

# CICADA BUZZ

## CONGRATULATIONS HELEN A prize winner at the Orange Eisteddfod

*Helen Pitcher is an Ambassador for Women With Disabilities Australia. She now has bilateral cochlear implants and has made considerable effort to bring music back into her life. With great perseverance and the support and encouragement of friends and family, Helen's heart-warming story shows how so much can be achieved when you follow your passion!*

Helen has also written for the Women with Disabilities Australia Our Site, see her full stories here:

<https://oursite.wvda.org.au/stories/my-musical-self>

<https://oursite.wvda.org.au/stories/the-covid-19-pandemic-and-technology>

### HELEN'S STORY

Even though I had been born with a severe to profound hearing loss, my parents were determined I would be able to live in the hearing world. I was fitted with a Calaid hearing aid in 1956. Luckily, I loved hearing sounds so was keen to explore my hearing environment. My introduction to music came from my grandmother who showed me how to read music and relate it to the keyboard on the piano.

When I moved back to Bathurst to live with my family, I became the first deaf child to enter mainstream education in the Central West of NSW. Here I was expected to be like every other child and no consideration was given to any special need I might have in the classroom. At home, my brother started learning recorder. If he left his recorder and book lying around, I would quickly pick up the recorder and book and teach myself to play. By the time my class started recorder lessons, I had already picked up the basics. I really did enjoy the time we had playing recorder in class, and so I naturally put my hand up when we were asked who would like to be part of the school recorder group. The headmistress rang my mother to say she would rather I did not join the group.

When I finished primary school, my parents (on the advice of the Education Department) sent me to a private school run by the Anglican Church. They agreed I could start piano lessons, which I loved. I did well in the Australian Music Education Board exams and for the School Certificate did Grade 4.

As I grew older, I became busy with youth fellowships, and eventually married. In 1990, I left my marriage of 16 years and returned to Bathurst to live with my mother. I was losing my remaining hearing due to Meniere's Disease. In 1992, I was fortunate to be given a cochlear implant at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. It took me almost six months to feel comfortable wearing the processor and longer to hear most sounds clearly. Music was a horrible noise. Bit by bit I parted with all my music,



Ruth Harrison (accompanist), Helen Pitcher, Margaret Barlow (duet partner), who won 3rd Prize in the Orange Eisteddfod

recorder and CDs. I thought that part of my life was truly over. It took me about five years to hear speech clearly, and longer to distinguish sounds in nature such as the cicadas.

Fast forward to about 2008. My mother and the rector of our church decided I needed to realise I could hear music, even if it was slightly different to what I remembered. The rector had a good friend who was a pianist and had invited him to do a recital in the church. I was asked if I would sit at the door and collect the money. I was told to be at the church an hour early: perhaps I should have been curious as to why, but I thought I was helping to get things ready. The pianist came in to warm up, as I thought, so I took little notice. Little by little, I heard what he was playing. I stopped, listened, and tears rolled down my face. He was playing one of my favourite Beethoven pieces, "Moonlight Sonata". I had planned to leave when the concert started: I stayed.

Friends told me that the local U3A (University of the Third Age) had a recorder group. I was keen to get back to playing music, so joined. Ensemble playing was difficult unless I had a very clear indication of tempo but I was very fortunate the members of the group were very understanding. I found that I was not hearing clearly enough with the map I had, so asked the audiologist at Penrith SCIC if she could help. We discovered that the processor was out of date and was the cause of my inadequate hearing. Sarah Love lent me a Freedom processor, while she investigated ways for me to obtain a new processor. Cochlear was running a trial of the N6 for those using the N22 implant. Sarah was able to get me into it, and that gave me much clearer hearing. Once a few glitches were ironed out I started to gain more confidence

# State CICADA Associations

## New South Wales

### CICADA AUSTRALIA INC.

Secretary: Judy Cassell  
PO Box 5028  
South Turramurra NSW 2074  
Email: [jcassell6@bigpond.com](mailto:jcassell6@bigpond.com)

## Queensland

### CICADA QUEENSLAND

Secretary: Shirley Edwards  
Email: [info@cicadaql.com.au](mailto:info@cicadaql.com.au)

