

12 POINT ACTION PLAN (12PAP)

To Improve Services and Facilities for the Hearing-Impaired

In March 2003, the Hearing Association adopted a 12-point action plan, prepared by Chris Peters, to improve services and facilities for the hearing-impaired, and to raise the profile of the association which is the premier organisation representing people with this disability.

Hearing loss is invisible, and the requirements of people with the disability are often ignored by service providers ranging from government departments to transport companies, accommodation providers, and television companies, right through to the local supermarket.

According to the last census, 223,500 recorded they suffered a hearing disability, including deafness. However, a report by K Anne Greville PhD published in October 2001, records 400,000 New Zealanders suffer hearing loss ranging from mild to complete deafness, with 390,000 suffering hearing loss. Of that figure, 250,000 have a hearing loss that qualifies as a disability. At 10% of the population, hearing loss is one of the largest disability groups in New Zealand.

While there are many issues affecting those with hearing loss, the association has focused on the following 12 points for attention. We regard these issues as our right, rather than as some favour to be granted by the organisation concerned, and will work to achieve all points.



Dick Earle
President

The Hearing Association would be grateful for Financial Assistance to further the work on the 12 point Action Plan



1 - Television Subtitles

Subtitled television programmes are available on only the three main public channels – TV One, TV2 and TV3 – funded by public money through NZ On Air.

The Hearing Association is working to have this extended to all television channels, notably Sky TV, and Prime. If necessary, we will seek legislation to ensure this happens. This is especially important for the elderly with limited discretionary income, for whom television is a major source of entertainment.

2 - Audio Loops

Despite legislation requiring that buildings such as theatres and meeting halls have assistive listening systems (primarily audio loops), the bulk of theatres and relevant public buildings do not have them, or where they ARE installed, they often do not work.

The Hearing Association has successfully lobbied the government to have the requirement for these systems feature more prominently in the revised Building Act, and will work to see the law is enforced, especially in existing buildings. Assistive listening systems allow those appropriate hearing aids to receive enhanced sound through their aids. Audio loops are even available for specific areas like a reception desk or bank teller position.

3 - Dedicated Facilities for hearing impaired

Companies and organisations that do business with the public must provide facilities where those with hearing loss can retain their privacy and dignity. The nature of hearing loss means those doing business with them will often have to speak more loudly, but in places like banks and hospital clinics, this can mean others can hear what is being said.

The Hearing Association will work with relevant organisations and with the government to ensure a private room, or an area that provides some privacy is required. This is as much a right for the hearing-impaired, as ramps are for the physically disabled.

4 - Advertising Contact Numbers

Advertising in newspapers, on billboards etc, provides a phone number for people to contact, but by and large do not provide either a fax number or e-mail address. This denies those who can't hear on the telephone, the right to take advantage of what is advertised.

The Hearing Association is working to have contact addresses such as fax numbers or email addresses included in all advertising as a matter of course.

5 - Hearing Aid Funding

Government subsidies for hearing aids have recently doubled – to \$198 each – while the cost of standard aids usually starts at about \$600 and can rise to several thousand dollars. While those in work or education can usually get subsidies, the elderly in particular – those with the most limited incomes and who because of their age are most likely to suffer hearing loss – are not generally eligible for any help. The ability of these people to make the most of their hearing, and to get the most out of life is being compromised. At the same time, Enable New Zealand, the primary source of subsidies for hearing aids and audiology services, is under-funded and at times has to stop providing any funds, to the detriment of the hearing-impaired.

The Hearing Association is working with the government and relevant bodies to ensure subsidies or funding are available, and to ensure Enable New Zealand is adequately funded and remains so.

6 - Audiologist Funding

Audiologists can be described as the “hearing” specialists, but those working in hospital clinics are often over worked, and the fees of those in private practice can be expensive and a barrier to those seeking their services. Hospital audiology clinics are now starting to levy part-charges for their services, creating another barrier to remedy.

The Hearing Association is working with the government and relevant bodies to provide subsidies for audiologist fees in a standard fashion nation-wide.

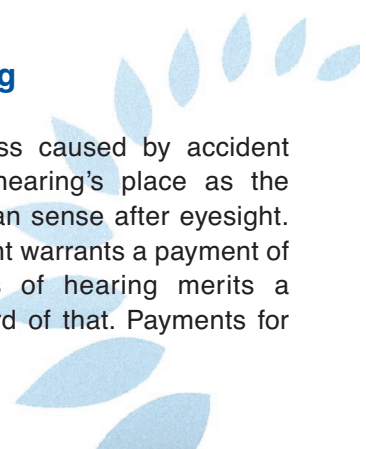
7 - Medical Insurance

Medical insurance policies generally cover only the cost of audiograms and little else, yet hearing loss is one of the largest disabilities in New Zealand.

