

Future of crucial communication service for deaf people hangs in the balance

Shirley Edwards was thrown into a world of confusion and frustration when she began losing her hearing in her 30s.

The Brisbane woman, who has two cochlear implants, is able to handle phone calls on her own thanks to a service that converts conversations into text for people with hearing difficulties.

But there are growing questions over the future of the National Relay Service (NRS), which provides the translations, with the Federal Government planning to cap funding for the service at two thirds of its current cost.

Mrs Edwards is among more than 4,000 people around Australia, largely hearing-impaired or elderly, who rely on CapTel handsets to communicate on the phone.

The handset operates like a regular



phone, except it connects to an NRS operator who translates the conversation and sends it back as text within seconds.

"It takes away the isolation and gives me a lot of independence," she said. "I don't have to rely on people to make my phone calls for me."

A Senate estimates hearing in February was told it cost more than \$31 million to provide the NRS in the 2017/18 financial year and \$32 million in 2016/17.

With the contract now up for renewal, the Federal Government has called for tenders capped at \$22 million a year.

But Senate estimates heard the process had "failed to deliver a value-for-money proposition", resulting in the current contracts being extended until January 31 next year.

Industry figures have told the ABC \$22 million would not be enough to meet growing demand and they feared services would be compromised.

The Australian Communication Exchange currently holds the Commonwealth contract to deliver the "relay service component" of the National Relay Service.

Tony Bennetts from Accesscomm, which distributes the CapTel phones, said the uncertainty was a concern.

"We do know from Senate estimates that there's an extension of the National Relay Service until January 2020, but we're not sure what's happening after that," he said.

"Will the cap require a reduction in hours and the availability of the NRS, which is currently 24/7?"

He said the NRS already offered a video relay service that is only available during business hours.

In a statement, a Communication Department spokesman said the funding cap was put in place by the Labor government in 2013. He said the Federal Government has been seeking the "most effective, efficient and economical NRS that can be provided and is looking at all service options that will fulfil the requirements of the NRS".

Mrs Edwards said if she lost access to her phone service it would be like being "plunged back into isolation". ●

Source: <https://ab.co/2YzkvXc>

Editors Note: If you would like to voice your opinion on this, you can email the Minister of Communications Mitch Fifield on minister@communications.gov.au or the Shadow Minister of Communications Michelle Rowland at michelle.rowland.mp@aph.gov.au



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President's Pen

Welcome to Autumn edition of the Chorus. This issue will most likely be the last in this format. Due to future committee changes, we are looking at different formats for future magazines. This is sad but with postage and printing increasing it's a fact of

life and we want to keep membership dues the same. We are hopeful with the new format, when it has been finalised, will be easy for anyone on the committee to put together when our Editor goes on leave.

The secretary is ordering 100 copies of a second reprint of our publication "Everything you need to know about Cochlear Implants". A new batch of CICADA brochures will also be printed. There has been renewed interest in our USB wristband product and another 50 have been ordered—this time there is a choice of five colours—red, purple, blue, green and orange. The price of \$10 remains if purchased at a meetup or function. For postal orders the price will be \$13 which includes postage.

The hospital kits are ready and will be sold to members first for \$25.00 per

kit. An order form will be uploaded to the Forms page on the website or you can order the kit/s from the Secretary, or email Penny for more information. There are only 20 or so on offer, so best to get in quickly!

We have had our first battery request from NDIS and hopefully it will be the first of many. If you are NDIS registered, it is important to let NDIS know our ABN number. You will also need to let us know your NDIS client number after which we will invoice you.

We would like to receive any stories, jokes, experiences you may have had or witnessed that you would like to share with other members, for our magazine. You can email or mail any contribution to the Secretary.

