

# 2012/2013 Annual Report



# Contents:

President's Report	Page 3
Executive Officer's Report	Page 4
Board of Management	
Executives	Page 5
Board Members	Page 5
BHA Vic Staff	Page 5
Contributors and Donors	Page 6
Case Study Vignettes	
Community assistance scheme	Page 7
Tinnitus support	Page 8
Hearing aid support—collaborative effort	Page 9
Assisting an elderly couple	Page 10
Advice on assistive technology	Page 11
Assisting aged care residents	Page 12
Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2013	
Certification by Committee	Page 13
Income and Expenditure Statement	Page 14
Statement of Changes in Members Funds	Page 15
Balance Sheet	Page 16
Cash Flow Statement	Page 17
Note to and forming part of the Financial Statements	Page 18
Independent Auditors Report	Page 21

# President's Report:



I am pleased to present this annual report as President of Better Hearing Australia (Vic) Inc.

This year continued with challenges and opportunities that we met and responded to by continuing to deliver leading services for our clients, members and the communities we serve in assisting people with the management of their hearing and sensory loss. BHA (Vic) Inc has made a significant difference in the lives of people with hearing impairment and loss assisting over 3,000 Victorians each year.

The year has seen greater focus from the Board of Management with further strengthening of our strategy planning and implementation, governance and risk management approaches. One of the things that attracted me to BHA (Vic) Inc was the excellent diverse suite of services offered, as well as the staffs commitment to working with people with hearing loss, giving clients and members the tools, knowledge and

support needed to exercise their rights while enhancing opportunities for social inclusion and independent living skills. I would like to thank Michele Barry the new Executive Officer who has demonstrated already in her short time with BHA her outstanding ability in analysing the pathways forward that will require strong leadership and innovative approaches in navigating the changing world. I would also like to thank Dr Tom McCaul for his significant role as interim Executive Officer and for his leadership in obtaining our quality accreditation.

The outcomes that BHA (Vic) Inc is able to achieve are only possible because of the commitment, hard work, generosity and efforts of many individuals and organisations that we work with. The ongoing support of individual members and donors is particularly appreciated. The BHA (Vic) Inc Board of Management, Executive Officer and staff wish to acknowledge and thank its many supporters for their contributions over the last 12 months.

BHA (Vic) Inc receives funding for its services from the State Government Department of Human Services (DHS). BHA (Vic) Inc acknowledges the importance of their funding and expresses its appreciation for their professionalism and collaboration in working with us in improving outcomes for people requiring hearing and sensory loss management. We recognise more can be achieved through enhancing these partnerships and funding arrangements and we look forward to this challenge.

The changing environment most notably is the introduction of NDIS (DisabilityCare) which will be an exciting time for the sector and BHA (Vic) Inc . It will bring its challenges and opportunities that I believe we are ready to lead and respond to as we have the right people, strategies and governance structures to meet the needs of people requiring assistance with the management of hearing loss. I would personally also like to thank the Board of Management and BHA (Vic) Inc staff for their time, dedication and ability to work collaboratively together in achieving great outcomes.

I commend this report to you as it truly reflects the wonderful work undertaken by BHA (Vic) Inc and the quality achievements that we see on a daily basis.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ja Richie', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

**James Richie**  
**President of Better Hearing Australia (Vic) Inc**

# Executive Officer's Report:

## As the newly appointed Executive Officer, this is my first report.

I joined the BHA (Vic) Inc team in May 2013 and accepted this role because I saw that the services of BHA make a significant difference to people with a hearing loss to enable them to pursue their goals. I am excited about our vision and motivated by the solutions we can offer.

The past year has been one of change. I thank Dr Tom McCaul as acting Executive Officer until May this year. During this year Tom provided leadership and support for our team as well as leading a successful accreditation process. I am pleased Tom is continuing to support the organisation in this aspect and has continued on as our Business Systems Coordinator.