Shirley Edwards: [shirley@hotchipz.com](mailto:shirley@hotchipz.com)  
Penny Phillips: [pennyphillips1@bigpond.com](mailto:pennyphillips1@bigpond.com)

## South Australia

### CICADA SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Email: [contact@sacic.com.au](mailto:contact@sacic.com.au)  
Ph: 08 8379 4500 (Nina)

## Western Australia

### CICADA CLUB W.A. INC.

Chairperson: Edna Chapman  
Email: [eknit57@hotmail.com](mailto:eknit57@hotmail.com)  
Ph: 9401 8164

Treasurer: Ted Ivey  
Email: [ted2laura@gmail.com](mailto:ted2laura@gmail.com)  
Ph: (08) 9371 5650

Secretary: Jane Humby  
Email: [legend.26@bigpond.com](mailto:legend.26@bigpond.com)  
Phone: 9733 2447

## Northern Territory

### CICADA DARWIN

Coordinator Chris Blackham-Davison  
Email: [Deafncrazy@gmail.com](mailto:Deafncrazy@gmail.com)  
SMS: 0427 897 170

## Canberra

For information contact  
Glenn Vermeulen: [glen.vermeulen@gmail.com](mailto:glen.vermeulen@gmail.com)  
SMS: 0427 897 170

## Hook Up Online And Share Your News

Please visit us at [www.cicada.org.au](http://www.cicada.org.au)  
Or our Facebook page Cicada Australia Inc.

Darwin friends now have their own  
Facebook page Cicada Northern Territory

Donations over \$2 to CICADA are  
tax-deductible.

If you would prefer to receive this  
newsletter by email, please send your  
details to [suewalters@cicada.org.au](mailto:suewalters@cicada.org.au)

in my playing. The group leader encouraged me to join the ensemble group at the local Conservatorium. From there, I joined the Orange U3A recorder ensemble and now have regular music therapy sessions at the Conservatorium. I still play with the Bathurst U3A group.

I received a second implant on 20 November 2018 and was fitted with an N7 processor. Having bilateral implants enables me to become more conscious of direction of sounds. This helps enormously in ensemble music and allows me to play more fluently. I am now the proud owner of eight different sizes of recorder from the tiny garklein to the majestic and beautiful great bass. My music therapist and the Orange music director both encouraged me to continue with solo playing as well as duet. In September, much to my shock, my friend and I were awarded third place in the duet section of the Orange Eisteddfod.

I look forward to getting a N7 for my first ear and seeing what the next stage of my music journey holds.

Helen Pitcher  
November, 2020

## Presidents Report

Warm wishes to all our members for a Happy Christmas and New Year.

Joy and Peace are traditional blessings we seem to share particularly at Christmas, though 2020 has been our quietest year for a long time. Some of you may have had enough peace and wish for a little more JOY in the year ahead. My wish for you is that you can find some of these blessings in each day.

We still feel the loss of our dear John Boyce, who passed away the week after our International Cochlear Implant Day in February this year.

Chris Boyce our Treasurer and amazing provider of morning tea fare, has just celebrated 22 years since her first CI, on Remembrance Day, an appropriate day to remember!

It has been a frustrating and unsettling time for everyone with the COVID -19 restrictions and then the use of face masks hampering our comprehension of speech! We hope to start our regular morning teas again in February, with appropriate precautions. We will have to ask for RSVP so that we have an indication of numbers who are attending. A calendar of anticipated events will be included in this edition of BUZZ. Please do check the calendar on the CICADA website to confirm which events will still be going ahead at this stage.

Best Wishes to you all for Christmas and the coming year.

## DON'T FORGET YOUR AUDITORY REHABILITATION!!

We can always improve our listening and comprehension skills. Sometimes it is easy to feel you are not hearing as well as you used to. Some hearing people say this also!

It does take practise and concentration to hear well with an implant and the more you challenge yourself the better. IF you are tired it can be difficult to concentrate so make sure you get enough sleep and exercise, so your brain is fresh and relaxed! There are lots of options. IF you have a mobile phone that streams to your sound processor, you can listen to all sorts of things like music or podcasts and this is great practise and easy to access. Watch TV with AND without the caption, listen to the radio or audiobooks. If you suffer from phone call anxiety, call friends and practise! Sometimes if you have a few bad experiences, it is easy to lose your confidence, however the only way to improve is to practise.

