



## Better Hearing Australia (VIC) Christmas Appeal

We are looking for 100 heroes to donate \$100

Better Hearing Australia (VIC) is holding a Christmas appeal with a view to providing 13 refugees or asylum seekers the gift of hearing.

CEO Athina Georgiou thought of the concept after a discussion with audiologist Alina Stefanescu, who runs outreach clinics in Epping, Broadmeadows and Ringwood. These clinics deal predominantly with refugees and asylum seekers, some of whom are very recent arrivals to Australia.

Alina recently advised that clients receiving our outreach services are people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, asylum seekers, refugees, migrants, unemployed and job seeking individuals, as well as seniors looking for independent hearing testing and advice.

The outreach services provided by Better Hearing Australia (Vic) include hearing management and advice, hearing testing, tinnitus information and management, and hearing aid fitting and reprogramming through the Victorian Hearing Aid Bank.

Of all services delivered, the provision of hearing aids through Victorian Hearing Aid Bank aims to reduce the impact of hearing loss for the most marginalised and disadvantaged. The best example includes the refugees and newly arrived migrants with hearing loss that are not eligible for free hearing aid fittings through the Office of Hearing Services Program. For these individuals, learning and speaking English could present great challenges due to unaided hearing loss.

Once fitted with hearing aids through Victorian Hearing Aid Bank, they are able to perform better during English classes and at job interviews, increasing their chances of employment and boosting their self-confidence and social participation.

All you have to do is go to the Better Hearing Australia (VIC) Facebook page, find the 'Give the Gift of Christmas' post and follow the prompts – or just click [here!](#)

Your donation will go a long way to changing someone's life for the better.

All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.



# A message from the President ...

As 2017 draws to a close, it is timely to acknowledge and reflect on the year.

Better Hearing Australia (VIC)'s trusted name and brand awareness continues to live on in the hearing loss community however, we are now challenged with the balance of maintaining a sustainable social business while retaining the heart and soul of the organisation. As a Board we recognise the challenges that lay ahead in a time when only the strongest and most focused organisations will survive.



So what are we doing to face these challenges?

We are:

- continuing to work through the strategic intents outlined in our Strategic Plan
- continuing to identify the needs of the hearing loss community and the role we can play to support them
- continually improving our clinical governance and service delivery
- bringing targeted skills and experience to the board and staff
- building better communication with our members

Our CEO, Athina has worked tirelessly, not only to ensure our work is in line with our Strategic Plan, return the budget to a positive result and oversee clinical governance improvements, but has also met with many supporters (existing and potential), government representatives and community leaders to identify future partnerships, collaborations and opportunities. A big welcome to new members of the team – Jenny Smith, Kaushalya Troy and Anne Young. I would personally like to pay tribute to staff, both new and those who have departed, our volunteer Sub-Committee members for their ongoing support, our wonderful community partners for their passion and dedication and the board for their hard work and the immense time they volunteer to make Better Hearing Australia's values and mission a reality.

While this transition period presents significant challenges, it also presents great and exciting opportunities for the future of the organisation and we have a great team leading the way. We look forward to a busy but productive 2018! I, along with the Better Hearing Australia (VIC) Board and staff, wish you all a safe and happy Christmas season and we look forward to keeping in touch in the new year.

Georgie Stayches



## ... and the CEO

The past five months at Better Hearing Australia (VIC) have been very busy indeed! The organisation has been through an accreditation surveillance audit which is a requirement of the Department of Health and Human Services. The two standards which were examined were the Human Service Standards and the National Protocols for Disability Services. But for a minor non-conformity Better Hearing Australia (VIC) succeeded very well. This minor non-conformity has now been rectified it stands us in good stead for the full accreditation audit in December 2018.

My first AGM as CEO of the organisation was held on 21<sup>st</sup> November at the Eye and Ear on the Park in East Melbourne. The meeting was well attended, a new Board was elected, amendments were made to our Constitution and we heard from two very different speakers. Professor Elaine Saunders from Blamey Saunders hears gave an interesting account of the current developments in the audiology industry and retiring Board member Kaye Gooch provided a consumer insight into the hearing impaired world.

Next year holds many positive challenges as we work to improve the value offering of Better Hearing Australia (VIC) and toward placing our organisation at the leading edge of hearing management services in the community.

I would like to thank Georgie Stayches, President of the Better Hearing Australia (VIC) Board for her support and guidance and members of the Board for their support since I became CEO of this very important organisation. I would also like to thank our staff Alina Stefanescu, Kaushayla Troy, Jenny Smith, Sam Findlow and Anne Young for their great work and support over the past five months.

I wish all of our members and their families a peaceful, loving Christmas and a happy and prosperous New Year.

Athina Georgiou





## «TINNITUS AUSTRALIA»

TinnitusAustralia.org.au

The Tinnitus Australia alliance will become more active in 2018!

Quarterly meetings have been scheduled to take place, the first of which is on Tuesday 6 February at 5.30pm. Meetings will take place at Better Hearing House at 5 High Street Prahran.

Speakers experienced in the management of Tinnitus will provide expert information for those who suffer with this debilitating condition.

The meetings are open to all. If you wish to attend, or know someone who would benefit from these informative sessions, please contact the office on [victoria@betterhearing.org.au](mailto:victoria@betterhearing.org.au).

Keep an eye on our website [www.tinnitusaustralia.org.au](http://www.tinnitusaustralia.org.au) for further information.

Dates to remember:

**Tinnitus Awareness Week**  
5 – 11 February 2018

**Hearing Awareness Week**  
25 February to 3 March 2018

**World Hearing Day**  
Saturday 3 March 2018



### Mat Crompton

Mat Crompton was appointed to the Better Hearing Australia (VIC) Board in September 2017. He re-nominated at the Annual General Meeting held on 21 November and was re-elected.

