



**HEARING
AWARENESS
WEEK
23-29 AUGUST**

**ACCESS
At home**

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In Australia, hearing loss is more prevalent than all national health priorities except musculoskeletal conditions. This means hearing loss is more common than cardiovascular disease, diabetes mellitus, asthma, cancer and mental health. ¹

ONE IN SIX AUSTRALIANS have a hearing impairment

Deafness and hearing loss have long been associated with confusion, isolation and depression. With the development of technologies such as "state of the art" hearing aids, hearing loops and closed captioning, people with a hearing loss now have far greater access to personal communication and to events happening in the world around them.

There are plenty of communication channels available to you even if you are starting to have difficulty using the phone. Try calling a friend using other methods of communication eg National Relay Service. See www.relayservice.com.au

Many devices are available to help even if you don't have a hearing aid yet. Around the home special alerts such as for the telephone, door, alarm clock, baby cry alarms and smoke detectors.

Captioning is available on many DVDs, videos and on many television programs.

Assistive listening systems such as hearing loops, infrared and FM systems can be fitted in specific rooms in the house.

Hearing aids, cochlear implants and Auslan (Australian sign language) are all ways you can improve communication if you are Deaf or have a hearing impairment.

During Hearing Awareness Week, many audiology clinics will be offering free hearing checks.

Visit the Event calendar at www.hearingawarenessweek.org.au to find out what is happening near you.





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Background information

In 2005 it was estimated that 3.55 million Australians had some form of hearing loss.

- Children (0-14 years) – 10,268
- Adults (15 years and over) - 3,534,963 of that 49.5% were of working age (15-64 years) and 64% of people were over 60 years with 37% aged 70 years or more.

People often wait 7-10 years before they seek help for their hearing (from when they first notice).

Over half the population aged between 60 and 70 has a hearing loss¹ this increases to more than 70 per cent of those over the age of 70 and 80 per cent of those over the age of 80.²

Visit your local consumer organisation to get information and practical assistance to learn how to cope with your hearing loss. Organisations such as Better Hearing Australia, Self-help for Hard of Hearing (SHHH) and Deaf Societies are all places where you can get assistance, and there are many more. For further details see

<http://www.deafnessforum.org.au/links.htm#consumer>

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¹ Access Economics: Listen Hear! The economic impact and cost of hearing loss in Australia, February 2006

² Mitchell P et al: The Prevalence, Risk Factors and Impacts of Hearing Impairment in an Older Australian Community: the Blue Mountains Hearing Study, 2002