Go online to [Cochlear.com](http://Cochlear.com) Family Care Guides and look at the resources there, such as "Guide to adult rehab at home".

# Special Commonwealth Government Funding \$300,000 for Young Australians

The Hon. Mark Coulton MP, Minister for Regional Health, Regional Communications and Local Government attended morning tea and Q and A session at the Australian Hearing Hub Friday 4th December.

Minister Coulton recently announced an investment of \$21.2M over 5 years to implement key initiatives under the Roadmap for Hearing Health.

Hear For You CEO, David Brady attended this event and welcomed Minister Coulton's announcement of a special Commonwealth Government funding grant of \$300,000 to support Hear For You to deliver support services and pathways for young Australians with a hearing loss, mental health and social isolation impacted by COVID-19. The funding will also support a national communications program to reach out to young Australians with hearing loss.

The Minister was then taken on a tour of Cochlear manufacturing, followed by a discussion about funding that has been provided to National Acoustic Laboratories to conduct studies into the benefits of upgrade sound processors for seniors.



Dig Howitt (Cochlear CEO), Sue Walters, Anthony Bishop (Cochlear) and Minister Mark Coulton

## INTERNATIONAL COCHLEAR IMPLANT DAY and WORLD HEARING DAY 2021

Ideas of having a big event to celebrate International CI Day 25th February 2021 have been put on the back burner, seeing as COVID -19 Restrictions on large gatherings may extend for some time yet.

World Hearing Day is 3rd March and so the week 25th Feb-March 3rd is an opportunity to try and bombard the media with stories and information about cochlear implants and hearing loss generally.

Discussions with Cochlear, Australian Hearing Hub, Hearing Australia and other organisations who provide services to the deaf and hearing impaired are leading in the direction of trying to make a big splash on social media, TV, News and radio to bring awareness of hearing loss into the public eye and EAR !!

Cochlear will turn 40 in 2021, (since the very first implant in Melbourne) and want to take this opportunity to bring the focus on hearing loss, and use the details of the World report on Hearing as part of their communications program. Starting with International Cochlear Implant Day, Cochlear will launch their '*Inspired by you for 40 years*' program, which will **celebrate** some truly unique moments from the last 40 years, **recognise** the achievements of recipients (and other stakeholders) as they connect with life's opportunities, and **thank** those who help people to hear all over the world.

We would like to share the personal stories of people who have benefited from Prof Clark's invention, as this will bring a meaningfulness to the 40th anniversary.

If you have ideas or a story to tell about your own experience with an implant, even a short video of yourself telling us which sounds you love to hear the most!!!...please pass these on to [suewalters@cacada.org.au](mailto:suewalters@cacada.org.au) if you are happy to share them with the world!

**PLEASE DO keep an eye on our CICADA website [www.cicada.org.au](http://www.cicada.org.au) for any last minute announcements or activities about ICI Day 2021.**

## WHAT'S HAPPENING GLOBALLY?

A meeting at the World Health Organisation in Geneva in December 2019 brought together specialists in hearing from all over the world, to examine research papers on the proven benefits of cochlear implants. This meeting was held to put together a formal consensus of opinion on cochlear implant awareness and best practice guidelines in regard to assessment, surgery and post-implant habilitation and support. These International guidelines were published in August this year, see the details at: <https://adultheating.com/the-consensus-statements/>

A group of implant recipients, with the title of the Consumer and Professional Advisory Committee (CAPAC) was also invited to this Geneva meeting to offer input from the point of view of the recipient....VERY IMPORTANT!

