



# About *Australian* Hearing

## Australian Hearing

Australian Hearing is a Commonwealth Statutory Authority that is dedicated to helping people manage their hearing impairment to improve their quality of life. Australian Hearing provides a full range of hearing services exclusively to aged pensioners, most war veterans and children under 21 years, most of which are fully subsidised by the Government.

Australian Hearing was established by the Federal Government in 1947 to assist WWII veterans with ear damage and to help the large number of children born deaf following the rubella epidemic of the late 1940's. It is now the largest and most comprehensive provider of hearing services in the world, fitting over 80,000 hearing aids each year.

Our Audiologists work with each client to help them choose the best solution for their hearing needs. This involves assessing the extent of the hearing loss, fitting a hearing aid or other device which best suits the person's lifestyle, and providing expert advice, listening skills training and occasionally more extensive rehabilitation programs to help our clients manage their hearing impairment.

Hearing aid technology has come a long way over recent years and Australian Hearing offers a range of hearing aid products for clients to choose from, including tiny digital hearing aids.

The organisation also plays a vital role in the areas of hearing rehabilitation and

counselling, acoustic research, hearing aid development, hearing preservation and community education.

There are 73 permanent Australian Hearing centres and over 200 regular visiting clinics throughout Australia, staffed by Audiologists, administrative officers and technicians.

## National Acoustic Laboratories

The National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL) is the research division of Australian Hearing, and is the world's leading hearing research and development organisation.

NAL research concentrates on two major areas: Hearing Rehabilitation, and Noise and Hearing Loss Prevention.

- The **hearing rehabilitation research** group has a major emphasis on the fitting and use of hearing aids, providing a scientific basis for the delivery of hearing rehabilitation services. It contributes to scientific knowledge and has developed audiological procedures that are widely recognised and used throughout the world. In fact, 60% of all hearing aids fitted around the world use NAL hearing aid selection procedures.

NAL research regularly results in procedures and knowledge that leads to improved hearing rehabilitation outcomes for hearing-impaired people in this country and overseas.

- **NAL noise and hearing loss prevention research** contributes knowledge that benefits the Australian community and people generally. Benefits accrue through increasing public awareness of the harmful effects of noise, through improved techniques

for detecting hearing damage and susceptibility to further damage, through providing a major input to Standards and regulations concerned with the measurement and control of community, industrial and leisure noise, and with hearing conservation.



## Quick facts about hearing

- One in five Australians over the age of 15 have some degree of hearing impairment.
- Half the population aged between 60 and 70 have a hearing loss, and over 70% of those over 70.
- Males have a higher incidence of hearing loss, particularly older men, mainly due to noise exposure in the work place and during war service.
- Extensive research has found that exposure to excessive noise can cause premature hearing loss, and is the most common cause of hearing damage – and the most easily prevented.
- 70 per cent of people who had their hearing screened by Australian Hearing during Hearing Awareness Week had some hearing loss. 9 in 10 people over 60 years of age recorded a hearing loss even though 60 per cent had never been tested before.
- An Australian Hearing survey indicates many older people wait 6 to 10 years or more from the time they first notice they had a hearing problem before they had their first hearing test.
- Hearing loss can affect people at any age in our community. It can be present at birth, acquired through illness, accident, exposure to noise or as part of the normal aging process.
- The most common childhood medical complaint is otitis media, commonly known as middle ear infection. Over 80% of children will have at least one middle ear infection before they are three, often associated with temporary hearing loss.
- Around 1000 children are fitted with hearing aids for the first time each year.
- Recent advances in technology means that hearing aids are smaller, smarter, sound better, and are suitable for almost all types and degrees of deafness. A well fitted hearing aid can lead to improved health, relationships, social activity and emotional well being.
- Despite this, approximately 350,000 Australians wear hearing aids, and it is estimated that a further 1 million could benefit from using a hearing aid.

**AUSTRALIAN HEARING provides the best hearing care, the latest in hearing aid technology and leads the world in hearing research.**

*If you would like more information, ring 13 17 97 to be connected to your nearest AUSTRALIAN HEARING Centre, or visit our website on [www.hearing.com.au](http://www.hearing.com.au)*