CONGRATULATIONS
PROF GIBSON

The CICADA committee and members are looking forward to congratulating Professor Bill Gibson, or ‘Prof’ as we call him, at the launch of his biography on Sunday 12th March at our first gathering for 2017, held as usual at the Sydney Cochlear Implant Centre (SCIC). The imminent release of this book is not the only cause for celebration, as TINA ALLEN reports.

At 73 years old, Bill Gibson has reached a stage in life when many people would be content to sit back and relax. However he feels that he still has something to contribute to both his patients, who he continues to consult a few days per week, and the medical community through his speaking engagements at conferences around the world – including a Vertigo Academy meeting in Mumbai on 2th–4th March this year.

In May 2016, Bill received a citation at the Conference on Cochlear Implants and Other Implantable Auditory Technologies in Toronto, Canada, for: ‘Lifelong leadership and staunch advocate for the implementation of cochlear implant technology in the treatment of the severely hearing impaired. Early proponent for universal neonatal screening using evoked response technology. Proponent for the establishment of easier access by virtue of multiple implant centres in Australia.’

A couple of weeks ago on 26 January, Bill Gibson received another award when his AM was elevated to an AO as part of the Australia Day Honours. Several of his colleagues had been actively pursuing this much-deserved elevation and I feel proud to have played a small part by contributing one of the letters of support, in which I listed a summary of his key achievements.

Unlike other great men, who delight in blowing their own trumpet, Bill is humble about his achievements. In an email, he said he felt ‘abashed’ to be informed that the producer of Channel 7’s ‘Daily Edition’ had invited him to their Martin Place studio to be one of the people who will be interviewed. This interview will be wonderful publicity for his biography as will any other interviews and articles that appear in the media over the coming months.

Although it was hoped that Bill Gibson’s biography would be published much earlier than March 2017, it is the perfect time to be telling his story as he reaches a golden stage when his achievements are being recognised and rewarded. Unlike some biographies, the book about Bill Gibson will require no postscript as the various threads in his story come full circle by the final pages. I challenge anyone not to ‘tear up’ when they read the closing poem by a young woman named Amelia Hardy about her ‘brave surgeon, sent from above’ who worked on her ears when she was two years old and ‘filled them with love’.

CICADA commissioned Bill Gibson’s biography to pay homage to a man who has done so much for humanity and the lives of his patients, including many CICADA members. Since becoming a doctor at twenty-three years old and a qualified surgeon at twenty-seven, he has never stopped striving to care for his patients. He decided upon a medical career for all the right reasons and since emigrating to Australia in 1983, has never charged a gap to his patients above what their private health care funds pay for a procedure. His selfless attitude was one of the reasons I chose to include a quote for the front of the book from another great humanitarian, the ophthalmologist, Fred Hollows: ‘The basic attribute of mankind is to care for each other’.

The Fred Hollows quote appears opposite the foreword, which was kindly supplied by Professor Dame Marie Bashir AD CVO and includes the following closing words: ‘Professor Bill Gibson is an outstanding man, a great humanitarian and deserving of this well-researched biography about his exceptional contribution to medicine’. Professor Clark also kindly supplied a quote for the book and told me that his friendship with Bill was forged due to the similar obstacles they faced in the early days of establishing their respective cochlear implant programs in Victoria and New South Wales.

“Bill Gibson: pioneering bionic ear surgeon” will hopefully preserve for future generations the story of a world-leading surgeon who continues to maintain close associations with his patients, including the forty-plus cochlear implant recipients whose stories appear in the book. The book has a photo section with thirty-two illustrations including a photo taken by the author of the CICADA committee in their clubroom at the SCIC (see below) A book order form has been mailed to CICADA members and can be downloaded from: www.cicada.org.au ($25 + P&H). Copies of the paperback and e-book are also available to purchase from on-line booksellers and bookshops (RRP $35).
I am happy to see so many familiar faces in our crowd here today. We have had a good year of BBQ days and Morning Teas. Thanks to our dedicated committee for turning up and bringing such lovely food.

I think the main strength of CICADA is providing a warm welcome to visitors, answering their questions about living with cochlear implants, helping them to make the most of their hearing and introducing them to others who have been through the same experience.

This year we have continued to work with other organisations such as Hear For You and Deafness Forum with their “Break The Sound Barrier” campaign, to help build awareness of issues surrounding hearing loss. Deafness Forum is trying to get Hearing Health listed as one of the top ten National health priorities.

Jan Pryor from the DIDI Foundation introduced us to the work that DIDI are doing in Nepal, helping women to receive some further education and teaching them new business skills. They are also supporting a deaf school and helping to rebuild schools after the earthquake.