BHA (Vic) Inc has a terrific team who over the past year delivered services to over 3,000 people. I thank our Hearing Advisors Carol, Sharon, Gwen and Kathleen, who have already impressed me with their expertise, and innovative client focused approach. I also thank our Finance and Administration Officer Jaki, for her support and business management expertise.

For over 80 years the organisation has provided support for thousands of people with hearing loss, from an origin of lip reading support, we now provide individual hearing loss management. Our suite of services includes hearing testing, independent living training, information, Community Assistance Scheme and advice on assistive technology. To demonstrate the range of services delivered we have included some case study vignettes to show how we support clients to pursue their own goals.

BHA's services both support and supplement Federal government arrangements. Addressing the needs of sensory loss in our community is our unique Community Assistance Scheme to enable people to receive a second hand hearing aid free of charge. At this time of writing government funded services do not fully address the range of hearing loss needs of emerging groups.

Together with a range of organisations, BHA plays an important role to advocate and promote the needs of Australians with sensory loss. The years ahead will be challenging, as a state-wide service we are part of the NDIS (DisabilityCare) rollout in the Barwon region. An exciting time in Australian policy, intended to deliver more choices and services for people with a and hearing support.

I am fortunate to report to a highly skilled Board of Management who understand the challenges ahead. I sincerely thank our President James Ritchie for his support and leadership and look forward to working together to evolve BHA to meet the challenges ahead.



**Michele Barry**  
Executive Officer of Better Hearing Australia (Vic) Inc



**Michele Barry**  
Executive Officer  
From 20 May 2013



**Dr Thomas McCaul**  
Executive Officer  
13 August 2012—20 May 2013

# Board of Management:

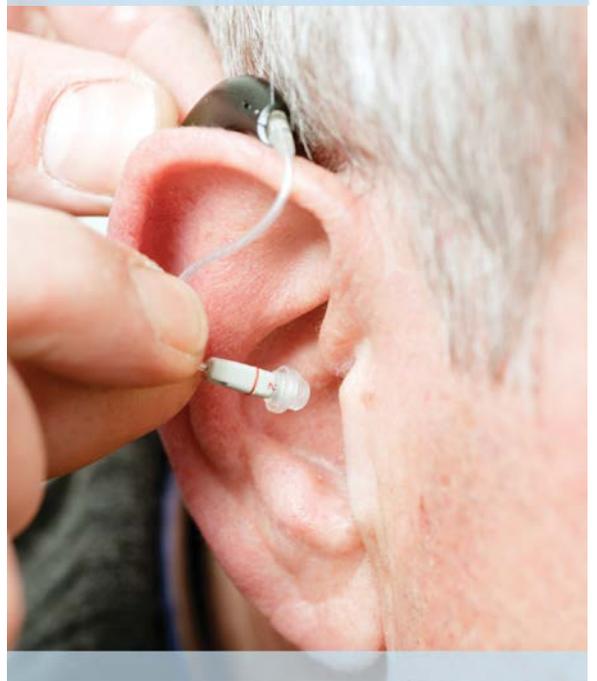
The Board of Management is the governing body of Better Hearing. The Board is made up of between 7 and 12 members of the organisation and is appointed to the Board post nomination at the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting. Meeting every two months, the Board review subcommittee and working group progress, define and manage policy and financials.

## Executives:

<b>President:</b>	James Ritchie
<b>Vice President:</b>	Kartik Natarajan
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Craig Ball
<b>Secretary / Public Officer:</b>	Bill Trumble

## Board Members:

Hellen Broadbent	Lucienne Harrison
Margaret Robertson	Josie Sidoti
Peter Young	



## BHA Vic Staff:

We are extremely lucky to have our wonderful staff. Without our staff, we would not be able to provide the services which assist those with hearing loss, their families, students, and professionals in our community.

