. Many do not realise how much they are missing out on, while their partners are aware but frustrated by their resistance to seek help. Let's hope they will come to us when the time is right so we can help them.

**Sue Daw OAM**



## BHA NEWCASTLE

It has been really good to see hearing loss in the news lately, with stories including: the inquiry into hearing aid companies and the concerns about sales practices in some hearing aid clinics, an advertising campaign with Mickey Robbins encouraging people to get their hearing checked, Tinnitus Awareness Week and the inquiry into hearing health and wellbeing of Australians. More headlines included Associate Professor Catherine Birman, one of the world's most experienced cochlear implant surgeons, being awarded the 2017 NSW Premier's Award for Woman of the Year, and finally, Cochlear releasing its first off-the-ear sound processor, the Kanso. With all of this news, it is hoped that people will take more notice if they have a hearing loss and seek help, possibly from a branch of Better Hearing Australia.

Classes are continuing at our Newcastle branch, although with reduced numbers, but those who attend come along regularly and enjoy all that our classes have to offer.

Judy Cowan OAM, former tutor in charge of Taree/Forster who moved to a retirement village a few years ago, is continuing to spread the message about hearing loss. By starting up a small group at the village, Judy has made the residents very hearing aware and they all appreciate the advice and strategies that Judy has to offer. Well done Judy!

We recently attended a Volunteering Expo in the hope of attracting more volunteers to our organisation.

The NSW Government Family & Community Services now offers a Certificate 1, 2 and 3 in Active Volunteering, which provides a volunteer with the skills required to enable them to effectively undertake volunteer work. After reading the notice board of volunteer positions available in many organisations, it was mind blowing at reading some of the 'qualifications' that are required of volunteers these days. Whatever happened to volunteering your services to hopefully help out and lend a hand?

Plans are underway for Hearing Awareness Week 2017 and we will be hosting a special morning tea with a guest speaker.

Our branch is also looking into offering a scholarship to assist with technical devices for a local school student; this is being made possible following a bequest made to our branch and the request that the funds be used locally.

*Karen Dempsey*

## BHA BRISBANE

### Investing in our future

BHA Brisbane's new Strategic Plan, which will take the organisation through to 2019 and the full implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in Queensland, has now been put into effect. In addition to being 'NDIS ready', the key themes of the plan are: commitment to quality services, investing in organisational capability, building our community profile and investing in strategic partnerships.

### Active Communication Education (ACE) Program Implementation

In February this year, BHA Brisbane was



fortunate enough to have Barbra Timmer from the University of Queensland share her experience as an ACE Program facilitator with BHA volunteers and staff. This was an informative session that will help ensure our volunteer facilitators have the skills and confidence to deliver the program effectively and consistently.

BHA Brisbane looks forward to running the first ACE group program in the coming weeks. For more information about the ACE Program, contact Business Manager Tony Whelan or check our Facebook page for course commencement dates.

*ACE was developed from the program of research conducted in the Communication Disability Centre at The University of Queensland. The program was developed to help adults with hearing loss to become more effective communicators and to provide them with strategies to cope better in every day life. It is an evidence-based rehabilitation option for adults with hearing loss who do not want to wear hearing aids or who want more than hearing aids alone can provide.*



**BHA Brisbane President, Carol-Anne Greensil presents a thankyou gift to UQ's Barbra Timmer**

Valuing our volunteers - Cheryl Selvage  
BHA Brisbane would like you to meet Cheryl Selvage, one of our very valued volunteers. Cheryl has been an educator most of her adult life and even though she works full time as a hospital chaplain, Cheryl still finds time to volunteer and continue her passion for education. After seeing an advertisement in a local newspaper and following some 'sage' advice from her mother, Cheryl became a volunteer at Better Hearing Australia Brisbane. She was working in Special Education at the time and as Cheryl's father was hard of hearing, she felt coming to BHA would be helpful for the whole family - that was 25 years ago.



Cheryl's volunteering journey started early; she recalls her aunt working with young children in a special school for children with a disability. Still in primary school, Cheryl would volunteer her time to help out during school holidays. Since then, she has volunteered for many organisations over the years including: community youth and children's organisations, local gardening clubs and church groups. Cheryl recalls that at one time she and her partner held no less than 22 volunteer positions in the community!

What she most enjoys about volunteering is the wonderful variety of amazing people from different backgrounds she gets to meet and the chance to listen to their stories and life experiences.

Cheryl is a volunteer lip reading/communication tutor with BHA Brisbane and runs classes most Tuesday nights. It's hard to imagine how many people Cheryl has supported in those 25 years.

When not volunteering, Cheryl enjoys spending time at home with her family. She also appreciates a good book and spending time in the garden. On behalf of everyone at BHA Brisbane, we'd like to thank Cheryl for being a 'Very Valued Volunteer'!

