



How BHA Supports Hearing Management

Mr De Vries was so overwhelmed when he went to an audiology clinic with the hearing aid in mind, only to be told that the one he selected wasn't appropriate for his needs and the more expensive option was much more suited to his requirements.

A recent article in *The Age* highlighted the plight of many people with a hearing loss and the process encountered when trying to purchase a hearing aid. Melbourne based, Mr Jan De Vries, 81, was interviewed for the article in which he talked about the issues he faced in his quest to obtain a hearing aid.

Jan contacted Better Hearing Australia (BHA) a not-for-profit service that helps people who have hearing loss because he was so overwhelmed with the experience and wanted to find out the differ-

ences in hearing aids available. At Better Hearing Australia, Audiologist Agnieszka Kosidlo, provided Jan with unbiased and independent information which focussed on his needs. Jan was then able to go and successfully purchase hearing aids that were suitable for his needs and budget.

Those eligible for a Government subsidy are entitled to free hearing aids. However if you don't fit into this group you must pay for your own hearing aids. These can cost anywhere from \$2,000 to \$10,000 depending on the features.

The worst thing about the inability to get hearing aids is the social exclusion and loneliness, lack of job opportunities and less interaction with family and friends. The best advice given is to

shop around. "A good audiologist can fix the above problems, but many pensioners don't realise they can shop around for one if their initial hearing problems aren't solved" says Michelle Barry, Chief Executive Officer of Better Hearing Australia, Victorian branch.

Mr De Vries has now been fitted with a hearing aid suitable to his needs and budget. His warning to other hearing impaired people is that the government process can be challenging, but it's worth shopping around.

For an impartial discussion about your hearing needs please contact the staff at Better Hearing Australia on 03 9510 1577 to arrange an appointment.

Alternatively email
victoria@betterhearing.org.au

Image by Wayne Taylor / Fairfax Media

How BHA enriched

Elizabeth's life

It has been quite a few years since Elizabeth Saunders was working in St Kilda Road as a dental nurse. It was at this time that she came across the Better Hearing Australia Lip reading classes. Elizabeth took on the classes and really enjoyed lip reading. Elizabeth made some wonderful friends with people who are synonymous with BHA's rich history.

After completing the Lip Reading classes Elizabeth decided to become a lip reading tutor which she did for many years.

Recently Elizabeth moved into a residential care facility in Carlton and it was at this time that Elizabeth needed to clear out her house. Elizabeth, along with her niece Jennifer cleared out the house and has kindly donated the meticulously kept tutoring plans and BHA memorabilia to our Victorian office. We will look at how to best display the memorabilia from Elizabeth.

Michele Barry, CEO and Jeanette Durlak, Office Administrator recently met with Elizabeth and her niece Jennifer at Elizabeth's accommodation in Carlton. We were delighted to hear about Elizabeth's experiences and how the skill of lip reading was one that she used even now.



A heartfelt Thank You to Elizabeth and her niece Jennifer for donating the lip reading tutor plans and books to Better Hearing Australia. It is appreciated.

ELDER ABUSE CONFERENCE

BHA Vic was delighted to be part of the Elder Abuse conference from 23-25 February at the Pullman, Melbourne on the Park. Too many people in aged care facilities neglect hearing care and we hoped that our presence would be a small step to eradicating that issue. BHA Vic now offers a training course in how to look after people that have hearing health issues.

We want to ensure that no one is left out of conversations which can be avoided by simply ensuring hearing aids are in proper working order.

We enjoyed meeting many who wanted to learn more about managing hearing health and we look forward to providing this training opportunity to them.



Hearing loss in aged care is often overlooked.

Did you know 80% of people over 80 have a hearing loss? Some people with a hearing loss suffer from isolation, loss of friendship, companionship and belonging and the inability to participate in activities, higher risk of falls and cognitive decline. The effects of unsupported hearing loss are many; difficulty communicating

with medical staff, misunderstanding information, and isolation and more frequent falls.

We should expect that aged care staff are able to support people manage hearing loss, right? But this is not often the case.

Communication is a basic human right; do you know anyone in care who is not supported to manage hearing loss? If so please speak up, ask the manager if they have a hearing

care plan, without support they might be left out of the conversation. If you know of anyone needing aged care training, please contact our office, we have been supporting hearing loss management since 1932.

Introducing Better Hearing Australia's Aged Care Training

Are your staff trained to be attentive to the needs of hearing impaired residents?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Demonstrate that your staff know how to support someone with a hearing condition.
(Standard 2.16) We can teach staff how to support hearing loss:

- Understand hearing loss
- Awareness of what clients hear
- Hearing Aids / Cochlear implants management
 - ⇒ How do hearing aids work?
 - ⇒ Cleaning
 - ⇒ Changing batteries
 - ⇒ Storage and care
 - ⇒ Trouble shooting
 - ⇒ Assistive Technology to support hearing loss.

Please call our office to find out more on 03 9510 1577

or victoria@betterhearing.org.au

IF YOU
HAVE
**HEARING
LOSS**
WE CAN
HELP

Free Hearing
Assessment
Service

Unbiased and
Independent

We also provide
Training for
Aged Care Staff

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www.betterhearing.org.au
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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Better Hearing Australia (VIC) branch is delighted to announce that we will once again be holding information sessions in 2016. The information sessions were extremely well received and gave visitors the opportunity to talk to the hearing advisors and topic specialist.

- Tinnitus, Friday 20th May 2016

- Assistive Technology, TBC

- Caring for your ears TBC

If there are other topics which would be of interest please contact us on 03 9510 1577 or email at victoria@betterhearing.org.au and we will endeavour to add additional topics.

The Better Hearing Australia National AGM will this year be held in Melbourne on Friday 7th October. Be sure to put the date in your diary.

ASK A HEARING ADVISOR

I have hearing aids which are helping me a lot, but I still find it difficult to hear when I go to church as the sound seems to echo around the place. Are there any devices that will help? Daphne, Ringwood.

Dear Daphne, Large spaces with hard surfaces can be difficult to manage. The sound bounces off the hard walls and other structures. Do you know if your hearing aids have a telecoil? This device is available in most behind the ear hearing aids but is not always activated when you are fitted with them. Your hearing aid supplier will be able to tell you if you have one.

The telecoil can be used in many public spaces (theatres, churches, cinemas, train stations, at counters in banks and other facilities). When you are in an area that is "looped" for a telecoil, you simply turn your hearing aid to the T (telecoil) position and all sound that is being picked up by the microphone is transmitted directly to your hearing aids. Ask your audiologist to activate the telecoil and then come into the BHA office in High Street, Prahran and we can show you how it works using the loop system we have fitted in our meeting room.

Condolences

On behalf of the Board of Management and members of Better Hearing Australia we would like to offer our sincerest condolences to ex Board Member Margaret Robinson on the passing of her husband Laurie.

Margaret is in our thoughts at this sad time.

Your Gift Counts

For over 84 years, BHA has helped thousands of people 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 tax deduction on your tax return.

To donate to BHA Vic visit the website at www.betterhearing.org.au