<b>Executive Officer:</b> (13 August 2012—20 May 2013)	Dr Thomas McCaul
---	------------------

<b>Executive Officer:</b> (from 20 May 2013)	Michele Barry
---	---------------

<b>Hearing Advisors:</b>	Kathleen Pearce Sharon Plunkett Gwen Rosengren Carol Wilkinson
--------------------------	---

<b>Financial and Administrative Officer:</b>	Jaki Medford
--	--------------

<b>Business Systems Coordinator:</b> (from 20 May 2013)	Dr Thomas McCaul
--	------------------

# Contributors:

## Contributors:

Better Hearing Australia (Victoria) Inc acknowledges the funding support provided by the Victorian Government for the services funded.



Mr WE Evans

Deafness Foundation

All Souls' Opportunity Shop

Member Donations

Paul Kean and his IT team

Word of Mouth Technologies

Hearing Aid donors

Thank you to the many individuals and organisations who refer and recommend our services.



## Case Study Vignettes:



### Community assistance scheme:

Henry, a 35 year old refugee has no hearing in his right ear and severe sensory neural loss in his left ear. He is struggling to study at University. His one hearing aid had been stolen; he came to us at Better Hearing for advice and possible hearing aids as he did not have the finances to purchase a new aid. Whilst discussing his options the man broke down. He was distraught that his hearing friends were all getting on where he was still struggling.