Until next time

Stephen Willis, President

MONTHLY MEETUPS

Southside Meetup
Flying Pepper Cafe
120 Kate Circuit, Rochedale
Thursday 10 October
from 10am - 12noon

Northside Meetup
Dragonfly Cafe
1657 Gympie Road, Carseldine
Tuesday 2 July
from 10am - 12noon

Fraser Coast Meet-up
Hervey Bay Library,
161 Old Maryborough Road,
Hervey Bay
First Saturday of the month
from 1.30pm onwards

Gold Coast Meet-up
Able Centre,
13 Sykes Court, Southport
First Wednesday of the month
from 10am - 12noon

Sunshine Coast Meet-up
Sunshine Castle,
292-296 David Low Way, Bli Bli
Last Tuesday of the month
from 10am - 12noon

BITS AND BOBS, TIPS AND TRICKS

It is thought by some that overcharging batteries at night will do them harm. A check with experts has advised that it is safe to recharge all night, even if your battery didn't 'run out' when you take the processor off at night.

With the iCellTech brand, you can remove the batteries when you take the processor off at night, and place the blue tab back on the batteries. Doing this helps the batteries last longer.

The iCellTech batteries sell at \$35 per box. If you wish to purchase these disposable batteries, you need to contact your planner and give them our ABN number of 29 911 299 608. If you are self-managed there is no need to contact NDIS. When this is done, download the order form from the website and send the order to us, along with your NDIS client number. We will invoice you showing the client number and relevant details on the invoice. There are two choices when making payment: either pay the invoice yourself which we will receipt showing PAID and you give invoice to your planner for reimbursement; OR give the invoice directly to your planner and NDIS makes the payment. Once the invoice is paid, the batteries will be sent to you. If you need further information please contact us.

There has also been queries on how you can become an NDIS client. To start the process, you need to contact NDIA for a NDIS Access Pack. You can contact 188 800 110 using the NRS, email nationalaccesssteam@ndis.gov.au, or write to NDIA, GPO Box 700, Canberra ACT 2601. Once you have gained access to NDIS, the NDIA will work with you to develop your first plan. When access requirements are met, you become an NDIS participant. Remember you must be under 65 years of age and an Australian citizen, resident or permanent visa holder.





Tour of Cochlear factory during Hearing Awareness Week



CICADA Queensland Secretary Shirley Edwards with Health Minister Stephen Miles during HAW



CICADA Queensland luncheon in celebration of Hearing Awareness Week



FUNDED!

Sunshine Coast University Hospital is thrilled to have secured \$5000 worth of funding for hearing kits and resources thanks to The Honda Foundation.

The kits will be directed to Emergency Departments across the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service to improve communication with hearing impaired patients.

Congratulations to the CICADA Queensland representatives, Penny & Judy and Nurse Manager for Patient Experience, Kathryn Thompson (pictured left).



A new captioning app currently making waves is **Live Transcribe**. This app is still in the beta developing stage, but its speed and accuracy in converting speech sounds to text is very high. However, this app is only available on Android devices.

If you only have an Apple device, a workaround is to purchase a cheap Android mobile phone that you can use solely as your own portable captioner. Just download the app from Google Play onto the android device, and you are set!

Queensland Rail now has messaging service for customers with a disability, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. The text number is 0428 774 636.

Lifeline is trialling a text number between 6.00pm and 10.00pm. The days are believed to be Monday to Friday. The number is 0477 131 114. This information was found in Facebook.

OPEN CAPTIONED MOVIES:

The Redlands Performing Arts Centre Concert Hall will continue showing open captioned movies during 2019. Cost of one film is \$8.00 and 2 films on same day cost \$14.00. A few of the films were all shot in and around Brisbane, including Redlands. They are:

- Saturday June 29th – 12 noon – The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader.
- Saturday June 29th – 2pm – Pirates of the Caribbean – Dead Men Tell No Tales.
- Friday 1st November – 5pm – THOR – Ragnarok.
- Saturday 2nd November – 1pm – The Railway Man.
- Saturday 2nd November – 4pm – Muriel’s Wedding.

Mark these dates in your diaries now!

The Blue Room Cinebar in Rosalie and the Palace Cinemas in inner city Brisbane continue to screen captioned movies each month. Check their websites for the latest offerings.



Due to popular demand, a second reprint of our information booklet on cochlear implants is now available.