## BHA GEELONG

Our Hearing Loss Management sessions have begun for the year and we have welcomed our regular attendees as well as new members to these sessions. The first meeting for the year was part of Tinnitus Awareness Week when we had a well-attended tea pouring demonstration and talk.

In February, Joan Belle, together with husband Bob, gave a talk at Geelong Grove Retirement Village. The talk covered improving communication between partners and provided strategies for both the person with the hearing loss and the person without.

Very positive feedback was received during the afternoon tea following the talk, with attendees finding much of the information new to them and extremely helpful.

BHA Geelong Branch was pleased to

host the March National BHA Board Meeting and welcomed members from around the country.

**Joan Belle**

## BHA ADELAIDE

In February, we moved back to our renovated South Australian Council of Social Services (SACOSS) venue which is now looking very fresh and pleasant. The new kitchen facilities in our small classroom are useful as we previously had to get water from the community room.

The community room used for our coffee mornings has also been recarpeted and painted and the hearing loop reinstalled in both rooms. We feel very comfortable and the major renovations were at the front of the building which does not affect us.

Our first meeting was a class meeting but it was turned into a chat session and a chance for people to have a good look round at the new SACOSS facilities. As we are members of SACOSS, we felt it would be a good idea for our members to find out about their work so Derik asked them to supply a speaker for our February Coffee Morning. One of their employees, Paul Saunders, talked about the work SACOSS undertakes.

*"The South Australian Council of Social Service is the peak non-government representative body for health and community services in South Australia, and has a vision of Justice, Opportunity and Shared Wealth for all South Australians". They liaise with the local government and are strong advocates for disadvantaged groups.*

Paul's talk was interesting and afterwards, we felt we knew more about the work and policies of SACOSS.

Our Coffee Morning in March focused on Australian Hearing and was given by Peng Lam, a Specialist Audiologist and manager of local branches.

Peng explained the various tasks of Australian Hearing and talked generally, with members asking several questions. Peng is interested in our hearing aid maintenance project and has asked for the package. She may be able to help us get it 'off the ground' and further discussion will take place next week.

Our tutor, Stan, is going on an overseas holiday for two months so we have thought of doing something different in the class group. We are asking our members to tell us about a particular travel experience they have had in the past and since we have some very well travelled people in our group, we are looking forward to hearing some fascinating stories. We will give people a time frame and those listening can ask questions. This has been done this in the past and it worked well. It gives students an opportunity to hear a variety of voices and brings many memories to the fore.

## BHA CENTRAL COAST

March was a busy month for BHA Central Coast (BHACC)!

On Saturday 4th March, BHACC took part in an International Women's Day (IWD) Expo event held at Erina Fair Shopping Centre. The theme of the Expo was Be Bold for Change. Inclement weather on the day put paid



**Peng Lam says:**

**AUSTRALIAN HEARING IS HERE TO SERVE YOU!**

**Peng will tell you about:**

- Australian Hearing,
- their programs and devices
- and general information about hearing loss and communication issues.

???

**Peng will answer your questions.**

  **ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER SERVICES**

to the original plans to hold the event outside in the area known as The Hive. Fortunately, the management of Erina Fair, after meeting with the IWD's Organising Committee, allowed the event to take place inside the shopping centre. 37 organisations and service groups participated, each manning a stall at one of four locations within the shopping centre.



**IWD Expo 2017**



Throughout the day various events, including a performance by the Singing Hands Choir, were programmed. The event offered the opportunity for the BHACC volunteers who attended to spread the word about BHACC services. BHACC shared a stall with a staff member from Australian Hearing, who offered free hearing tests to the shopping centre's patrons.

BHACC hosted a NSW Seniors Week Festival event at Avoca Beach Picture Theatre on Monday 6th March. A captioned version of the classic musical comedy, *High Society*, was screened.

## “keeping in touch nationally,”

Thanks to a successful NSW Seniors Festival Grant application and subsequent funding from the NSW Department of Family & Community Services, BHACC was able to offer free movie tickets and a choc-top ice cream to the 69 seniors who attended.

The BHACC Management Committee is now looking ahead and considering what to do for Hearing Awareness Week 2017.



**NSW Seniors  
Festival 2017**



# YOUR BETTER HEARING AUSTRALIA BRANCHES

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### **NATIONAL OFFICERS:**

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**President:** Michele Barry  
**Vice President:** Mirella Prasad  
**Secretary:** Andrew Bush  
**Treasurer:** Jeannette Durlak  
**Director:** Joan Belle  
Bob Belle  
Tom McCaul



**BETTER  
HEARING  
AUSTRALIA**

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