Mat became aware of Better Hearing Australia (Vic) through fellow Board member Victoria Didenko, when they both worked on the 2015 Tinnitus Awareness week project 'My Ear Rings for Peace'.

Mat brings to the board a wealth of cross-sector marketing experience working for over 10 years for brands such as Mercedes and L'Oreal. He has worked with charities such as Melbourne's Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, however he recently joined an agency that focuses solely on social issues rather than big brands. He again points to 'My Ear Rings for Peace' as a contributing factor.

"The fulfilment I experienced with My Ear Rings for Peace, being part of a campaign that's sole purpose is to help people, was an epiphany. It was very powerful. I knew I needed to make a change after that." He hopes his brand and fundraising experience with Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, as well as his connections at his new agency, The Shannon Company, will help the BHA in their efforts for years to come.



### Kim Turudia

Kim was appointed to the Better Hearing Australia (VIC) Board at the AGM in November 2017.

Kim brings extensive healthcare management experience from over the last 25 years in the industry and looks forward to working with an organisation providing healthcare based services to improve the overall wellbeing of people.

Kim is currently the Medical Services Manager at Deakin University which involves managing the health clinics on campus which provide GP and allied health services to students and staff of the University.

In seeking a Board position Kim researched various agencies but felt that the guiding principles of Better Hearing Australia (VIC) including respect, diversity, partnerships, transparency and sustainability were aligned with the key principles she applies in her workplace and across her work teams.

The health care environment is facing change and disruption, technology is moving quickly and it is important that organisations and providers are agile and ready for change. With the predicted one in four people suffering hearing loss by 2050 the role and relevance of Better Hearing Australia (VIC) today and into the future becomes key to providing referral, information and services to many people in the community.





## 50 Years with Better Hearing Australia (VIC)

Life member Kaye Gooch provided a thought provoking insight into the history of Better Hearing Australia (VIC) at our AGM last month. Kaye resigned from the Better Hearing Australia (VIC) Board this year after 13 years of service and 50 years as a member! Following is an excerpt from her presentation.

*I first joined Better Hearing Australia (Victoria Branch) in 1964, when I was still in high school. I joined in order to learn lip reading, as my hearing was deteriorating. At that time, we were located in Russell Street, in a building occupied by the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The building has since been demolished, and the Hyatt Hotel now stands there in all I had a moderate hearing loss, and wore the cumbersome body-worn "Calaid" hearing aid, issued by Government to children in the 1950's and '60's. By the time I was in my teens, my hearing was deteriorating, so I came to Better Hearing Australia (VIC) in the hope that lip reading would assist with communication.*

*In my twenties, I lost my hearing completely, and was in very lonely isolation. Receiving cochlear implants restored my hearing considerably, and the implants have enabled me to lead a much fuller social life.*

*Many hearing-impaired people in those days, only obtained a moderate help with their hearing aids, and many felt awkward at "hearing" social events. So, Better Hearing Australia (VIC) hosted a thriving social support program. We had reel-to-reel film nights, indoor carpet bowls and other activities. At these social activities, we all felt accepted, and there were plenty of visual aids to help with communication.*

*But by the 1980's, things were changing. The coming of the cochlear implant, which gave hearing to people with sensorineural hearing loss, and the development of more powerful hearing aids, meant that many hearing-impaired people were now able to hear much better.*



*People became less reliant on Better Hearing Australia (VIC) as a social support, and used it more as an "advisory centre" for advice on using this new hearing technology. This in turn, led to a sharp decline in membership.*

*One woman said, on being invited to join Better Hearing Australia (VIC), "No, I don't want to join anything, I just want the advice I need to manage my hearing loss, and move on". So Better Hearing Australia (VIC) - along with similar hearing loss organisations around the world - have changed from being "social support" groups to being hearing loss "advisory centres" and hearing loss information clearing-houses."*

*Some years ago, the various vision loss organisations in Australia - Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind, Association for the Blind etc., merged to become one entity, Vision Australia. This led to a more cohesive service to people with vision impairment, and eliminated wasteful duplication.*

*We need to ask ourselves, "Is Better Hearing Victoria - and nationally as well - still relevant today?"*

*I believe the time has come for Better Hearing Australia to perhaps close, and merge with other hearing loss organisations, such as Vicdeaf and Deafness Forum. By becoming a single entity, we could provide a more comprehensive service to people with all types of hearing loss, and work to ensure that people using all communication methods (Auslan and oral communication) and people using all types of hearing devices (hearing aids, cochlear implants and BAHA bone attached hearing aids) would have easy, affordable access to the hearing technology they needed.*

Better Hearing Australia (VIC) has served the hearing impaired community wonderfully over many decades - but vastly improved hearing technology has altered the landscape drastically. So - let's unite with other hearing-loss groups, to bring about a strong, cohesive service to all hearing-impaired Australians!



The office of  
Better Hearing Australia (VIC)  
will close on  
Thursday 21 December 2017  
and reopen on  
Wednesday 3 January 2018.

Coming up in 2018 ...

## World Hearing Day

Saturday 3 March 2018

**HEARING** awareness  
**WEEK**

From Sunday 25 February 2018

TINNITUS AWARENESS WEEK

5 – 11 February 2018

Better Hearing Australia (VIC) Inc  
Address: Better Hearing House, 5 High Street, Prahran, VIC 3181  
Phone: 1300 BHA VIC (1300 242 842)  
Email: victoria@betterhearing.org.au  
Visit our website: www.betterhearing.org.au  
Find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/betterhearingaustralia



Find us on  
**Facebook**

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