We took ear impressions, programmed an aid and fitted the aid with a temporary ear mould. His face lit up and he became more verbal. We also loaned him a Bellman Mino to try at university.

We called the university disability support unit and arranged an interview with a disability liaison officer to find out what assistance they can give him or what assistive technology they have available for loan. We are keeping in touch with Henry to ensure he gets the assistance he needs to make study more accessible to him.

# Case Study Vignettes:

## Tinnitus support:

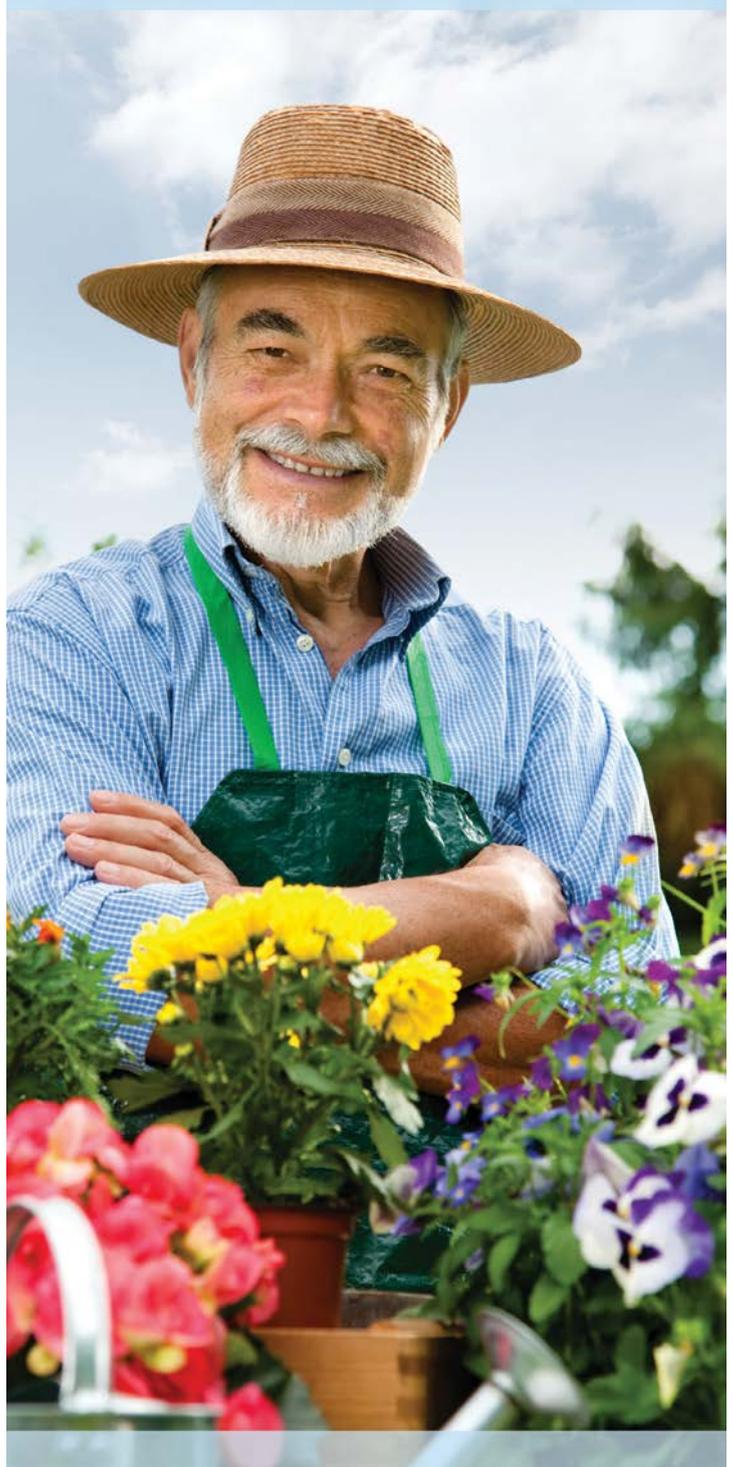
Mario migrated to Australia from Italy after World War II, he is retired and enjoys gardening. Mario's life was turned upside down when he suddenly developed tinnitus. He was diagnosed with a slight hearing loss and told that nothing could be done about his tinnitus; there was no cure and he would have to learn to live with it. Mario found this very negative information rather depressing and spent more and more time thinking about how bad his tinnitus was and how he was never going to get rid of it. Eventually he was spending most of his day sitting with his head in his hands feeling helpless.

