



Hearing Association

New Zealand

Te Kāhui Rongo o Aotearoa

February 2012

HEARING AWARENESS WEEK

25TH – 31ST MARCH 2012

THE FACES OF HEARING IMPAIRMENT

IS THE OVERALL THEME FOR 2012

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HEARING ASSOCIATION FOR MORE INFORMATION



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THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IS BY JOHN HARWOOD (PRES) AND IS IN REPLY TO SOME MATTERS RAISED BY VARIOUS MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS/MINISTRY OF HEALTH

At a recent meeting in Auckland with Sue Primrose and Phil Wysocki (8.12.2011) of the Ministry of Health there was a discussion concerning what the Hearing Association did and what services we provide to our clients from our 28 member associations. Because you all work independently I emailed all the member associations and asked for their answers. There were 12 items supplied, all in areas to help the hearing impaired.

- 1 The HA assists all age groups/ethnicity, etc, not just the over 16 yr olds and no appointments are generally necessary. Also there advice supplied to tinnitus sufferers, individuals and families.
- 2 Prove easy phone access for the hearing impaired for hearing aid advice, referrals to other agencies; ie audiologists, ear nurses, Veterans Affairs, ACC, doctors, etc.
- 3 Drop In centre for replacement of hearing aid tubing, cleaning and checking of hearing aids, minor repairs, batteries, assistive listening equipment trials and sales. LIFE therapists are often not available when required due the low number of hours allocated in that area (this is based in population).
- 4 Provide resources, education to institutions (rest homes) commercial industries on how to help the public who suffer from hearing difficulties.
- 5 Undertake and monitor testing of loop systems in public buildings.
- 6 Noise level testing, education and monitoring.
- 7 Supply of second hand hearing aids for loan in emergencies, and sale as necessary where cost of new aid is prohibitive.
- 8 Sending away of hearing aids for repair, on behalf of clients.
- 9 Sales after demonstration and trial of assistive listening equipment.
- 10 Liaison with local Councils, audiologists, other health providers on hearing related needs, on behalf of the hearing impaired community.
- 11 Social activities and general support.
- 12 Some of the Member Associations have in place interest free loan schemes to help those who struggle to pay fro their hearing aids. This is a very popular service with the older person.

From a Ministry point of view we are not needed because they have a contract with LIFE to provide the same service.

The Hearing Association has been servicing the needs of the hearing impaired for 80 years and has a proud record, and as our missions Statement says; to enhance of the interests and general welfare of all persons with a hearing loss, their families, whanau and all who support them, to improve their quality of life.



In spite of what the Ministry thinks our service is required, and estimated 700,000 people are seeking some sort of assistance to try and put their lives on track and it's essential that all groups work together to help these people achieve their goals. After all, if we can't work together to help this group of people who can?

The Hearing Association has been looking at the coverage they have in New Zealand and have found that coverage is limited by the amount of grants they receive and the volunteers available who can give their time to the hearing impaired. We have a membership of approx 6,000, mostly from smaller cities and towns. Our 4 major cities would have approx 800 of the 6,000. The service in the region from Auckland north (over 1/3 of population) is the area which most needs attention.

Ongoing work being researched and promoted in conjunction with NFD and DANZ is captioning on TV and there looks to be a break through with Sky TV considering captioning on several channels. The Relay Telephone service is to be improved and only requires to be signed off by government, Also, work is being carried out on setting up local groups of all those who help people with disabilities, including health professionals, volunteer groups, government agencies. There are of course some areas already doing this, and who share their concerns with each other.

INTRODUCING GISBORNE'S NEW STAFF PERSON

Hi, my name is Helen Ovenden. I have recently joined the Hearing Association here in Gisborne taking over Katy's job as secretary/treasurer. I must say that they are big boots to fill. I have enjoyed a lovely warm and friendly welcome here from Katy, Anna, the committee and members that have popped in for batteries etc. It has not taken me long to feel comfortable.

I have a varied working background mainly in office work but have enjoyed being a librarian at a local high school here in Gisborne, working at Gisborne Medlab until their closure in 2006, and mostly office temping all over town which I enjoyed immensely. I figure that I must enjoy a challenge!

I have 4 kids – 3 sons and a daughter. They have got to be my best life achievement in life. I am the very proud grandma of 6 grandchildren. My partner, Michael, and I have just purchased a block of land and some rentals which we have just finished painting, another challenge as a painter I am not! We do not have much spare time at the moment for our hobbies but we are looking forward to getting back to a little slower pace soon.

I am looking forward to learning about how the Hearing Association works and must say that so far I am impressed by the work that is involved in keeping it all running smoothly. Hopefully it will not take me too long to get up to speed as well. I already have a goal here. I had a visit this morning from a profoundly deaf woman and found it difficult to communicate as she did not have any form of hearing aids. I have been kindly offered a loan of some books to have a look at signing and am keen to find something on the internet as well.

I am looking forward to meeting people here or by way of email communication. It is just early days for me but very exciting no less.

BRANCH NEWS

Te Awamutu HA:

Here is our tentative programme around Hearing Week:

23 March: Open Evening at our rooms 477 Alexandra St, Te Awamutu. 6.30 – 8.30pm.

28 March: Open Day on Wednesday at our rooms 477 Alexandra Street. 9.30am – 3.30pm.

29 March: Our AGM & luncheon at Waipa Workingmen's Club 10.00am – 1.30pm.

1st April: a Sunday morning Church Service to acknowledge the hearing impaired & disabled.