The issue is the massive gap between those who could potentially benefit from CIs and those who have been able to receive them: only 5-10% of people in developed nations with severe to profound hearing loss have a CI, in spite of the benefits to individual and society being well proven, including the cost effectiveness. Advocacy groups, including user and family groups, have increasingly contributed to planning of public health initiatives globally in recent years, and those involved in hearing care and CI provision have been increasingly effective. CICADA has been invited to be a part of a proposed global initiative to build awareness and assist improved access globally to cochlear implantation, rehabilitation, life-long technical support including processor upgrades and aftercare driven by CI user advocacy initiatives. The recommendation, is the formation of the "CI International Community of Action (CIICA) " which would be a voluntary association of advocacy groups to share resources, activities, inspire further action and magnify the voice for CI . It's a promising objective to think we may be able contribute to global concerns. It's also a reminder that we CAN perhaps have our voices heard globally if we have a good network of people with the necessary skills.... but it's also important to speak out whenever we do get the opportunity!!

## QUILT RAFFLE

CICADA Member, Hilda Kruletic, has donated a beautifully handcrafted quilt.

It measures 215 x 215 cm and is pictured here on a standard double bed. (See picture)

Seeing as we were not able to get together this year or provide our usual annual raffle, CICADA would like to raffle this quilt by asking \$10 per ticket.

If you would like to participate, kindly send your payment via EFT to the CICADA account:  
CICADA AUSTRALIA Inc

ANZ Mona Vale  
BSB: 012 349  
Account number: 499335992  
Reference: (Your Name) Raffle

Please email Judy, our Secretary on [jcassell6@bigpond.com](mailto:jcassell6@bigpond.com) when you have made your payment and you will be allocated ticket numbers OR alternatively make contact via snail mail - Secretary: Judy Cassell, PO Box 5025, South Turramurra NSW 2074

*The raffle will be drawn in 2021 at our March Morning tea.*



## PROF KELVIN KONG

### CICADA AUSTRALIA congratulates Prof Kelvin Kong on his work with Indigenous Australians

Australia's first Aboriginal surgeon, the highly acclaimed ear, nose and throat surgeon, Associate Professor Kelvin Kong has been awarded the prestigious Menzies Medallion.

The University of Newcastle (NSW) Associate Professor received the medal, recognising his leadership in Aboriginal health service delivery, advocacy and research, in particular his work to improve ear health in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. The Menzies Medallion is awarded by Menzies School of Health Research, one of Australia's leading medical research institutes dedicated to improving Indigenous, global and tropical health. A proud Worimi man from Port Stephens, the breadth and depth of Associate Professor Kong's work is far reaching and includes his role as chief investigator for the Menzies-led Centre for Research Excellence in Ear and Hearing Health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children. Currently practising in Newcastle as a surgeon, he specialises in paediatric and adult otolaryngology, head and neck surgery (ear, nose and throat surgery), and lectures in allied health at the University. Menzies Director Professor Alan Cass said, "I am very pleased to see Associate Professor Kong receive this year's medallion. Kelvin brings passion, energy and expert skills as a surgeon and researcher to improve ear health in remote, rural and urban communities. "Kelvin has a strong and clear voice in advocacy to close the gap in educational and social disadvantage associated with the high prevalence of otitis media and hearing loss in Australian Indigenous children. "In particular, Kelvin has been instrumental in raising awareness of ear health problems in the Australian community and bringing this issue to the attention of governments. His work has had a profound and measurable impact." Kelvin Kong is also joint chair of the Hearing for Learning Initiative; a community-based training project that focuses on prevention through early detection of ear issues in young children by a locally trained and community-based workforce.

(Reprinted from Deafness Forum's One-In-Six)



Kelvin Kong

## New Wollongong Clinic

The new RIDBC Cochlear implant clinic has opened at Wollongong. It is upstairs from the Post Office in Crown Street Mall. This is great news for the Illawarra area residents. Hopefully the Illawarra CICADA group will be able to resume their picnic days in the New Year. The new audiologist, Paul Jevelle and new receptionist Jessica Blacker are pictured here in the new clinic, which opened just 3 weeks ago.

For the Illawarra Support Group, please contact Sue Young:

[sby218@uowmail.edu.com](mailto:sby218@uowmail.edu.com)



Jessica Blacker and Paul Jevelle

## Vale Cathie Hayden

"It was very sad to lose CICADA member Cathie Hayden in June this year and we extend our sincere sympathy to her husband Peter. As we were not having our regular gatherings we did not know that she had become ill and Cathy sadly passed away 29th June. Cathy and her husband Peter were welcome helpers at our BBQ days and morning teas and we will miss their cheerful company."