Donations gratefully accepted to cover printing and postage costs. To receive a copy, please contact Shirley Edwards on secretary@bicadaqld.com.au

SO HOW DO WE COMPARE?



Australia

Strongest belief that hearing loss can affect relationships^a



Japan

Strongest belief additional education is needed in their country around preventing and treating hearing loss^a



UK

People are least likely to have had a hearing test in the last two years^a



Germany

People are most likely to know where to get their hearing tested^a



USA

People in the USA rated workplace facilities higher than any other country^a

A new player on the block...

Andrew Stewart (pictured right), the recipient of the Libby Harrick's Award in 2017, has launched his own company Hearing Connections. Specialising in Hearing Augmentation systems, Hearing Connections is also able to provide assistive technology, hearing coaching, parent mentoring, cochlear implant rehabilitation support and workplace hearing Awareness training.

Andrew was born into a hearing impaired family, with a hearing impaired father, brother and two sisters. He wore hearing aids from 7 years old until he was fitted with his first cochlear implant in 2009 and his second in 2016. He and his wife have raised two wonderful and amazing hearing impaired children who wear a combination of hearing aids and a cochlear implant.

In the early 1980's Andrew's father Geoff Stewart was one of the original founding members of SHHH (Self Help for the Hard of Hearing, now Hearing Matters Australia). At this time Andrew had recently completed his

education in electronics and he began working in the hearing sector gaining over 30 years of experience in Hearing Augmentation. This included a vast range of public access buildings and venues, including the Opera House, airports and Sydney trains.

Over the years he has been awarded a Life Membership of Deafness Forum for his contributions in 2005, followed by Consumers Telecommunications Network award in 2007 for Outstanding Contributions to Consumers, sat on the Deafness Forum Board from 2011 – 2013, and an ACCAN award for Outstanding Contributions to Consumers in 2013.



One of his achievements was ensuring the needs of deaf and hearing impaired people were not ignored during the deregulation of the Australian telephone network (when Telecom was sold and Telstra, Optus and others appeared on the Australian scene). Andrew was solely responsible for the TTY (telephone typewriter for the deaf) operating on the Australian network.

Hearing Connections offers a wide range of services from cochlear implant rehabilitation, managing hearing loss, Hearing Coaching, and onsite workplace assessments. Professional services are also wide and varied, including installation of sound systems such as SoundField, Hearing Loop, FM, Infrared and counter loop systems.

To find out more about the company visit www.hearconnect.com.au or email team@hearconnect.com.au or write to PO Box 4432, North Rocks NSW 2151 ●



MEDICATIONS TO BE AWARE OF...

Some medicines can impair your hearing. These are called ototoxic drugs. Their side effects can include tinnitus, hearing loss, balance problems and phantom sounds.

They can damage the fragile hair cells in your inner ear or affect the nerve supply to your ears.

The ototoxic drugs include:

- Non-steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs (NSAIDs), such as aspirin, ibuprofen and naproxen
- Certain anti-biotics including aminoglycosides
- Certain cancer medications
- Water pills and diuretics
- Quinine-based medications



This is just an overview, so check with a doctor or pharmacist if you have any concerns ●

Source: Your Time magazine March 2019

Loud and Clear: Australian start-ups are changing the hearing game

For Dr Kate Lomas and Dr Liz Williams, co-founders of Hemideina, understanding insect ears is the key to unlocking a billion-dollar industry. The start-up is named after the scientific term for the Wellington tree weta insect, the species which is endemic to New Zealand.



Dr Kate Lomas & Dr Liz Williams

"We really see this as a dramatically improved

treatment for

profoundly deaf patients, and we're aiming to do this with our different sound processing technology," Williams, co-founder of Melbourne startup Hemideina, says.

Williams and Lomas (pictured above) recently closed a \$1 million funding round from private investors and locked in an \$800,000 commercialisation grant from the federal government to bring their Hera Implant to market. The technology is a smaller and less invasive alternative to the traditional cochlear hearing implant.

The implant was developed from Lomas' research in biophysics and takes inspiration from her work on insect hearing systems, specifically the Wellington tree weta, which has extremely sensitive hearing.