Anyone is welcome to view our range of phones with increased volume controls; alarm clocks with powerful shaker & loud ringer; 4 sizes of hearing aid batteries; portable hearing aid drying boxes & capsules; personal amplifiers for those who do not use hearing aids; TV wireless & digital headphones etc.

Free to members only, we also have an Ultra-vac system to help dry out hearing aids or to remove wax from tubings... or come & see us for unbiased information regarding selection of hearing aids.

Hasting HA:

Hearing Awareness Week—we will be having a stall in the centre of town to promote the association, as well as various products for sale.

Tauranga H A:

Well the rain has fallen mainly on the BOP this holiday period which in conjunction with the Rena Disaster has seen a lot of cancellations of holiday makers to our area. Our staff have all enjoyed a nice break and we all agreed a wet holiday was still better than a dry working day hahaha. If the start of the year is any indication of how the rest of the year is going to be busy, busy, busy, is the prediction. A letter sent out to all Rotary, Lions and Probus clubs has resulted in 11 presentations already having been booked from Jan 9 – March 31st.

2012 is also going to see the new Ryman's facility opened in Bethlehem and we are working closely with management now to see our Rest Home Service available to their residents.

Our President Stuart Keene has now moved to Auckland but continues to preside over our committee meeting until March when a new president will be appointed. We wish him well in his new adventures and cannot thank him enough for the support he has given to all the staff and his belief in us to feel comfortable enough in our abilities to stand down.

With the Christchurch Earthquake, the recession and the World Cup, like many other Associations, funding was hard to get last year, so if anyone has had a successful fund-raising idea we would love to hear from you.

Nelson H A:

Nelson Hearing Association is fortunate to have had two very generous grants from Pub Charity over the last two years. In 2010 they funded a heat pump for our meeting room and at the end of last year they funded a foyer and meeting-room floor upgrade. We now have tiles in the foyer replacing old-fashioned, faded lino, and a new carpet in our meeting room making the room look modern, light and fresh. Our meeting-room is an important source of revenue so the heat pump and carpet replacement is very welcome as the room is now warm in winter, cool in summer, and attractive. So a big thank-you to Pub Charity!



Nelson's New Tiles and Carpet



important information from <http://www.health.uab.edu/17730/>

Listening to your iPod -- or any of today's popular portable MP3 music players -- too loudly or for too long could permanently damage your hearing, according to the American Academy of Audiologists and iPod manufacturer Apple Computer Inc. Being at close range to a single extremely loud sound such as a shotgun blast (about 145-165 decibels dB) can cause permanent damage to your hearing, but so can constant exposure to the more moderate levels of noise produced by iPods and other music players. At peak volume, iPods can reach 110 to 120 dB, which approach the level of a live rock concert. Hearing is a complex process. Tiny hair cells in your inner ear amplify vibrations from sound waves, converting them into signals your brain can interpret. Excessive sound pressure can damage these hair cells, causing them to lose their ability to transfer sound to the brain. The result is noise-induced hearing loss, which can distort hearing and cause difficulty understanding speech.

Up to a point, hair cells can recover. If you've ever been to a loud concert, you may have noticed ringing or a sensation of fullness in your ears or some hearing loss immediately after the show. This type of hearing damage is usually temporary and clears within a day or two. Constant exposure to loud sounds, however, can weaken and eventually kill hair cells, which causes permanent hearing loss. Noise-induced hearing loss is directly related to both the volume of the sound and the duration of exposure. The longer and louder you listen, the greater the potential for lasting damage.

So how long can you listen without causing lasting hearing loss? NIOSH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offer these guidelines for continuous decibel levels and permissible exposure times:

85 dB - 8 hours

88 dB -- 4 hours

91 dB -- 2 hours

94 dB -- 1 hour

97 dB -- 0 minutes

100 dB -- 15 minutes

103 dB -- 7.5 minutes

106 dB -- less than 4 minutes

109 dB -- less than 2 minutes

112 dB -- less than 1 minutes

115 dB -- about 30 seconds

To reduce the risk of hearing loss, many experts suggest keeping your iPod or other personal music player set at no more than 60% of the peak volume and listening for no longer than 60 minutes a day. You can probably listen safely for longer if you're willing to turn the sound down even lower.

Because modern devices have a long battery life and can hold thousands of songs, people tend to listen longer. In addition, there is little research available on the effect of earbuds on hearing loss. Some scientist suspect earbuds, the tiny headphones that rest directly in the ear and are standard accessories with most MP3 music players, may increase risk of hearing loss because they produce a more intense sound signal.

To help prevent hearing loss:

- Know which noises cross the threshold of 85 dB, where hearing damage occurs.
- Wear earplugs or other protective devices when engaged in activities that expose you to loud noises. Most drugstores carry earplugs and more sophisticated ear muffs are available in hardware and sporting goods stores.
- Invest in headphones that block ambient sound, which will reduce the need to turn up your music player's volume. Noise-cancelling headphones are more expensive, and typically cost between \$50 and \$200.
- Make sure your children protect their hearing. Long-term exposure to loud music for extended periods starting in childhood could result in significant hearing loss by the time your child reaches adolescence or adulthood.

Children, who may not appreciate the many problems hearing loss can cause later in life, are especially vulnerable to noise-induced hearing loss. iPod owners may want to download Apple's free software update that allows users to set maximum volume limits on the player. Using a combination code, this update lets users and parents set and lock in volume caps. The [free download](#) is available for the iPod nano and fifth-generation iPod.

This information was supplied by Michelle Holland and formed part of the document used for a previous press article