## Optogenetics: Improving the precision of bionic devices with light

### Bionic Connections Spring 2020

In world-first studies, researchers at the Bionics Institute have found a novel way that could improve the quality of hearing for people with cochlear implants.

Scientists have established that by adding light stimulation to the existing electrical stimulation provided by a cochlear implant, the accuracy of nerve activation is improved. This research uses a technique called Optogenetics and has the potential to improve hearing outcomes for recipients of cochlear implants.

For a person with normal hearing, sound waves travel in the fluid-like cochlea of the inner ear casing sensory hair cells to react and send signals to the brain via the auditory neurons. For those with hearing loss, these hair cells have died. To counter this, a cochlear implant can be inserted which uses electrical stimulation to mimic the function of a normal hearing response.

Although cochlear implants have been a wonderful breakthrough, the quality of the sound has room for improvement; the way the electrodes activate the neurons is not very accurate. This leads to poor speech understanding when there is background noise, and poor perception of complex sounds such as music.

A team at the Bionics Institute led by A/Prof Rachael Richardson has used optogenetics, which involves a simple genetic alteration of auditory nerves with a light sensitive molecule enabling them to be activated via focused light beams. The results have shown that through the use of optogenetics the precision of bionic devices can be improved.



# 2021

## Social Gatherings to be held at SCIC

**Building 39 Old Gladesville Hospital  
Punt RD Gladesville**

### ALL WELCOME

Due to Covid-19 safety precautions, numbers may be limited to some events. Please RSVP if you plan to attend to [sue.walters@scic.org.au](mailto:sue.walters@scic.org.au) or phone 0417 675 691

#### Thursday Morning Teas Feb- Oct 10.30am-12pm

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 4th February                | 1st July                                |
| 4th March                   | 5th August                              |
| No April morning tea-Easter | 2nd September                           |
| 6th May                     | 7th October                             |
| 3rd June                    | First Thursday of month Feb to Oct only |

#### SPECIAL EVENTS

Thursday 25th February 2021  
**International Cochlear Implant Day**  
3<sup>rd</sup> March  
**World Hearing Day**  
Online events only

BBQ days will be advertised and confirmed closer to the events.  
Check the calendar and notices on the CICADA Website [www.cicada.org.au](http://www.cicada.org.au)  
Information: [sue.walters@scic.org.au](mailto:sue.walters@scic.org.au)

## Graeme Clark Scholarship

The Graeme Clark Scholarship, awarded by Cochlear Limited, is a unique award set up to help recipients of Cochlear hearing solutions who are residents of Australia and New Zealand.

The scholarship consists of financial assistance of \$5,000 per year for a three-year undergraduate degree at an accredited university and is paid in instalments on the successful completion of each consecutive year of study. It is available to those who are currently completing their final year of high school, currently attending university, or mature aged students who have been accepted into a university course.

For more information visit the Cochlear website

[www.cochlear.com/au/scholarship](http://www.cochlear.com/au/scholarship)

#### HOW TO APPLY

To be considered for a Graeme Clark Scholarship, submit your application via email to [customerservice@cochlear.com](mailto:customerservice@cochlear.com) or post to:

The Graeme Clark Scholarship  
Cochlear - Australia and New Zealand  
PO Box 1444 Macquarie Centre NSW 2113, Australia.

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS ON 8 JANUARY, 2021. LATE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.



## Direct streaming for MED-EL now available

Directly streaming music and phone calls to SONNET and SONNET2 audio processors is easy with the new AudioStream cover.

AudioStream uses *Bluetooth*® Low Energy streaming for high-quality sound and supports bilateral use for true stereo.

AudioStream is fully compatible with the first-generation SONNET for users from as far back as 2014.

Setting up AudioStream for first use is fast and simple. With the AudioKey 2 app for Android or iOS, AudioStream can be configured and updated with just a few clicks. Once set up, you don't need to use AudioKey 2 for everyday streaming. AudioStream is compatible with iOS version 11 or later and Android version 10 or later.

For more information, please visit <https://www.medel.com/hearing-solutions/accessories/connectivity/audiostream> or contact your local cochlear implant centre.

