



**HEARING
AWARENESS
WEEK
23-29 AUGUST**

**ACCESS
At Play**

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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

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.

Many venues and businesses have hearing loops. Ask whether the venue you are in has a hearing loop, and use the T-switch on your hearing aid to assist you to hear better.

There are many leisure activities you can enjoy even if you have a hearing loss. These include going to captioned and Auslan-interpreted theatre shows, to captioned movies, or venues with assistive technology that you can use with the telecoil or T-switch on your hearing aid.

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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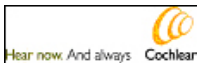


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Background information

How does our hearing work?

Your ears pick up sound which travels in invisible waves through the air. Sound occurs when a moving or vibrating object causes the air around it to move.

Sound waves travel down the ear canal and hit the eardrum in the middle ear. This causes the eardrum to vibrate. Three tiny bones in your middle ear link the vibrating eardrum to the cochlea in the inner ear.

The cochlea is filled with liquid that carries the vibrations to thousands of tiny hair cells sitting on a membrane that stretches the length of the cochlea. The hair cells on the membrane fire off tiny electrical signals. These electrical signals travel up the cochlea nerves of the auditory pathway to the brain. All this happens in a fraction of a second.

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.

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