A tiny electrode is surgically inserted into the ear, then a small in-ear bud turns sound waves into electronic signals sent to the electrode in the inner-ear, which are then used to stimulate neurons in the cochlea and send sound information to the brain. This "mechanical signal processing" is different from other options on the market, Lomas says, and its size means users don't have to remove or cover their hearing devices when swimming or playing sport.

The duo, who came together to launch the startup after previously working together at the CSIRO, say Australia is a great place to begin a hearing-focused startup. The multi-channel cochlear implant was invented in Melbourne, and the pair say that history has helped them find support when commercialising the product.

"One of the reasons we've been able to be successful was that really early on, we were able to take it to people [for support and review]," Lomas says.

The company says the hearing implants market is worth \$1.8 billion annually.

Global research suggests that more broadly, hearing tech for those with more mild types of hearing loss is also expected to grow. The number of units using wireless technologies such as bluetooth are also expected to increase. Statista estimates that 450,000 units of this type of tech was sold in 2016, with this number expected to hit 9.8 million by next year.

Hemideina is aimed as a treatment for deaf patients, but the startup is by no means alone in the auditory technology space. Smart headphones producers are developing consumer products aimed at helping those with mild hearing loss.

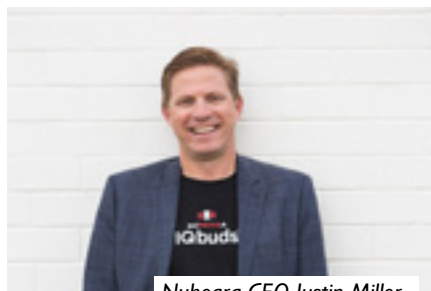
Williams says while these startups are very different from projects such as Hemideina, what they have in common is the quest to make auditory devices "more personalised" and focused on the specific needs of users.

Chief executive of smart headphones brand Nuheara Justin Miller agrees that personalisation is a key trend in the space. "We're gone down the path of very deep personalisation and embedding that on your devices," he says.

ASX-listed Nuheara has launched a range of headphones that transmit sound according to the preferences of users and offers products such as the IQBoost, designed to help those with mild hearing loss.

Nuheara chief executive Justin Miller: "We're creating the market we're selling into – this hasn't existed before."

The company has been launching its products into the US market, where the hearing tech space is rapidly changing ahead of a Food and Drug Administration plan to allow hearing assistance devices to be sold over the counter by 2020. Miller says there's a global appetite for personalised, wireless sound products but Nuheara's task so far has been to educate



Nuheara CEO Justin Miller

consumers about headphone products that have their hearing health in mind.

Nuheara made \$1.4 million in revenue in the

six months to December 2018, though it operated at a loss of more than \$4 million over that period. Miller says the long-term sales opportunities for this type of technology will continue as users turn away from screens and towards sound.

"We're getting used to voice and response, with smart speakers and those sorts of things," he says.

"The ear is going to get bigger." ●

Source: Emma Koehn, March 2019, Sydney Morning Herald

Three Australian 'Hearable' products making a global splash ...

Nura, Nuheara and Audeara all are about capabilities that are not part of global brands. That's the ability to adjust sound frequency by frequency to match hearing capability. They don't target people with profound hearing loss, rather with mild to moderate loss who don't need a medical hearing aid.

Audeara is the brainchild of Brisbane-based doctors James Fielding and Chris Jeffrey. Users create an "audiogram", which is used to adjust volumes at different frequencies on its headphones.

Perth-based Nuheara's IQBuds Boost earbuds similarly asks you to perform a 15-minute "ear ID" hearing test where you listen for faint tones.

Melbourne-based Nura's headphones take 60 seconds to personalise hearing without asking for feedback. Nura says it uses sensitive microphones and signal processing techniques to measure sounds coming out of the ear to understand hearing sensitivity.

In 2019, these Aussie firms are gearing up with new products in a highly competitive global market. At this month's Consumer Electronics Show at Las Vegas, Nura said it would market an earbud version of the Nuraphone headphones called NuraLoop.