## DEAF TESCO WORKER FACES COMPLAINTS FOR ASKING SHOPPERS TO LOWER MASKS SO SHE CAN LIPREAD

Nov 2020 Metro News

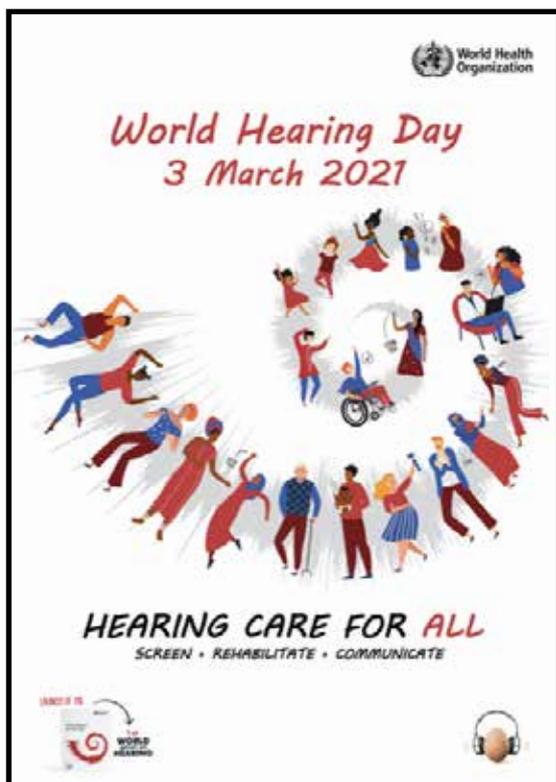
A deaf Tesco worker has told of the discrimination she has faced during the pandemic after receiving complaints for not being able to understand customers wearing masks. Melanie Muir, from Nottingham, said there have been times when she's wanted to 'walk out' of her job as a customer assistant at an Express store in Castle Boulevard. The 47-year-old has been deaf since she was a baby and relies on lipreading to communicate but since the mandatory use of face masks was introduced, Melanie has had difficulty communicating. Although she wears a cochlear implant, it only helps her to recognise sounds such as a phone ring, a door knock, or a dog bark. To understand her colleagues or customers, Melanie needs people to face her so she can lip read – but she has received discriminatory comments from some customers after asking them to momentarily lower their mask.

Melanie said: 'The regulars have been absolutely lovely and my team has also been great in supporting me. 'But since lockdown happened there's been a few daft, discriminative complaints but I often ask one of the team to help. I'm just trying to do my job. 'I have had some people not wanting to remove the mask and continue to shout at me through the mask when I have no idea what they are saying. 'A recent one was from a guy who rang in as soon as he walked out the shop. His complaint was unbelievable, asking "why is there a deaf person on the till?" and claiming there are no signs when there are two and I have a badge on. Melanie wants to raise awareness of the difficulties deaf people have faced during the pandemic.

'I feel it's such a stupid thing to say, it's rude and offensive, not just to me but to all those who are deaf too. We're just deaf, not daft. 'We are more than capable of doing things. It made me feel awful that my team is subjected to this.' After having to remind people more regularly about their masks, the worker found a legal notice on a deaf community site and puts it on display when she is working on the tills.

But Melanie said she continues to encounter problems that leave her feeling down and worried when she starts a shift in case someone is offensive towards her.

Melanie hopes that by sharing her story, she can make people more aware of what the deaf community faces during the pandemic, particularly if they rely on lipreading alone. 'Please show a little more consideration and be kind. It doesn't hurt to pop your mask down for a moment, just to communicate, you can still keep your distance,' she added.



## Support Groups

### Bathurst/Central West

Helen Pitcher (see her story in this edition) has approached the Bathurst QUOTA Club to help start up a support group for cochlear implant recipients or interested people in the Bathurst area. Helen will meet with them in February next year to discuss this with their group.

Thank you Helen for this initiative!

If anyone just wants to talk or ask questions about cochlear implants or hearing aids, Helen is happy for CICADA members and friends to contact her by email:

[h.pitcher@bigpond.com](mailto:h.pitcher@bigpond.com)

### Illawarra

#### Picnic in the Park for 2021

All events are on **Sundays, from 10:30am to 2:30pm**; bring your own picnic lunch & drinks.

