

CICADA BUZZ

INTERIM NEWSLETTER JUNE 2020

Cicada Gatherings for the Balance of 2020

After careful consideration, the Cicada committee has made the decision to cancel all remaining **Morning teas** and **BBQ's** for the balance of 2020, including the AGM in November.

Even though cases of Covid-19 are very small at the moment, there is a very real prospect that there will be a spike in numbers as restrictions are lifted. We are very mindful that many of our members and those that attend our functions are at the age where they are more vulnerable to the virus, which has strongly influenced our decision.

This means that all being well, we can start afresh in 2021. You can keep up to date by visiting our website, at www.cicada.org.au where information will be posted and updated. Alternately phone Sue Walters at SCIC on **02 9844 6827** or email suewalters@cicada.org.au

The decision has also been made not to run our annual fundraising raffle this year. Donations are always very welcome and can be made via EFT:-

<u>Account Name</u>	Cicada Australia Inc
<u>BSB</u>	012-349
<u>Account Number</u> –	4993 35992
<u>Payment Reference</u> –	Give your Surname

Alternately, they can be sent by snail mail to our treasurer, with cheques made out to **Cicada Australia Inc**

CICADA Treasurer
Chris Boyce
10 Vineyard Street
Mona Vale NSW 2103

Best wishes to you all from the committee. Keep Safe, Well and Warm and we look forward to catching up with you, hopefully, in 2021

ADVOCACY

I hope everyone is managing with the current COVID-19 related isolation issues. I'm interested to know if you feel supported by your community, whether that is your family, friends, local neighbours or perhaps another interest group like your sporting colleagues, book club or walking club.

What about your local implant recipients? Do you know someone nearby with an implant that you can collaborate with or just meet with on a social basis? Many have found social media or ZOOM meetings have kept them in touch to some degree with their friends and associates, but some who cannot manage the technology required, or have not been able to use it well, have felt quite isolated.

The strength of our CICADA group has always been that we have gathered socially at various events and that personal collaboration has reassured many deaf people that the CI can work really well and make a huge difference to their life. Our morning teas and BBQ days are an opportunity to learn more about implants and how to use them for maximum benefit, to learn about other assistive devices, to simply practice conversation in a small group where people understand that it works best to speak nice and clearly and one at a time!! It also gives you an opportunity to discuss your areas of difficulty.

I find that many people who have an implant, become an "accidental" advocate when they can describe to others how the CI works and just how important it is to have some hearing and feel connected again to life.

Well that's how it happened for me!!

Our Sydney CICADA group have become firm friends through our shared experience and working together to help others. I would love to see advocates all over Australia (translate this to a Global perspective even) that can act as volunteer local CI representatives or coordinators to bring implant recipients together socially to share their experience. New recipients benefit from practicing conversation in a social setting, especially if they live alone and don't have much contact with others. There are many online auditory training exercises, but sometimes people need help learning how to access these or finding the right ones for themselves.

It's beneficial to have a wide network to give voice to the CI Program, particularly when it comes to speaking with government.

In Australia, we currently benefit from funding for implants which has been provided only because people spoke out and fought for it. If you don't ask, you don't know what can be achieved and it is a matter of equity, to keep speaking out for those who can't afford upgrades or improvements to their situation to help them be the best they can be.

<https://www.pindrop.org.nz/webinars/public-health-advocacy-in-a-time-of-uncertainty/>

In this webinar Sue Archbold, Consultant on research, public policy and practice in hearing loss and cochlear implantation, discusses advocacy and empowering community voices- what role can consumers and health professionals play? If you have time to watch this, it is very interesting.

It is important to raise awareness of hearing loss generally so that more people can be aware of situations that arise just from poor communication. This is a long-standing problem. See this article on Indigenous health and hearing loss which highlights this: <https://www.themandarin.com.au/135332-opinion-how-mainstream-services-are-failing-the-many-indigenous-people-with-hearing-loss-in-custody/>

There is a very good GUIDE TO HEARING LOSS on the CICADA website which is designed to help inform about hearing loss generally as well as information on hearing aids and implants which you can share with people https://www.cicada.org.au/images/downloads/Guide-November_2018.pdf

There are many people with profound hearing loss who don't know about the implant or how to get a referral to someone they feel they can trust to give the best advice. Some have heard of recipients who aren't doing very well and this puts them off pursuing the idea of an implant for themselves. It's here I ask, "Who and why are SOME not doing well??" "did they get good support from their clinic to get started" ... "Did they get advice and reassurance and practice to help them improve" ??

Think back to when you first lost your hearing, when and how you found out about the CI and then, how it was in the early days learning to use it. Then think about now and how it has changed your life. Your personal experience is of great value to someone in that same situation. We encourage you to share it with as many people as possible so that others can learn about the CI and see it in action.

I would love to see an Australia-wide database for implant recipients that we can use to connect with each other. Maybe we can work on setting up small local meetings in all sorts of remote locations so that CI recipients feel supported. Maybe we can start up local conversation circles to help new recipients practice their listening skills. As the saying goes: "From little things, Big things grow".

Think about what you can do, to share your own experience of hearing loss and the cochlear implant and help get the message out there.

Creating a community brings its own rewards.

Sue Walters

President

INTERNATIONAL COCHLEAR IMPLANT DAY 2021

Thursday February 25th 2021 is ICI Day and CICADA are already thinking of ways we can celebrate this and create awareness about cochlear implants.

Wednesday 3rd March 2021 is World Hearing Day, so there is a "Hearing Awareness Week" in between these two days, where there is an opportunity to bring the issues around hearing loss out into the public space.

It's an opportunity to contact your local newspaper and ask them to put an article about cochlear implants in that week's edition. Seek out an opportunity to work with your local council, Probus, Lions or Rotary Club to invite recipients to a morning tea or social gathering in your local area and invite the general public to come along to speak with implant recipients, so they can learn.

We may even be able to find ways to get stories out on TV or radio programs, as well as Social Media.

Please think about ways in which you can work with others to help promote Hearing Awareness Week 2021. Contact suewalters@cicada.org.au and let me know if you have an idea.

Start early so that there is time to get cooperation from your local community.

BATTERY RECYCLING

Good news on the battery front is that ECOBATT have been lobbying for increased recycling services for all types of batteries, including the button cell type that many of us use in sound processors and hearing aids.

The button cell batteries are harmful if swallowed and present a hazard particularly to young children

The government is bringing into play a battery stewardship next year and Ecobatt have advised that their battery recycling services will be at no cost to us.

Ecobatt can provide a 20lt battery recycling tube in outlets that are convenient and accessible. This tube holds up to 80 kg of mixed batteries and will be returned to Ecobatt for sorting and recycling.

So start saving your batteries and we look forward to seeing these tubes in our implant clinics, shopping centres and other easily accessible places.

www.ecobatt.net