It has wireless and analog options with a magnetic detachable cable for connecting to any music source such as an aeroplane seat and has active noise control.

Nuheara, meanwhile, is launching an updated version of IQBuds Boost, also with active noise cancellation. It uses three microphones to analyse and process sounds inside and outside the ear and five times more processing power than last year's IQbuds Boost. Nuheara also has released an

adaptor that accesses TV sound called IQstream TV.

Nura co-founder Dragan Petrovic said the company had focused on the consumer market "although we have received quite a bit of attention and quite a bit of interest from musicians and music professionals in general."

He said singer Stevie Wonder visited Nura's booth at this month's Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas. "We've heard word from his manager just recently that he's been using it so much that he ran out of battery but forgot (left) the charging cable back in Las Vegas."

The US is Nura's biggest market with about 30 per cent of users, followed by Australia and the UK. Headquartered in Brunswick, in inner Melbourne, Nura had gone from 12 to 48 full-time equivalent staff in a year.

Nuheara in September snared former Samsung Australia VP Philip Newton as its chief sales officer. Mr Newton said he immediately transitioned Nuheara away from regular consumer retail.

"One of the first things that I did was essentially get the board to agree that the current direction that company was taking wasn't an appropriate one. They were trying to sell an assistant hearing product in traditional CE (consumer electronics)," he said.

Mr Newton said Nuheara was not targeting the Australian domestic market at this stage, but was focused on Europe.

Optical retail chain Specsavers in the UK had started to sell hearing aids and had approached Nuheara to assist the 65 per cent of clients who attended its clinics but didn't need medical hearing aids.

"We're on trial at the moment with Specsavers. If all goes well, they'll roll it out globally" Mr Newton said.

Nuheara is also targeting the equivalent to Specsavers in Germany, Italy and France. It is also working with the UK National Health Service to pitch its hardware as an alternative to hearing aids for people with mild hearing loss, after winning the NHS tender in November last year.

Audeara says it has achieved growth in the lifestyle hearables niche with Amazon launches in Australia, the US and UK, along with a JD.com product launch in China as a specialty brand.

Chief executive James Fielding said Audeara had achieved more than \$250,000 in China sales since last month.

The Australian Hearing Services Program and NDIS registration was driving Audeara's growth nationally and the company has significantly increased its Australian retail presence through hearing stores since March last year.

This is in addition to 70 Attune Hearing clinics where Audeara already sells. The company this year will launch in Canada and continue its US growth. ●

Source: *The Australian* January 21, 2019

ROOSTERS HAVE SPECIAL EARS SO THEY DON'T CROW THEMSELVES TO DEATH

It is common knowledge that a rooster's crowing is deafening, over 140 decibels in fact, a threshold that can cause damage in less than a second, just shy of shattering your eardrum.

Roosters are so loud it's surprising that they aren't deaf from their own

calls. So Belgian researchers looked into it, and found that they have special ears which allow them to crow to their heart's content without losing their hearing.

The ears are blocked when they crow. When they open their beaks

fully, their external auditory canals completely close off. They have built in earplugs! ●

Source: <http://bit.ly/2Hk0kXk>



Hidden disabilities now catered for in airports after Australia-first program at Brisbane Airport

The way in which big, noisy airports deal with people who have hidden disabilities is about to change, with Brisbane Airport launching an Australia-first program to help those who are managing anxiety, depression, autism or hearing loss.

Modelled on a successful program in the United Kingdom, 1,200 staff have now been trained and visitors can order lanyards to wear for their trip to discreetly alert staff they may need support. It could mean a quieter check-in, a back way through duty free, or getting help to find a relaxing spot before a flight.

Other Australian airports are taking notice of the Hidden Disabilities program, which could soon be the norm around the country. The idea was the brainchild of Brisbane woman Jennene Greenall who approached Brisbane Airport Corporation in 2016.

She was desperate to make life better for travellers with conditions like autism, dementia and hearing loss, after a trip to Europe with her daughter. Her daughter, who has Asperger syndrome, was so traumatised by her experiences in airports that she is now reluctant to travel. “She had a lot of anxiety and depression” she said.

