



TALENTED: Artist Ben has received support from Better Hearing Australia (Vic) Inc. INSET: Ben's artworks.

Hearing aid bank opens new world for Ben

Since Ben was young, he loved to draw, especially the cartoon characters he used to watch.

This love of art led him to study industrial design at university, after which he started work as a graphic designer at one of Iran's most famous comic magazines.

The secret to his talent? "I believe all artists need to have freedom. If they have freedom, they can draw anything

they like and they can be very creative and can grow. This way they end up drawing very good artwork," he explains.

However, Ben was denied this freedom in Iran and had to leave. Complicating matters, he also has impaired hearing.

Fortunately, Ben was granted refugee status in Australia where he learnt about Better Hearing Australia (Vic) and the Victorian Hearing Aid Bank.

The bank was able to fit Ben with two hearing aids in 2014. This gave him many opportunities to not only assimilate into society with his new English language and communication skills, but also continue his artistic career. Ben has had his artwork and photography published and some commissioned.

BHAhas opened up a new world for Ben and everyone else who sees his wonderful work.



Georgie Stayches

Board announced at AGM

BHA is pleased to announce the board for 2015/16 following the Annual General Meeting on October 13.

The 2015/16 Board is:

President:

Georgie Stayches

Vice President:

Sandra Keir

Treasurer:

John King

Secretary:

Vacant

Board Members:

James Caws
Victoria Didenko
Kaye Gooch
Josie Sidoti
Peter Young

Two of our long-standing board members chose not to renominate for personal reasons.

BHA thanks Bill Trumble for over 30 years of dedicated support and Hellen Broadbent for a range of roles including that of president.

Visit us in Broadmeadows and Lynbrook

BHA has started seeing clients in more locations.

We now have sessions at the Lynbrook Community Centre (corner of Lynbrook Boulevard and Harris Street, Lynbrook) and the Broadmeadows Community Hub (182 Widford Street, Broadmeadows).

They are integrated multipurpose community centres designed to be places where people can meet, build relationships, and engage in a range of activities, programs and services.

Our sessions at these centres are in addition to those in Prahran and at locations in Epping and Ringwood.

We visit each centre once a month and hope to reach more locations more often over the next year.

To book a session, call BHA on (03) 9510 1577.



NEW SITES: BHA has commenced sessions at the Broadmeadows Community Hub (top) and the Lynbrook Community Centre (above).

New audiologist joins the BHA team

Meet Agnieszka Kosidlo.

Part of the BHA team since May, Agnieszka provides consultation in relation to general hearing loss and tinnitus management. She is also involved in the Victorian Hearing Aid Bank.

Before joining BHA, Agnieszka worked as an audiologist in both public and private sectors, focusing on audiological assessments and hearing rehabilitation.

She also spent some time performing hearing assessments for children in a private hospital whilst working with an ear nose and throat specialist.

Agnieszka graduated from The University of Melbourne with a Masters of Clinical Audiology in 2009.



Agnieszka Kosidlo

The tale of Tinnitus: BHA and Jan Logan jewellery launch

Did you know that hearing conditions costs the Australian economy more than a staggering \$12 billion annually?

Among these conditions is tinnitus, commonly understood as a constant ringing in the ears or an ongoing soundtrack in the head.

Together, BHA and Board Member Victoria Didenko, who has tinnitus, are taking a creative approach to raising the profile of this debilitating condition by launching My Ear Rings for Peace, a collaboration with leading Australian jewellery designer Jan Logan.

“The My Ear Rings for Peace campaign will talk about a serious disadvantage one in 10 Australians have,” explains BHA CEO Michele Barry.

“To have someone of such esteem such as Jan Logan kindly donate her time, energy and a percentage of sales towards this cause is an amazing opportunity for our organisation and those we endeavour to help.”

There’s no shortage of demand for this help, with tinnitus often under-recognised from individual to government levels.

“Whether they know it or not, everyone knows someone with tinnitus,” Ms Barry says.

“The fact that it receives so little attention from the government or health sector – both state and federal – goes to show that much of the community are suffering.

“To be able to raise awareness of tinnitus in such a beautiful way will help our organisation provide early support services for sufferers, for the hope of combating this frustration and often debilitating issue.”