Mario's wife was instrumental in trying to find someone who could help. She called BHA (Vic) Inc and brought Mario in to see us. As he had already seen an ear specialist and had a full battery of tests, our first priority was to give Mario some information about tinnitus. This included an explanation of the latest theories: What is tinnitus and, importantly, what can we do to manage tinnitus and what might work for him?

Mario had virtually given up his favourite pastime, gardening, because he felt the tinnitus was too distressing for him to concentrate on anything else.

However, once he knew that his condition was not life threatening and was manageable, it was possible to discuss the possibility of him returning to the garden. Mario was also given information about the Tinnitus Association of Victoria and some Audiologists in private practice who specialise in this area. This helped him to realise that there were even more options available to help him manage his tinnitus.

A few days after this visit, Mario's wife called to say that she had already noticed a significant improvement. His tinnitus was rarely noticed while he was "busy" in the garden and this was giving him hope that he would have less and less times when he would be pestered by the tinnitus.



# Case Study Vignettes:

## Hearing aid support—collaborative effort:

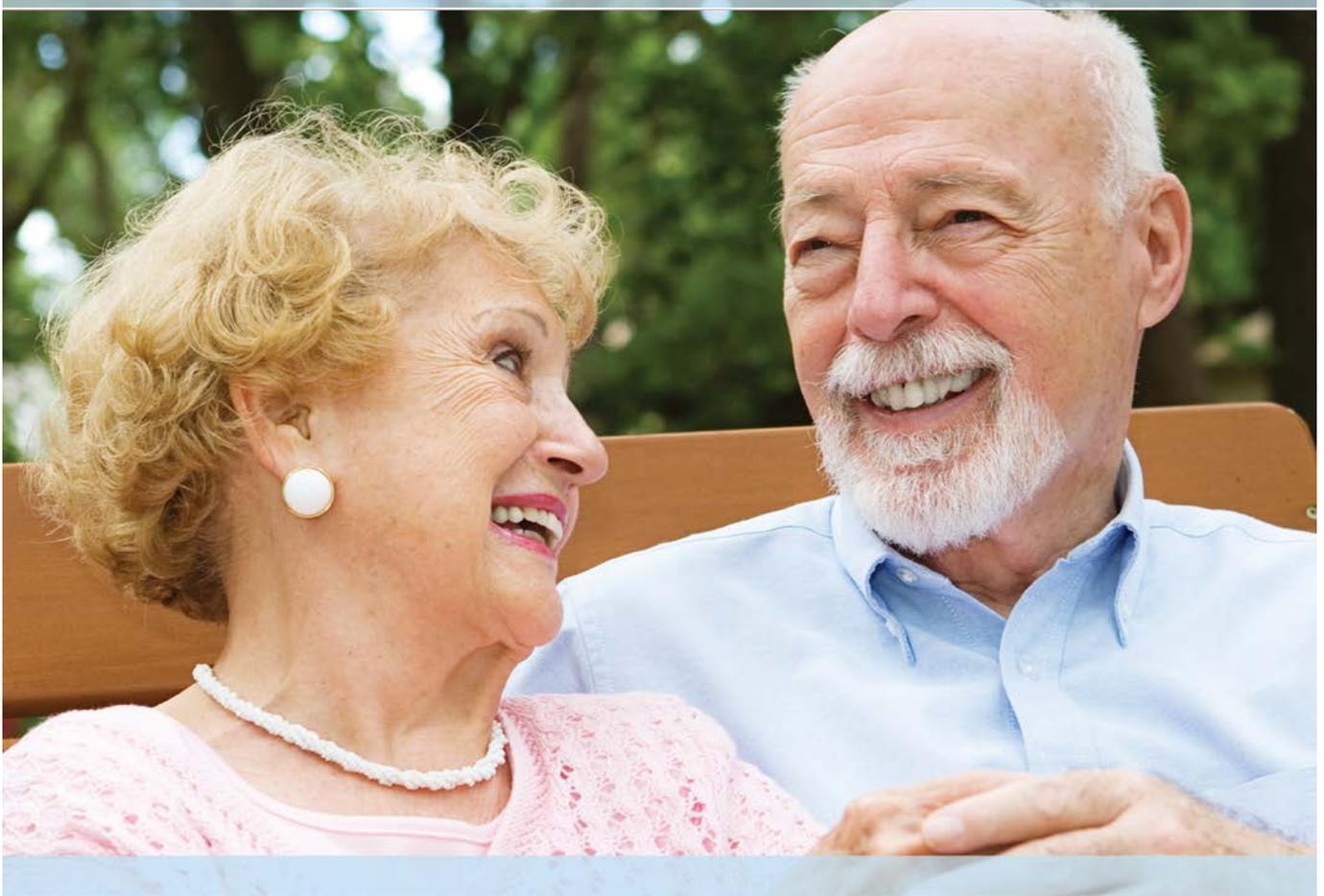
A social worker from Peter MacCallum Cancer Centre contacted Better Hearing Australia (Vic) Inc asking for assistance with a severely deaf patient who was undergoing extensive treatment. He had no working hearing aids. The patient and the medical staff were all very concerned about their inability to communicate effectively. It was believed that this was having a detrimental effect on the patient and adding to a very stressful situation.

BHA (Vic) Inc contacted the original provider who arranged for replacement hearing aids. It was expected that this could all take up to three weeks. In the meantime BHA (Vic) Inc arranged for a suitable listening device to be loaned to the patient. With the support of the social worker at Peter MacCallum this was fitted and the results were excellent. Guidelines for successful use of the device were provided and strategies for effective communication with a patient while in bed were offered.

Both the cooperation and determination of all three organisations to assist this patient and to persist when obstacles were presented were heartening and reassuring. BHA (Vic) Inc has written to each of the organisations thanking them for the extra effort and cooperation.



