

BETTER HEARING TODAY

Members' Newsletter



AUTUMN WELCOME

A warm welcome to all our readers for the first edition of Better Hearing Today in 2019. We are committed to bringing you the latest on industry updates, community meetings, business developments and government initiatives that will be of interest to all members and the larger community.

Enjoy the newsletter,

The Better Hearing Australia (VIC) Team



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

I'm pleased to share my first CEO message for our quarterly newsletter, Better Hearing Today. Since starting in January, I have been struck by the significant history of this organisation, the great people involved and the potential for the future. In this message, I would like to share with you some of what I have learned, BHA VIC team news, some thoughts on the future and pose some questions.

I was proud to be a stakeholder in the development of the *Roadmap for Hearing Health*, co-created by the Hon Ken Wyatt AM MP and the hearing sector. The Roadmap will set the course for how hearing, hearing loss and Deafness can be addressed into the future at all Government levels and prioritise areas of focus for organisations, research and funding. BHA VIC find that our values align strongly with the underlying principles of the roadmap and will endeavour to contribute to several of the domains. We will also be guided by this document.

The Royal Commissions into Aged Care, Mental Health and Abuse of Disabled are equally important in shaping our future. I bring a strong background in implementing person- and family-centred care, and these commissions remind us of the importance of individual stories and experience and ensure that we are meeting your needs.

I have also had the pleasure of meeting with the *Commissioner for Senior Victorians*, Gerard Mansour and Emma Kealy, *Shadow Minister for Mental Health* to discuss BHAs unique position as a charity whose focus is eliminating the impact of hearing conditions by going beyond the device. Most importantly, I have had the opportunity to meet with some of our members who I have learned a great deal from. I look forward to continuing these conversations about the future of BHA VIC.

On 3 March, *World Hearing Day* launched *Hearing Awareness Week* starting a global discussion about the impact of hearing loss and encouraging people to go out and get their hearing checked. During this important week, we presented educational seminars to the community and shared our messages via community radio and social media.

I also enjoyed an hour conversation on ABCs *Nightlife* program alongside Dr Brent Edwards, Director of the *National Acoustic Laboratories*, which is a great overview of hearing loss, the ear and hearing aids – you can listen [via this clickable link](#).

I would like to welcome our new community audiologist, Natalie Braude who joined the team in March. Natalie brings expertise in community education and adult hearing care and will be educating over 65's community groups across the state in the coming months.

I'm also delighted to announce that we are again partnering with *Swinburne University*, in which the *Diploma of Event Management* students will host a trivia fundraiser event for us. We'll update you with date, time, venue confirmation and ticket pricing next month. The purpose of this event is to raise funds to give ten asylum seekers or refugees access to the gift of hearing through our *Hearing Aid Bank*.

Along with the Board, I am working on clarifying the direction of the organisation into the future. While this will be finalised by the AGM later in the year, I would like to flag that your input is needed here, and I will be sending a questionnaire shortly that asks for your views on key areas. I look forward to continuing the conversation in the coming months. Until then, all the best.

Caitlin



WELCOME, NATALIE BRAUDE

Natalie is a highly-experienced Audiologist with over 13 years of practice in both Victoria and the UK. She is a strong advocate for patient-centered care, and draws upon a wealth of knowledge in the areas of hearing loss and tinnitus management.

Natalie has joined the Better Hearing Australia VIC team as our Community Education Audiologist. Natalie is passionate about helping people better understand the impact of hearing loss, and is excited to share her energy and passion through presentations to organisations across Victoria.



MEMBER'S MORNING TEA- HEARING AWARENESS WEEK

We caught up with some of our members for a morning tea to celebrate *Hearing Awareness Week* in March. It was a great opportunity for members to meet our new CEO, voice their ideas & concerns about the state of hearing health in Australia, learn about board updates and discuss the exciting future of our organisation.

We look forward to the next event and building our future strategy around member feedback.



MEETING WITH GERARD MANSOUR

Our CEO met with Gerard Mansour, *Commissioner for Senior Victorians* during Hearing Awareness Week to discuss the important role of hearing care in the wellbeing & participation of Senior Victorians.

The challenges that exist in the hearing sector around access and effectiveness were discussed - and the steps necessary to ensure older people have these services available across the state. Gerard is a passionate advocate for hearing health & wellbeing for older people, which is discussed in the 2016 report *Ageing is Everyone's Business*, [download via this clickable link](#).

The Aged Care Royal Commission & Mental Health Royal Commission are important factors that will help transform how the sector operates in the future - and we look forward to working with Gerard to ensure quality services for senior people.