The Hearing Association has surveyed medical insurance companies and will work to encourage them to provide policies offering a wider range of service for those who are prepared to pay for them.

8 - ACC Bulk Funding

Bulk funding for hearing loss caused by accident bears no resemblance to hearing's place as the second-most important human sense after eyesight. While the total loss of eyesight warrants a payment of about \$110,000, total loss of hearing merits a payment of about only a third of that. Payments for



partial loss of hearing are equally out of proportion.
The Hearing Association will work to ensure compensation is more adequate and realistic.

9 - Noise Levels

Noise levels in public places – especially clubs and bars – have been described as “toxic”, and English research shows 73% of those attending clubs and bars suffer the symptoms of hearing damage the next day. Yet nothing has been done to curb this danger to the public, especially the younger generation who run the risk of future hearing problems as a result. Those who work in such venues are even more at risk. Noise levels should be treated as the same threat to health as smoking.

The Hearing Association will work to have noise levels measured and analysed, and with regulatory authorities, unions, and other relevant organisations to make these environments safe.

10 - Public Awareness

Because hearing loss is invisible, and because of the stigma it often carries, the average New Zealander often does not realise that by and large there is no cure for hearing loss or damage. People therefore do not protect their hearing as they should. By the same token of public ignorance, people who generally know how to help someone with a mobility or visual disability, do not know how to help those with hearing loss. This is a public health issue.

The Hearing Association has launched a number of initiatives to make the public more aware of hearing loss, and has opened talks with the government on developing a public awareness campaign.

11 - Travel

Travelling on public transport, especially long-distance travel, is often stressful and sometimes dangerous for those with hearing disabilities. They generally have no way of accessing or properly understanding public address announcements, and can be denied information with safety implications as well as such basic information as service changes, departure changes, and so-on. The death of an American tourist at Kaikoura railway station in March 2003 highlights this danger.

The Hearing Association is working to have all public address information presented in visual form, preferably by display screens. As a minimum, all transport companies must be required to identify passengers with disabilities, and then cater for their needs. The most suitable way of doing this is

through the booking process. The Hearing Association has made submissions to government, to the Human Rights Commission, the coroner, and transport providers, to improve the provision of public information .

12 - Accommodation

People with hearing disabilities staying at hotels, motels and other such accommodation, often have no way of knowing fire alarms have been activated, and they face the same privacy issues at check-in and check-out as they do in banks, hospitals, etc. Televisions in hotels and motels usually are not equipped with Teletext, denying guests the option of enjoying this basic service.

The Hearing Association has opened discussions with the hospitality industry to improve safety and services to the hearing-impaired who use their services.

SPECIFIC PROJECTS

The Hearing Association will shortly undertake a number of specific projects, including some initiated by the member associations. Among these will be:

A - Child Education

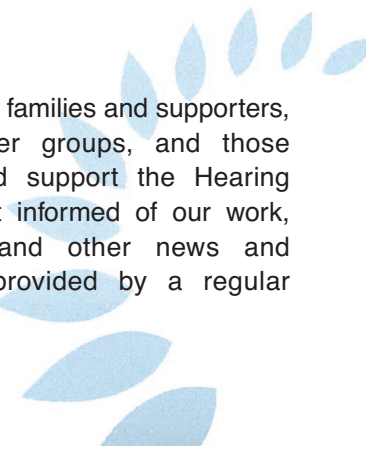
In 1999, the Hearing Association in Nelson produced an acclaimed education kit for use in schools, explaining to youngsters what hearing loss is and why it is important to protect their hearing. This kit is still valid, and work will be initiated on refreshing the kit and promoting its reissue to schools throughout the country.

C - Information Booklet

The production of an information booklet that will be made available to all members of the public, listing goods and services available to the hearing-impaired. These include services such as Teletext programmes on TV, captioned movies, the new telephone relay service, and so-on.

D - Newsletter

People with hearing loss, their families and supporters, the government, other peer groups, and those organisations that fund and support the Hearing Association need to be kept informed of our work, treatment breakthroughs, and other news and information. This will be provided by a regular newsletter.