# Case Study Vignettes:



## Assisting an elderly couple:

An elderly couple in country Victoria were referred by their Case Manager regarding communication difficulties and neither being confident using the telephone. Being primarily confined to their home because of other health problems, a home visit involved hearing tests to provide an understanding about their own and each other's hearing loss and impact on communication. Advice was given on appropriate communication strategies for helping them to change the way they talked with each other. The husband had hearing aids but was not able to raise his hand to insert one aid (for his better ear) having suffered a shoulder injury. His wife was not confident about helping him so was shown and encouraged to assist with inserting this aid while his injury persisted. Also he was due for a review of his hearing aids, but as the couple had moved since his initial assessment many years previously, he was unsure of how to follow up and connect with a local audiologist. Arrangements with the Office of Hearing Services provided him with a Return Voucher and details for accessing a local audiologist. He has since had a follow up appointment utilising transport as arranged by his Case Manager. Also his wife has decided to obtain hearing aids. Arrangements were initiated for her to utilise her entitlement through the Office of Hearing Services with her appointment arranged to coincide with her husband's transport and attending the same audiologist.

Their telephone difficulties were immediately resolved with a trial of appropriate equipment and a changeover of equipment arranged within the week through the Telstra Disability Equipment Program. Both report some weeks later of a "change for the better".

# Case Study Vignettes:



## Advice on assistive technology:

Susan, who is in her 50's, attended in her community an Information Talk given by a Hearing Advisor on hearing loss management and was motivated to ask for a follow up appointment about her hearing difficulties. Susan had been aware for some time of her hearing change but was reluctant to address her difficulties and unsure of what steps to take. She phoned within a week for an appointment at Better Hearing for a hearing test and advice.

Accompanied by her husband John, they both have a clear understanding of Susan's hearing loss, the implications for their communication difficulties, and the options and strategies for managing the change this brings to their relationship. They received information about current hearing aids and costs, and independent guidance about getting hearing aids when she is ready. The couple trialled equipment options for immediately overcoming TV listening difficulties and for more comfortable listening. Susan, has since obtained reasonably priced equipment to suit their situation pending a decision about hearing aids.

Having been assisted through the initial challenge of recognising and being 'open' to her hearing loss, then receiving advice to help explore options, she now reports she is more comfortable about living with her loss and better informed and prepared for making decisions about hearing aids. Susan values that she can now talk about her hearing loss and engage her family in resolving to do something about her hearing loss.