National Disability Insurance Scheme
The NDIS is slowly being rolled out to new areas. You can go online to check if you are in an area that is eligible for applications to the NDIS. https://www.ndis.gov.au/

If you are under or almost 65 you should register as soon as you are eligible. Hearing loss seems to be low on the priority list at this current time, though if you are registered you will still have to submit a plan to apply for funding for things deemed necessary to get you on an equal platform with a hearing peer. It might be possible to get funding for upgrades in the future.

Biography of Prof Gibson
This is currently in the editing and layout process and we have a cover photo finalized for the book. We expect the book will be ready to launch in early 2017. Look out for further information and order form to be sent to you early in 2017.

Our Website…. Has a new look. It is easier to navigate and has more relevant and current information. The Hearing Guide so carefully put together by Neville Lockhart is readily and easily accessible. Many thanks to our webmistress Pat Mitchell for her work on the website. We want CICADA members to make suggestions if you have any ideas for the website, such as your own implant story (you can be anonymous) or a relevant experience that you want others to know about.

The Calendar shows social events for Illawarra, Gladesville, and Western Sydney and there are opportunities for other CICADA Groups to post events if they want. PLEASE do help us with this, as it is only from input from everyone that we can have an interesting and informative site.
CICADA Australia Inc.
26th Annual General Meeting
Sunday 6th November

The Cicada AGM saw the following office bearers elected to the Cicada committee.

President       Sue Walters
Secretary        Judy Cassell
Treasurer        Chris Boyce
Public Officer   Karen Cooper
Lawrie Custer
Anne Dernow
Max Houterman
Alan Jones
Cecilia Kramar

CICADA would like to welcome new committee members Max Houterman, Anne Dernow and Lawrie Custer. We also welcome back Lawrie Custer who has previously served on the committee. Thanks for volunteering! We appreciate your commitment and look forward to working with you for the benefit of all.

Cicada’s Annual Raffle was drawn by Prof Gibson. Congratulations to the 2016 winners and “Thank You” to those members who continue to support Cicada by purchasing our annual raffle tickets.

Joy van der Poorten - First Prize $500
Constance Gosper  - Second Prize $200
Denis Munari     - Third Prize $100

Cicada received this note from Joy following her 1st prize win in the raffle.

Thank you so much for the wonderful prize cheque from the Cicada raffle. I was shocked and delighted. My implant was turned on early October, and in fact I had just been to SCIC and purchased the Aqua kit after a follow up visit with my Audiologist.

I am so grateful to have the support of Cicada members and information as I gain confidence with the implant and a new world of sound.

With very warm appreciation. Joy van der Poorten.

Please note that there was an error with the functions dates for 2017 to be held at Gladesville. There WILL be a morning tea on the first Thursday in April.

Many thanks to the 2016 committee members, together with unofficial members, John Boyce and Robyn Jones, plus the small band of volunteers including Peter and Maria Keegan, for their hard work throughout 2016.

Don’t forget March 12th – The launch of Professor Bill Gibson’s book, Commissioned by Cicada. We are excitedly looking forward to the big day, to be held at SCIC Gladesville.

This is our first function of the year and replaces our usual Guest Speaker/BBQ format. Keep the orders for the book rolling in. Even if you are going to pay for and pick up the book on the day, if you can send in the order form, it will help us have idea of how many to cater for.

The committee members look forward to seeing you on the day.
On Thursday I went to Cochlear HQ to make a presentation. It was at a regular staff meeting and was for staff involved in the production of implants and processors. They don’t regularly meet implant recipients but this was a great opportunity to tell my story, meet those people and for them to meet an implantee.

The Manager of Production gave the intro and there was a slide with a list of names of people who had been with Cochlear 5, 10, 15 and 20 years!! Once you’re a Cochlear engineer, you stick around. They are a dedicated and experienced group of people!

Then it was my turn, I told the story of why I went deaf (cancer treatment, radiotherapy and chemotherapy) and what being implanted after I went completely deaf means to me. I showed my switch-on movie, and got a laugh or two!

Then when I had finished, another list was put up by the Production Manager. This one was still a substantial list, the list of people who had been involved in the manufacture of my particular devices, the very devices inside my head!! They were asked to stand when they recognized their name on the list and so I was able to see their faces and thank them, almost individually, for the work they had done to enable my cochlear experience.

Then we had a little Q&A session where they asked me about facets of my implant story, “Which one do you prefer, left or right?” (Neither, both work together), and “How do you compare natural hearing to implant hearing?” (It’s good but I am still deaf, it’s different to natural hearing)

Then we had a photo session where I was surrounded with those who had made my devices!!