MEETING WITH EMMA KEALY MP

We met with Emma Kealy for Lowan - *Shadow Minister for Mental Health* - to discuss the importance of raising awareness on the link between hearing loss and mental health issues.

To support this, clinical audiologist Emma Laird wrote about the latest research on how using hearing aids or a cochlear implant could lead to better mental health. Read via [this clickable link](#) or check our website.



HERBERT STREET VILLAGE PRESENTATION

We had the pleasure of presenting a hearing health & wellness seminar to the seniors group at the *Dandenong Herbert Street Village* in March.

We spoke about general hearing loss & tinnitus management strategies, how to pick the right audiologist, accessing hearing loop services in public spaces, and discussed the importance of persevering with hearing aids.

We look forward to presenting for the group again in the future.



DISABILITY EMOJI ANNOUNCEMENT

Disability emojis are finally coming to smartphones in the second half of 2019. This is a massive step towards better representation and inclusion for people with disabilities, as digital & social media have become hugely influential.

Hearing aids, wheelchairs, prosthetic limbs, guide dogs and more will feature in the update. We can't wait to start using these new emojis and better represent the people and groups that we advocate for.

You can view the full list of new emojis [via this clickable link](#) or visit the [Emojipedia website](#).



HEARING ACCESSIBILITY- INSIGHTS & REVIEWS

Inside the music

Film review

Reviewed by Virtual Sharon

The film begins in silence.

Scrolling text tells us that Beethoven almost completely lost his hearing yet he never lost his ability to create music. In 1820, he obtained a device that transformed how he perceived sound. This was his hearing machine and sadly, it no longer exists.

Inside the Hearing Machine presents the remaking of Beethoven's hearing device and demonstrates what he may have heard when using it. It's an intriguing documentary with sublime music and great poignancy. It excerpts Beethoven's famous Heiligenstadt Testament where he speaks of his social isolation and the embarrassment caused by having to admit that he is deaf. His torment over the "demon in his ears" is profound.

While I was intrigued by the quest for Beethoven's mysterious hearing aid, the most illuminating part of the film for me was the conversation with Robin Wallace, an eminent Beethoven scholar, who talks about how Beethoven complained of "loudness recruitment". He explains: "that this is the tendency of the auditory centres to compensate for the inability to hear certain frequencies by registering other frequencies as abnormally loud."

For me, this was a light-bulb moment. My mother and father frequently ask people to speak louder and then with irritation complain about unnecessary shouting. I'm surprised that I haven't come across this term before. So, now I have my own quest - to find out more about loudness recruitment and see whether anything can be done to help my parents and me.

The week I thought that I had lost my hearing

Written by Faik Demir

I woke up one morning and my ears would not stop ringing. No matter how hard I tried to ignore the sound, it would not stop. I thought that I had caused irrevocable damage to my hearing and immediately began to blame myself for being so irresponsible in the past. It was a negative reaction and I feared what the future may hold.

Why did I listen to my iPod all day during high school, why did I go closer to the speaker during gigs, and most importantly why did I never consider the effects of my hearing health?

During that early part of the week, my ears continued to ring on and off, but I chose to remain isolated. When I turned on Netflix, I knew that I had to switch on the subtitles because the ringing was making me nervous & frustrated, and I didn't want to mishear anything. When I went out to dinner with friends that week, I made sure that I was facing them with the better ear. When someone suggested going to a pub I knew was much louder and not suited for conversation, I suggested we go to a more 'intimate' one.

It dawned on me, this is what many people inadvertently experience every day and don't seek help for.

Read the full article [via this clickable link](#) or visit our website.



GIPPSLAND EDUCATION SEMINARS



We're taking our community education seminars to the Gippsland region in May and June. Collaborating with *Gippsland Audiology*, we'll be speaking about the latest in hearing technology, government updates & tinnitus management strategies. Keep up to date via our website & social media in the next month.

ROADMAP FOR HEARING HEALTH



The newly released *Roadmap for Hearing Health* is now available [via this clickable link](#) or you can visit the *Department of Health* website. The Roadmap will shape the short & long term future of hearing healthcare in Australia and was developed by key stakeholders including our CEO, Dr Caitlin Barr & National President, Tony Whelan.

SAVE THE DATE - TRIVIA NIGHT 2019

We're excited to announce that for the second year, the *Diploma of Event Management* students from *Swinburne University* will be running a trivia night fundraiser event for Better Hearing Australia VIC. Save June 4th-6th in your calendar and we'll update you next month to confirm venue, times, date & ticketing info.



We look forward to updating you on all things hearing health in the Winter edition of Better Hearing Today.

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