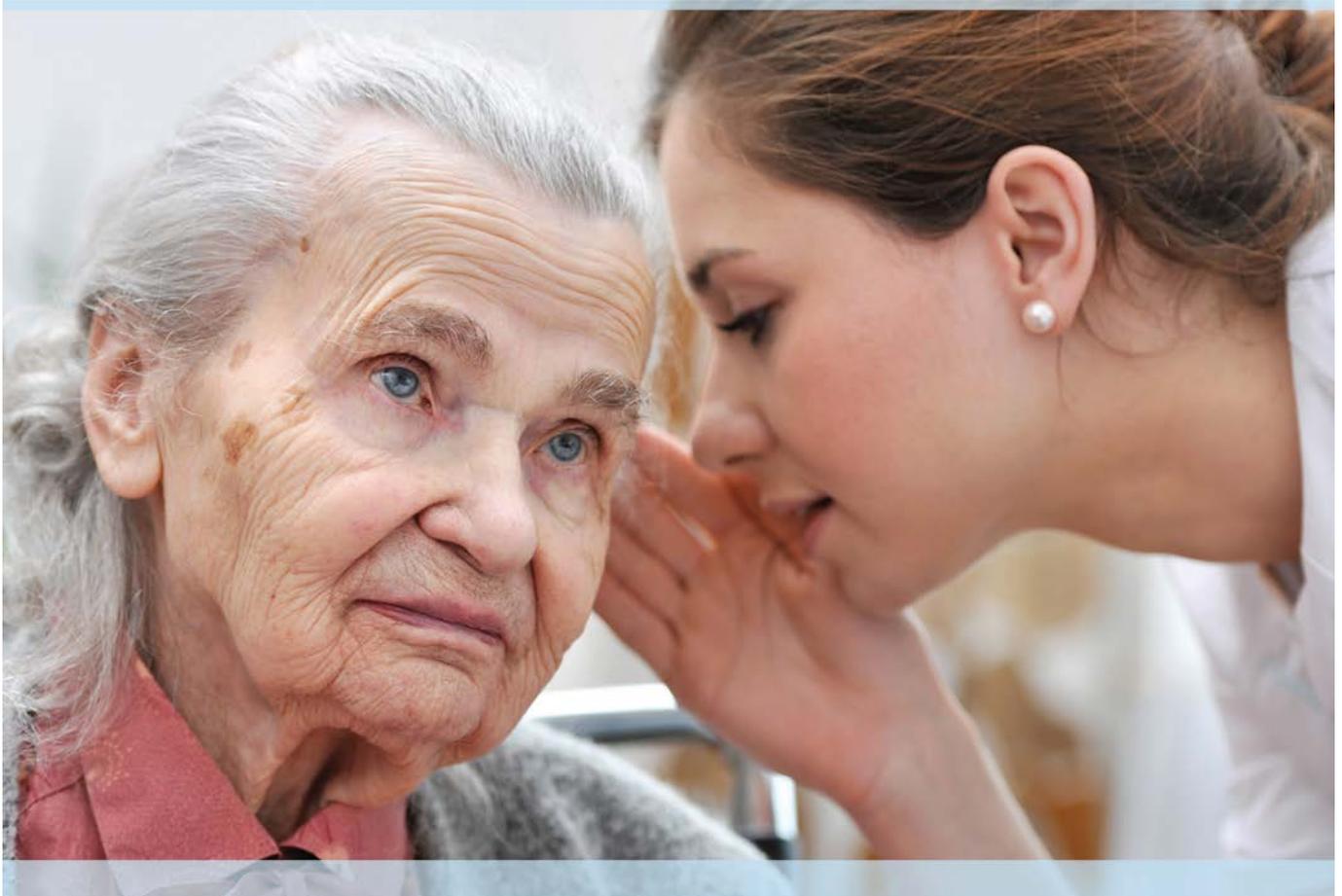
# Case Study Vignettes:

## Assisting aged care residents:

Helen, a 77 year old in an low level care facility was referred by another resident previously assisted by Better Hearing services. Helen has a moderate to severe hearing loss and a severe vision loss, classified as legally blind. She was not using her hearing aids having been fitted with them just as she was losing her vision and not having gained competence inserting and managing them. Helen had become almost totally isolated in her current living situation and not attending the range of social activities available. Without access to visual speech clues and without hearing aids, she could not participate in the life of her community. Even with careful assistance over a couple of visits it was evident she was not able to manage to put her hearing aids on.

A detailed guide was prepared for hearing aid insertion and the total care of the aids and a meeting arranged with the Care Coordinator of her section, who was offered training to assist. She is now more involved in, and mentally stimulated by social activities and conversations with fellow residents with the use of her hearing aids, improving her quality of life. Helen is very outgoing in nature and loves social interaction.

Arrangements were also made for Helen to have a full review of hearing aid use with a new Office of Hearing Services Return Voucher. Helen chose a new audiology service to suit her current needs and on advice was visited by Australian Hearing. This also enabled her to access Complex Needs eligibility based on her dual disability for higher quality aids.





**BETTER  
HEARING  
AUSTRALIA**

**Better Hearing Australia (Victoria) Inc** ABN 16 984 530 754

**Address:** 5 High Street, Prahran, VIC 3181

**Phone:** 1 300 BHA VIC, 1300 242 842  
(03) 9510 1577

TTY: (03) 9510 3499

**Fax:** (03) 9510 6076

**Web:** [www.betterhearing.org.au](http://www.betterhearing.org.au)

**Email:** [victoria@betterhearing.org.au](mailto:victoria@betterhearing.org.au)