It was such an emotional day, almost as emotional as the first switch-on, depicted in part in the movie, which I hope they enjoyed, and realized that that was the fruit of their labour!

I can highly recommend the experience to other implantees and also other branches of cochlear around the world, although it might be difficult. I think the engineers are all based in Australia!

Thank you to the dedicated staff and my ex-Audiologist Extraordinaire (you know who you are!)

0419250833 - (I’m deaf, SMS)

Morris Dancing

Black Joak Morris performs the traditional village folk dancing of the English Cotswolds. The group provided some lively entertainment for our AGM, as well as screening a PowerPoint display, highlighting some of the different steps and types of dances they perform. Morris dancing is fresh and varied and their talented and knowledgeable musicians provided the live music. One of the older musicians said he used to be a Morris Dancer until his knees gave out and now he enjoys accompanying them with his concertina!

The dancing ranges from single-person jigs to nine-person spectacles and some dances involve hitting sticks together as if they are fighting with swords. It is an ancient tradition associated with fertility rites and celebration of the seasons. It is also a living tradition, and the group performs many dances written recently and by Australian sides, including themselves! The Joakers are a large energetic side that couple athletic display with bright costumes, loud bells on their knees and a hat which they each decorate with their own creative ingenuity!

They can sometimes be seen busking, dancing on street corners in Newtown or The Rocks in Sydney, or doing workshops and performances at various Folk Festivals.

Thanks to Black Joak Morris for their great work!

What a Day!

John Couani

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NSW Support Groups

Illawarra

What a great day we all had at the Cicada Illawarra Christmas event for 2016 at Shellharbour. We could not have asked for a better day. The sun was shining, weather was perfect, and there was plenty of catching up and answering questions about Cochlear Implants as well.

These days are a wonderful opportunity for potential recipients and implantees to learn from others and to ask any questions they may have about living with a Cochlear Implant. Along with this come the new friendships, which I am sure we all very much enjoy, and lots of laughs as well.

To David and Bob in particular, on behalf of the group, we would like to thank you for the wonderful work you do to keep this group going from strength to strength. To all the volunteers that bring along nibbles and cakes, and make the day even more scrumptious a big thank you too.

On behalf of Robert and I, and the beautiful Lions Hearing Dog Sydney, we hope everyone has a safe and Merry Christmas and we hope to meet you all again at the next event at the Illawarra Live Steamers on 26th February 2017.

Faye Yarroll

The Escapees – “young adults” with cochlear implants & friends

2016 - What a year it has been for the CICADA ESCAPEES!! The group had their last event in December with the unique dining experience at a Sydney Korean BBQ restaurant. It was just awesome to see the escapees having fun and exciting as everyone got a turn becoming chef for the night cooking their own meats and vegetables on the BBQ plates at our tables.

Sue Walters, president of Cicada surprised all of us by joining in for the dinner event and it was lovely having her there. She shared some great stories and tips for the escapees, especially with getting most out of hearing in difficult situations. It was a noisy restaurant!!

Reflecting on the year 2016, the group had a great time participating in the following events: Day out at Bondi Beach, Wet n Wild Sydney, Sydney Day Hike/Walk, Sky Zone Trampoline Park at Alexandria, Ice Skating at Liverpool Catholic Club Sports Complex, Sculptures by the Seas at Bondi and concluded the year with the Korean BBQ Dinner.

We all hope to see familiar and new faces in 2017!

Northern Rivers

Our 2016 Christmas party was well attended. Everyone contributed to an amazing spread of delicious food. We even had barista made coffee, made by two accomplished baristas (Sheliya and Paul Van Buggenum). It was a great night that was enjoyed by all.

Many thanks to those who provided the awesome food and those who travelled long distances to attend. Also to Seacoast Church for freely providing us with such great facilities to use.

For information about the group and their meeting dates contact: Sheliya Van Buggenum. New contact details: sheliyavan@yahoo.com
Western Sydney

Western Sydney continues to run regular get togethers at Doonside as well a regular morning teas at Penrith SCIC.

For details of 2017 activities contact Sean and Margaret Sewell on Mobile +614 2521 5654 or 041 5205 877 Judy Tutty – Co-coordinator 043 704 9452 for more information.

Bits and Pieces

Flying Tip

If you suffer from pain in your ears when flying (ascending or descending mostly) because your ears do not adapt well to the change in air pressure, think about having your ears cleaned before you fly.