Jan Logan, Founder and Director of her namesake business, represents the one in 10 Australians with tinnitus.

Ms Logan experienced the onset of a constant ringing in her ears following



ABOVE: Jan Logan, Victoria Didenko and guest at the My Ear Rings for Peace launch. RIGHT: Rob Mills, Jan Logan and Michele Barry.



an intrusive ear operation at age 18.

“As a child I suffered consistent earaches, and it was not until 18 that I underwent an intensive operation which involved taking a graft of skin from behind my left ear to cover the hole,” she says.

“Whilst the procedure was successful in eliminating the pain, I became almost deaf in that ear and began to suffer what is today known as tinnitus – that was over 50 years ago.”

According to Ms Logan, “tinnitus can be one of the most tiresome of symptoms – something that is not seen but is with you all the time, even in your quietest moments”.

“I am delighted to show my support for the My Ear Rings For Peace campaign, and hope that by donating 15 per cent of sales from my Arcadia Stud it will enable people to make

their ears beautiful on the outside, whilst giving them a sense of peace on the inside,” she adds.

My Ear Rings for Peace officially launched on October 21, with a private in-store event at Jan Logan’s flagship Melbourne store.

Guests were able to purchase the Arcadia Stud on the night, with 15 per cent of their payment donated to BHA.

To show your support for My Ear Rings for Peace and purchase nine carat gold, white gold or silver Arcadia Stud earrings, visit www.myearringsforpeace.org.au.

Earrings available until sold out.

Ask the BHA Hearing Advisors ...

Dear BHA Hearing Advisor,

My husband has a hearing loss and I have to go to hospital for an operation. I am worried that he won't hear the phone or the doorbell while I'm away. Is there anything we can get to help him?

– Nadia, Epping

Dear Karen,

In terms of phones, it is possible to get extra volume on both the ringer and earpiece. Telstra has a disability helpline (1800 068 424) which can advise about appropriate equipment.

As for doorbells, some are extra loud and can be moved from one room to another. There are many places specialising in devices such as these to help people with hearing problems.

Importantly, remember to check that your husband can hear the smoke alarm when he is in the bedroom and is not wearing his hearing aids. It may be worth considering whether special smoke alarms with visual warning and vibrating pads are needed.

Our advisory service is available to discuss your particular circumstances.

– BHA Hearing Advisor

Dear Hearing Advisor,

Where can I get good hearing aids? Some of my friends have very expensive hearing aids but don't wear them. I can't afford to waste money as I am on a pension.

– Gerald, Melbourne

Dear Gerald,

If you are on an Australian pension and

have a medical entitlement card, you will be eligible for free assessment and, if necessary, hearing aids through the Office of Hearing Services.

You will need to see your doctor who can make an application online and sign the medical clearance for you. For more information, visit www.hearingservices.gov.au.

Once the OHS receives your application, it will send you a voucher and list of approved outlets in your area where you can go for an assessment.

If a hearing aid is recommended, you can opt for the free ones, or 'top up' to a more expensive device which is not on the free list.

Don't feel pressured into topping up if you can't afford it.

There is nothing wrong with the free hearing aids provided that they are programmed correctly for you, and you should feel comfortable about this decision.

Hearing aids can take time to get used to and sometimes need adjustment after the initial fitting.

We would always recommend you (and your friends) go back to see the person who fitted them if you have problems and cannot wear them.

– BHA Hearing Advisor

If you have any questions for our Hearing Advisors, send them to 'Ask the Hearing Advisors', Better Hearing Australia (Vic), 5 High Street, Prahran VIC 3181. Alternatively, email victoria@betterhearing.org.au.

To book an appointment to see a Hearing Advisor, call 1300 BHA VIC (1300 242 842).



Ted Drowley

Vale Ted

It is with much sadness that we announce the passing of Ted Drowley in October.

Ted was a dedicated and much loved member, board member and past president of BHA.

We offer our sincerest condolences to his family and friends.

Your gift counts

For over 82 years, BHA has helped thousands cope with hearing loss.

For many, we are the only support available.

To continue our work, we need financial assistance.

As a registered charity, money donated to BHA can be claimed as a deduction on your tax return.

To donate to BHA, visit www.betterhearing.org.au.

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