“The worst experience was Paris [airport] and we were flying to London and when we got there she just wouldn’t leave the hotel. When you are at security or customs, it’s quite intense. There are always so many more people around and everyone’s trying to rush you through the process, that can be quite intimidating for a person with a disability, and also their carer.”

She said the program removed the label of “special”, adding everyone should be entitled to assistance.

“The program is really about elevating the level of service, so that someone with a disability, isn’t singled out and treated differently.” Ms Greenall set up an advocacy group and even devised the program and training for the staff, with the help of an occupational therapist.



Brisbane Airport Corporation introduced a distinctive lanyard for passengers with hidden disabilities that enables them to discreetly identify themselves to airport staff.

KEY POINTS:

- Brisbane Airport is the first to cater for people with conditions like autism, Asperger’s, hearing loss
- Sydney and Melbourne airports are in talks for similar programs
- Airport staff will help find a quieter check-in, a back way through duty free, or getting help to find a quiet spot before a flight ●

Source Shelley Lloyd, ABC News, 3 May 2019



A CICADA’S EARS...

A cicada’s ears are different from ours. They’re not on the head, and they don’t stick out, but there are two of them and they do have eardrums.

A cicada’s eardrums are called tympani (tympanum if you’re talking about only one). There are two tympani, hidden under the big flaps you see when you turn a cicada on to its back. These protective flaps are called operculi (operculum for one). Male cicadas have much bigger operculi than the females.

Did you know that ‘tympani’ is the proper name for our own eardrums? It’s also the name for a drum section of an orchestra—but those musical drums don’t hear sounds, they produce sounds.

The male cicada produces sounds with its tymbals. That’s also the name of some small drums! ●

Source: Cicada Sing-Song by Densey Clyne

Person Centre Care - Communication & Hearing Loss

BY PETER LINDLEY

At Queensland's Metro South Health, the person centred care approach starts with three questions:

- What are my patients needs as a person?
- What can I say or do, to make this a better experience for my patient and their loved ones?
- How can I show that I care and respect them?

The following information is intended to help staff understand the needs of their patients with hearing loss, and enable them to respond in a way that demonstrates care and respect.

"Can you hear me?" is a common question from a hearing person to someone they know to have impaired hearing. Unknowingly, they are asking only one question instead of two, when it is more complex than that. Our auditory system is very complex. To reduce that complexity, two fundamental areas of understanding is what this article is about.

First, the word *hearing* refers to the sounds we hear. Second, the word *processing* refers to our brain making sense of those sounds and organising the sounds in a coherent format that we can understand. Thus, we have two questions to ask: "Can you hear me and can you give me feedback as to what you have heard?" This will confirm

patient understanding or misunderstanding.

Being in hospital is a very stressful experience for those with a hearing loss. The stress is exacerbated for the person who is deaf or hearing impaired through not knowing 'what is going on', 'what is to be done to them and why?' So ensuring that the deaf or hearing impaired person is well aware of 'what is going on' serves two purposes: reducing stress on the patient and the possibility of errors occurring.

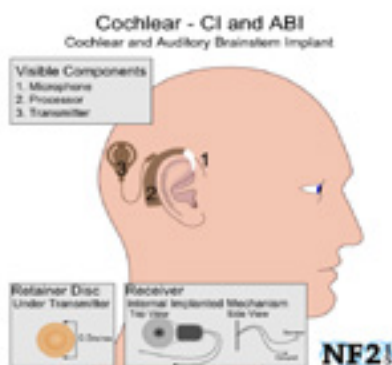
Person centred care includes effective communication through a recognition that hearing loss is a significant disability, that if not identified, creates a risk situation and can lead to unsafe practices impacting on the hearing impaired person, and those involved in their care, and also on the hospital itself.

After working for 33 years in the rehabilitation wards of a large public hospital, and after seeing a purely clinical focus, I am convinced that recognition of the patient as a person, and ensuring that the approach to healing is kind and respectful, will encourage their involvement in their own care and have a significant impact on recovery and rehabilitation outcomes.

➤ continued on next page...

A Reminder about *Static Electricity*...