Wax in the ears can stop the eardrum from moving properly and the ears may not be able to equalise the pressure inside. If you have cochlear implants, you may not notice that you have accumulated wax in your ears, as it doesn’t affect your hearing like it does with people who hear acoustically. YOU can use the commercially available eardrops to soften the earwax so it will move on, or see your doctor or ENT.

If you are susceptible to sinus congestion, nasal spray like Drixine can be used in the nose about ½ an hour before you take off, to clear your sinuses so that the pressure in the Eustachian tube can equalise better. There are various sinus medications, but you should also check with your doctor to make sure they will not affect any other medications you are taking.

Some people claim that earplanes, a type of earplug that slows down the rate of pressure change in the ear, are effective in reducing the pain in the ears that can affect some people when flying.

Been to the MOVIES Lately??

I am often asked about accessing captions on mainstream new-release movies.

Many movies these days come with closed captions that have to be switched on if you want to see them. However most cinemas choose NOT to switch on the captions because some members of the general public find captions distracting.

Deaf Cinema Club arrange events where they hire a whole theatre and have the captions displayed openly so you can follow the spoken word easily. You can sign up for email alerts to their events https://www.facebook.com/deafsocietynsw/posts/625967900841889

Another option is to go to your local cinema and find out if they have Captiview, which is a device that you can arrange to borrow from the ticket counter. It fits into the cup-holder on your seat and has a flexible stalk fitted with a small LED screen that displays captions on closed caption movies. You position the small screen in your line of view under the big movie screen. However, you need to learn how this system works. Some large cinemas may have 1 out of their 6 cinemas where this device can be used. The movie itself has to have closed captions available on the actual movie disc. If you go to your local cinema and talk to the manager, they should be able to tell you if they have the Captiview device available, which of their cinemas can access the technology and how to go about using the device so you can read the closed captions. They may have, for example, Cinema 3, their largest theatre fitted with the Captiview technology and they may show the latest release movie in that particular cinema only the first week of its release, so you have to be keeping track of all this information. Many people find that Captiview is not very practical and the small LED screen is difficult to line up and read the words while watching the movie. I think it requires a bit of practise.

Give the cinema feedback on your experience!!

Another option is of course to see foreign movies, which have English subtitles!

Sue Walters

Greetings For The New Year

A warm welcome to 2017!!

There was some news announced late last year that the first national curriculum for AUSLAN, Australian Sign Language, the official language of the Deaf community is to be rolled out in schools across Australia. The Deaf community has lobbied for this for many years, so it is quite a breakthrough and is welcomed as a step towards equality for the signing Deaf.

Hearing students will be able to learn AUSLAN too, so this is a chance to learn a second language and appreciate the different grammatical structure of a visual language. What a great idea!

Outside of increasing your social network to be more inclusive of signing deaf friends, it would be of great value in those noisy places where you cannot hear well anyway, due to loud music and background noise. Think about it!

Another piece of news to share is that the Australian Government’s Standing Committee on Health, Aged Care and Sport announced an Inquiry into Hearing Health and Wellbeing of Australia, due to the significant incidence of hearing loss in our population and the related social and economic costs. Submissions were due 23rd December 2016. CICADA Committee put forward comments regarding costs of upgrade processors and maintenance, better access in the way of visual signage and audiloop systems in public places, also that a national public awareness campaign about hearing loss, as well as prevention, would be of great benefit to Australians.

I think it is up to all of us to advocate and create awareness of how hearing loss affects one. Be proud of your cochlear implant and show it off! A lot of hard work has gone into creating this miracle of modern medicine and technology and with 32 years of experience of “bionic hearing” I still do think it is a miracle. You do have to keep working hard at listening and paying attention and there is always room for improvement, but by informing others about the issues on hearing loss, we can help get the word out into our communities.

Sue Walters

Laughter is the Best Medicine

That Sinking Feeling

A man and woman were having a romantic candlelit dinner in a upmarket restaurant when the waiter noticed the man slowly sliding out of the chair and onto the floor underneath the table. The woman seemed not to notice as he disappeared out of sight.

The waiter not quite knowing what to do went across to the table and discreetly whispered, “Pardon me Madam, but I think your husband is under the table.”

“No he isn’t” the woman replied eyeing the waiter calmly, “My husband just walked through the door.”
HEALS program gives Aboriginal children access to surgery, therapy for hearing loss
Dec 2016 Sydney Morning Herald

Latoya Terry couldn't understand why her toddler Saraya was ignoring her. When the mother-of-two called her daughter, she would get no response. "I thought she wasn't listening to me," Ms Terry said. "Turns out she literally couldn't hear." Like a disproportionately large number of Aboriginal children, Saraya had hearing loss brought on by a severe middle ear infection (otitis media). Saraya, now five, had contracted ear infections every couple of months for the first years of her life. "They would be quite painful for her and she was on antibiotics a lot," said Ms Terry from Wagga Wagga. The run of infections meant Saraya didn't have her hearing tested until she was four, when she was referred to a specialist.