Hearing Association

New Zealand

Te Kāhui Rongo o Aotearoa

Hearing Help Card

If you have a hearing loss, use these cards to help others help you.

Research shows at least 1 in 10 New Zealanders has a hearing loss.

The **HEARING ASSOCIATION** is their representative.

See reverse for contact details.

(Separate Wallet Cards below)



Hearing Association

New Zealand

Te Kāhui Rongo o Aotearoa

The **HEARING ASSOCIATION** has been helping New Zealanders with hearing loss since 1932 and has 34 branch associations throughout the country.

The Association provides help, information, advice and devices to help those with hearing loss and those who support them.

Contact us for help and details of our nearest office.

Phone 0800 23 34 45

Email enquiries@hearing.org.nz

www.hearing.org.nz



Hearing Loss



Hearing Loss

I have a hearing loss. To help me to communicate with you, please:

- Face me
- Speak clearly
- Speak slowly
- Don't shout
- If I'm missing a word, try an alternative or write it down.

Thanks for your help.

Hearing Association of NZ
Email enquiries@hearing.org.nz
Phone 0800 23 34 45

I have a hearing loss. To help me to communicate with you, please:

- Face me
- Speak clearly
- Speak slowly
- Don't shout
- If I'm missing a word, try an alternative or write it down.

Thanks for your help.

Hearing Association of NZ
Email enquiries@hearing.org.nz
Phone 0800 23 34 45

BLUE WALLET CARD

CUSTOMER:



If you have a
HEARING LOSS
please tell us

For more information contact
the Hearing Association Inc.
Phone: 0800 23 34 45
Email: enquiries@hearing.org.nz
www.hearing.org.nz

Supported by The National Foundation for the Deaf
Phone: 0800 867 446 www.nfd.org.nz

STAFF:



Please help Hearing-Impaired customers

- Face them
- Speak clearly
- Speak slowly
- Don't shout
- Try writing it down

For more information contact
the Hearing Association Inc.
Phone: 0800 23 34 45
Email: enquiries@hearing.org.nz
www.hearing.org.nz

YELLOW COUNTER CARD

To the Manager

Thank you for agreeing to display a Hearing Association counter card to help your hearing-impaired customers and clients do business with you. It is a proven initiative that will also benefit you and your staff.

Research shows nearly 400,000 New Zealanders have a hearing loss ranging from mild to complete deafness, with about 250,000 of them having a hearing loss that qualifies as a disability. It is these people the card is designed to help.

As you probably know, one area in which people with hearing loss have the most difficulty is where there is background noise. This card, displayed at your premises, will encourage those with hearing loss to identify themselves, because they will know your staff understand how to help.

The instructions on the back of the card show your staff how best they can talk with people with hearing loss, and I ask that you spend a few minutes ensuring your staff understand what is required. Improving communication helps everyone – and that is good for business.

The card is a Hearing Association initiative that follows its successful introduction in the Christchurch area a few years ago. That operation went so well, we've decided to extend it nation-wide.

The Hearing Association was established in 1932, and now has 34 member associations throughout the country. We are the primary organisation representing New Zealanders with hearing loss.

If you would like more cards, or if we can be of further assistance, please contact us.

Thanks again for your help

Chris Peters
Public Affairs Manager



Working for the hearing-impaired.
E mahi ana mā te hunga waimaero rongo



Chris Peters

*This letter was
handed out by
the Hearing
Association during
their Nationwide
distribution of
the yellow
counter card.*



HISTORICAL FLASHBACK

In the book 'Help for the Hard of Hearing' published in 1945 prefaced by the Rt Hon Peter Fraser, deafness came under three classifications.

- **Deaf:** The congenital deaf and those who have lost their hearing before school age.
- **Hard of Hearing:** Those who have been handicapped by impaired hearing in varying degrees.
- **Deafened:** Those who have lost their hearing after receiving education and are consequently "ear minded".

Mrs G A Hurd-Wood's dedicated work since 1926 culminated information of *The NZ League for the Hard of Hearing* on 16 March 1932 in Auckland with the following aim and objectives:

- To improve the outlook for totally or partially deafened adults.
- To reduce the ill-effects of deafness to a minimum.
- To encourage deafened and hard of hearing



people to pursue their accustomed means of livelihood with a minimum of inconvenience to their employers, the public and themselves.

- To eliminate quackery so far as it affects deafness
- To co-operate with the New Zealand government in dealing with the prevention of deafness in children.

OUR ASSOCIATION TODAY

Our official name is The Hearing Association, and with a Board of six drawn from two representatives from each of three regions.