Electrostatic Discharge (ESD) is the sudden discharge of static electricity. ESD can damage sensitive electronic equipment, including cochlear devices of cochlear implants (CI) and Auditory Brainstem Implant (ABI). ESD is an everyday occurrence, which may go unnoticed, since charges may be small.



I. RESULTS OF ESD

Issues from ESD could include:

- Program Issues: Disruption or mapping disruption easily fixed at next tune up session with an Audiologist.
- Processor Damage: Damage to the speech processor circuitry

which would require a new speech processor.

- Receiver failure: This is rare for more recent implant models which are more resistant to ESD, but would require another surgery for replacement if failure occurs.

2. SOME CAUSES OF ESD

- Low Humidity - Hot or Cold Dry Conditions
- Removing Clothes over Head
- Playing on Plastic Slides
- Walking Across a Carpet
- Handling Polyethylene Bags
- Pouring Polyurethane Foam into a Box

- Latex balloon coming in contact with Hair

- Computer, Monitors and TV's

3. WAYS TO DECREASE ESD

- Monitoring humidity levels:
 - Over 30% humidity
 - Use of Humidifier
 - Noting times of year dry in your region - Typically November to March
- Use of fabric softener
- Use of anti-static mats
- Avoiding synthetic cloth

For further information see www.wikihow.com/Remove-Static-Electricity ●

Source Cochlear Ltd www.cochlear.com/

Musical Ear Syndrome

Are you losing your hearing and sometimes hear music that isn't really there? Musical ear syndrome can be experienced by people who lose their hearing. Instrumental music or songs can play in your head over and over. These auditory hallucinations might be alarming, but they aren't a sign of mental illness. They are probably due to your auditory system and brain producing their own music because of the loss of hearing. While it is disturbing for some people, many people get used to it or even come to like it.

WHO GETS MUSICAL EAR SYNDROME?

Musical ear syndrome is believed to be somewhat common in older people with hearing loss, but it can occur with those who lose their hearing at any age. A neurology professor said that 2 percent of those losing their hearing will have musical auditory hallucinations, while Neil Bauman, who first described the syndrome, says it affects between 10 and 30 percent of people who are hearing impaired. Bauman says that people predisposed to it are more often elderly, hearing impaired, lack adequate auditory stimulation, have tinnitus, and often are anxious or depressed.

Musical ear syndrome can also be seen in adult cochlear implant patients. One study found that 22 percent of the recipients experienced it before or after the implant. Of the 18 cases studied, most heard both instrumental music and singing, while some heard only instrumental music and some heard only singing. Most coped with it well, but three of the 18 people found it intolerable. Some people report that musical ear syndrome keeps them from getting a good night's sleep.

CAUSES OF MUSICAL EAR SYNDROME

The causes of musical ear are not yet known definitively. But the leading theory is that the loss of hearing makes the auditory cortex hypersensitive. The sensory deprivation leads the ear and brain to produce these auditory hallucinations, similar to Charles Bonnet syndrome where visually impaired people have visual hallucinations.

A study using electroencephalography found that musical ear syndrome has some neural similarities to tinnitus, but that areas of the brain associated with music and language production were active when the subjects were hearing the phantom music.



An earlier example of research on musical hallucinosis in acquired deafness was published in *Brain*. This was a study of six people who experienced musical hallucinations after acquiring hearing loss. None of them had epilepsy or any psychosis. The theory that musical hallucinosis is caused by activity in a certain part of the brain was tested by performing brain scans. The researcher found that imaging data did support the hypothesis. They also found that out of six people, only one improved with treatment, which was with improved amplification.

The focus of treatment for the syndrome is to improve the hearing of the patient with hearing aids and to encourage them to enrich their environment with sound. That way, the brain isn't filling in the gaps with its own auditory hallucinations. If you are using any medications that might cause auditory hallucinations, your physician may change them or eliminate them. Some people may also benefit from anti-anxiety or anti-depressant medications. ●

Source: www.verywellhealth.com/music-in-the-ear-1048946

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People with a hearing impairment are usually provided with a cochlear implant or a hearing aid—or both. The device provides us with the sounds we need to hear. It does not process those sounds in an identifiable context. The auditory centre in our brain is still that part of our being which is responsible for enabling us to understand what we are hearing.