More than 40 per cent of urban Aboriginal children under eight have significant ear problems and speech and language impairments, according to the SEARCH study, the largest long-term analysis of health and wellbeing among this demographic. The rate of ear disease and hearing loss among Indigenous Australians is 10 times that of the non-Indigenous population. Hearing infections left untreated can lead to hearing loss, speech and language delays, and can severely handicap their ability to thrive in school.

Hearing problems among Aboriginal youth have been linked to the high Indigenous incarceration rate in Australia. About 94 per cent of Indigenous prisoners in the Northern Territory suffered impaired hearing, compared with 45 per cent of the wider Indigenous population.

But a NSW Health-funded program, the Hearing Ear Health And Language Services (HEALS), is bridging the gap for Aboriginal families struggling to get their children's hearing problems addressed. HEALS has provided speech and language services and surgery to almost 800 urban Aboriginal children since it was launched in 2013 in partnership with Aboriginal community controlled health services, SAX Institute researchers and the state's hospitals.

Cochlear™ is excited to announce that the Nucleus® Kanso® Sound Processor is now available!

The Kanso Sound Processor is an off-the-ear sound processor that’s so discreet it’s barely noticeable and so small and comfortable you can forget you’re wearing it. This offers greater confidence so you can live your life, your way.

Incorporating the same industry-leading technology as the Nucleus 6 Sound Processor and compatible with our life enhancing accessories, the Kanso Sound Processor makes it even easier for you to experience the joy of A+ hearing. We will be offering the Kanso Sound Processor as an accessory to existing customers* and at this stage it will not be available for candidates. Kanso is not currently reimbursed by health funds.

"Since having the Kanso I feel a lot more confident. I’m not self-conscious and life is easy again. I love everything about it.”
- Alison, Kanso recipient

Please visit the myCochlear™ Online Store at www.cochlear.com/au/mycochlear to order your Kanso now!

For more information please visit our website www.cochlear.com/au/kanso

*The Kanso Sound Processor is compatible with all Cochlear Nucleus implants except the Nucleus 22 implant, due to the Kanso Sound Processor’s size and coil type. The Cochlear Nucleus Hybrid acoustic component is not compatible with the Kanso Sound Processor.

The Kanso Sound Processor is not intended to be used by Hybrid L24 Cochlear Implant recipients who receive benefit from the acoustic component. Cochlear, Nucleus, Kanso, Hear now. And always and the elliptical logo are either trademarks or registered trademarks of Cochlear Limited. © 2017
Isabella ready to start big school thanks to cochlear implant
Jan 2017 daily telegraph.com.au southern courier

Five year old Isabella Walsh was diagnosed with hearing loss at birth but thanks to the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children and great Aussie invention - the cochlear implant - she is ready to start big school. The Canadian-born Randwick resident was diagnosed with mild to moderate hearing loss following the newborn screening test and eventually it emerged she had Pendred’s Syndrome, a disorder that causes deafness. “When Mel and I heard the news our first born had hearing loss we were devastated,” Isabella’s father Simon Walsh said.

“There is no history of hearing loss in our family so it was a total shock. We had no family support nearby as we were living in Toronto at the time, so this made it harder again.” At nine months, Isabella was fitted with hearing aids and in 2014 she received a cochlear implant in her left ear. Mr Walsh said his eldest daughter, who has a little sister Elodie, was experiencing a “new world of sound” thanks to the SCIC Cochlear Implant Program run by the RIDBC. The next big step for Isabella is starting at Waverley Public School later this month.

“I think for us, and probably like most parents, we were concerned about when or if she would be emotionally ready to start school given what she has been through,” Mr Walsh said. “This all fell into place during the year, and she is now more than ready... The support we have received from everyone at RIDBC has made a huge difference and we now feel confident that Isabella has a bright future ahead of her.”

MED-EL Tips and Tricks
Changing the microphone cover of the SONNET audio processor

The microphone cover protects the two microphones in the SONNET from moisture and dust. It is recommended to replace it every three months, when the microphone openings appear dirty or when you experience degraded sound quality.

The microphone cover should either be dried or replaced when the microphone openings have become wet as this may degrade sound quality.

To replace the microphone cover proceed as follows:

Watch how to change SONNET’s microphone cover with our easy hands on video tutorial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gqA47NqvbNY