- The National Body supports 34 fully autonomous and separate associations which are dedicated to:
- Raising the profile of hearing issues.
- Ensuring the rights, facilities and services are available for all people with a hearing loss.
- Facilitating the dispersal of information, including advances in technology.





The above picture shows the Christchurch Location. Below are the Locations as at 1 August 2005

| Location | Address | Postal Address | Phone | Fax |
|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| Ashburton | 206 Cameron St | POBox 200 | 03 308 3295 | 03 308 3295 |
| Auckland | 8 St Vincent Ave Remuera | POBox 26205 | 09 524 9847 | 09 523 1248 |
| Blenheim | 25 Alfred St | POBox 457 | 03 577 9333 | 03 577 9912 |
| Christchurch | 275 Riccarton Rd | POBox 6460 | 03 341 6705 | 03 341 6805 |
| Dannevirke | 19 McPhee St | 19 McPhee St | 06 374 7137 | 06 374 7137 |
| Dunedin | 7 Malcolm St | 7 Malcolm St | 03 477 9710 | 03 477 9717 |
| Gisborne | 179 Palmerston Rd | 179 Palmerston Rd | 06 867 3652 | 06 867 3653 |
| Greymouth | 10 Golf Links Rd | 10 Golf Links Rd | | |
| Hamilton | 40 Wellington St | POBox 4399 | 07 856 2008 | 07 856 2097 |
| Hastings | Q513e Southampton St | 513e Southampton St | 06 876 7210 | 06 876 7294 |
| Hokitika | 44 Lake Kaniere Rd | 44 Lake Kaniere Rd | 03 755 8296 | 03 755 8296 |
| Lower Hutt | 342 Waiwhetu Rd | 342 Waiwhetu Rd | 04 567 8036 | 04 567 8035 |
| Invercargill | 126-128 Dee St | POBox 7069 | 03 214 9154 | 03 214 9154 |
| Kapiti | 15a Ngahina St | POBox 439 Paraparaumu | 04 902 1866 | 04 904 1840 |
| Levin | 104 Queen St | POBox 1069 | 06 368 2469 | 06 368 2469 |
| Masterton | Gawith Burridge Bldg | POBox 72 | 06 378 2948 | 06 378 2548 |
| Matamata | 8 Meura St | POBox 293 | 07 888 6414 | 07 888 6462 |
| Morrinsville | 43 Canada St | 43 Canada St | 07 889 5355 | |
| Napier | Civic Ct Dickens St | POBox 4019 | 06 835 7790 | 06 835 7854 |
| Nelson | 354 Trafalgar St | 354 Trafalgar St | 03 548 3270 | 03 546 7565 |
| North Shore | 5 The Strand Takapuna | POBox 33 060 | 09 489 6610 | 09 489 6612 |
| Paeroa | Belmont Rd | 5 Olga St | 07 862 7124 | 07 862 8669 |
| Palmerston Nth | 435 Church St | POBox 1274 | 06 357 8708 | 06 357 8710 |
| Tauranga | 55b Edgecumbe Rd | 55b Edgecumbe Rd | 07 578 6476 | 07 578 6476 |
| Te Awamutu | 371 Mahoe St | POBox 577 | 07 871 3649 | 07 871 3640 |
| Te Puke | Methodist Church | 17 Beatty Ave | 07 573 8743 | 07 573 8743 |
| Thames | 306 The Terrace | 306 The Terrace | 07 686 7302 | 07 686 7302 |
| Timaru | 259 Stafford St | 259 Stafford St | 03 688 6673 | 03 688 6673 |
| Waihi | WEN Community Agency | POBox 260 | 07 863 6866 | 07 863 6862 |
| Wanganui | 35 Dublin St | 35 Dublin St | 06 347 9743 | 06 347 8463 |
| Wellington | 16 Kent Tce | POBox 19 038 | 04 384 7017 | 04 384 7065 |
| Westport | 44 Queen St | POBox 248 | 03 789 6165 | |
| Whangarei | 2 Deveron St | POBox 5001 | 09 437 6282 | 09 437 6851 |

You may email all the above by location followed by @hearing.org.nz example christchurch@hearing.org.nz To contact the National Office enquiries@hearing.org.nz
The above addresses are correct as at 1 August 2005. Changes will show on our web page www.hearing.org.nz. The country is divided into three regions. northern@hearing.org.nz,
central@hearing.org.nz and southern@hearing.org.nz