Therefore the common misconception that the technology enables us to 'hear' and immediately understand what we

are hearing is incorrect. To one degree or another, depending on the individual and the part of the hearing pathway which is damaged, they assist us in the hearing process, but 'understanding' is a challenge that we all must deal with. Effective communication requires appropriate strategies to assist the process of 'understanding'.

It is essential that you face the person/s who has a hearing loss, speak clearly and modify your rate of speech in order to give the hearing impaired

person/s time to process what you are saying. Further, 'can you hear me?' is likely to elicit a 'yes' as they may think they have hearing and understood, but in fact may not have received the correct message.

Asking for feedback is a very important strategy. ●

The author Peter Lindley is a life member of Deafness Forum of Australia, a hearing impaired consumer and a committee member of Be Heard - Redlands (QLD)

VISION STATEMENT

To hear, listen and be heard.

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide education, information and support about the cochlear implant, and empowerment on hearing loss issues.

BEQUESTS

We are a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission.

Our ABN is 29 911 299 608.

If you wish to make a bequest to CICADA Queensland, contact us on secretary@cicadaqld.com.au

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CICADA QUEENSLAND CONTACTS

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Please make all submissions for next edition of CICADA CHORUS by 26 July 2019. A word limit of 600 words applies.

Join us as a Friend of CICADA Queensland!

Annual membership is \$20 per person and \$30 per family from July to June of the current year. If joining after December of the current financial year, membership for the rest of the current financial year is \$10.

This fee includes the quarterly CICADA CHORUS magazine.

Our Membership Form is available on our [Forms](#) webpage.

BATTERY SERVICE AND MERCHANDISE

CICADA Queensland provides a cochlear implant battery service and sells customised name badges, polo shirts, caps and MEDICAL ALERT! USB wristbands. All merchandise has our logo. All order forms show postage prices and are available on our [Forms](#) webpage. Prices are:

- A box of **iCellTech 675 batteries** cost \$35.00. Postage extra.
- **Cap** is available in one size and different colours and cost \$14.50 each. Postage extra.
- **Polo shirt** is available in different colours in sizes of small, medium and large and cost \$28.00 each. Postage extra.
- **MEDICAL ALERT! USB wristband (snap-on)** plus postage cost \$13.00 each. They are available in five different colours: red, orange, purple, blue and green. If purchased at one of our meetings, the cost is \$10.00.
- **Name badges** (magnetic) each cost \$16.85 including postage.
- **Hospital Communication Kits** are now available at a cost of \$25 per kit if purchased at one of our events. If ordered by mail postage will cost \$8.30 for a total price of \$33.30. These kits are a valuable tool for all persons with a hearing loss going into hospital for a procedure. If you wish to purchase a kit, email Penny on pennyphillips1@bigpond.com.

If paying by cheque or money order, please make payable to CICADA Queensland and post with order form/s to Secretary, CICADA Queensland, 85 Crotona Road, Capalaba 4157.

Our Heritage bank account is in the name of CICADA Queensland, Account No. 10416358, BSB 638-070. Please use your surname as a reference for who payment is from when depositing payments into our account.

...Did you know that the 675 batteries can also be used in hearing aids? Order from our website at <http://bit.ly/2rBrvH>

Hearing with ...



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A Human Connection

Bradley Reporting has a strong focus on captioning services for deaf and hard of hearing professionals and community members. Our services are designed to empower individuals and assist with overcoming some of the barriers to full participation in society. Bradley Reporting delivers a personalised service that is flexible and adapts to the different environments captioning is needed by our clients.

As a small business focusing on captioning for deaf and hard of hearing individuals, our friendly personalised service is particularly suited to NDIS participants.

The easiest way to book our services in Queensland is via Deaf Services (Auslan Connections) or via Expression Australia (Auslan Connections), in Victoria.

Contact us for more information:

sales@bradleyreporting.com