Tea and coffee & morning tea will be provided with \$2 donation. I'll bring some yummy cakes and bikies! All picnics areas are linked to cycle tracks, have amenities and some have nearby playgrounds.

I have also added some new locations for 2021. Rather than a BBQ, to make it Covid safe, I have made the events "Picnic In the Park".

**14 February:** Elliott Park, Little Lake, off Osborne Road, Barrack Point

**18 April:** Towradgi Beach Park, next to Towradgi Bowling Club Towradgi Beach

**6 June:** Shellharbour Village Greens, in BBQ hut opps Beverley Whitfield Ocean Pool

**8 August:** Windang Foreshore Park, in BBQ hut, off Fern St Windang.

**10 October:** Towradgi Beach Park, next to Towradgi Bowling Club, Towradgi Beach

**28 November:** Christmas Get together: Elliott Park, Little Lake, off Osborne Road, Barrack Point

All picnics will go ahead, weather permitting. I look forward to seeing you there.

Sue Young: [sby218@uowmail.edu.au](mailto:sby218@uowmail.edu.au)

**Covid-19 restrictions have resulted in Support groups suspending their activities for 2020. Please contact your relevant group – details below – for information about activities for 2021**

## Newcastle and Hunter Valley

For Information contact:-

**Moira Havard** - [moirak@bigpond.com](mailto:moirak@bigpond.com)

**Alison Gron** - 4926 8100

### Northern Rivers

For further information contact:-

**Sheliya Van Buggenum**

[sheliyavan@yahoo.com](mailto:sheliyavan@yahoo.com) or

Phone or Text 0422 524 284 OR Phone

**Lismore SCIC Office** on 1300 658 981

### Taree-Port Macquarie

For information contact:-

**Robyn Herps**

[robynherps@westnet.com.au](mailto:robynherps@westnet.com.au)

Phone SMS 0428 688 612

### Western Sydney

For details contact:-

**Sean Sewell** on Mobile SMS only

041 5205 877

**Judy Tutty** - Co-coordinator

043 704 9452

## MENIERE'S SUPPORT GROUP

We are a supportive group of sufferers of Meniere's disease and other vestibular disorders. We share what we can to make your life easier when faced with a diagnosis of Meniere's disease or other vestibular disorders.

We provide information on meetings, webinars, medical professionals, contacts and links, research information, nutrition, exercise, articles, interviews and more.

**Sufferers, family and friends are all welcome!**

**For more information:**

**Email:**

[dizzyanne.wfps@gmail.com](mailto:dizzyanne.wfps@gmail.com)

**Facebook:**

<https://www.facebook.com/SydneyMenieresSupportGroup>

## Battery Safety

Button batteries are found extensively, not just in hearing devices. It is important that they are safely disposed of. If swallowed, and because of their size this is quite easy, they can become stuck in a child's throat and result in catastrophic injuries and even death. Insertion of button batteries into body orifices such as ears and noses can also lead to significant injuries.

## Safe Storage and Disposal

It is important to store them safely and out of reach of children, in a secure cupboard or a high space. **Safe disposal** is just as important. If saving used batteries for disposal at collection points – see *the Spring Issue 2018 and the Interim issue June 2020 of the Buzz for details* – keep spent batteries in a jar on a high shelf until safe disposal for recycling.



### Know what to do in an emergency

If you suspect your child or grandchild has swallowed or inserted a button battery, call the Poisons Information Centre immediately on 13 11 26 for 24/7 fast, expert advice. If your child is having any difficulty breathing, contact 000.

Do not let the child eat or drink, and do not induce vomiting.

Remember, children are often unable to effectively communicate that they have swallowed or inserted a button battery. There may be none of the symptoms below. If you suspect a child has swallowed a button battery, ask for an X-ray from a hospital emergency department to make sure.

Symptoms to watch out for include:

- gagging or choking
- drooling
- chest pain (this may present as grunting)
- coughing or noisy breathing
- unexplained vomiting or food refusal
- bleeding from the gut — black or red vomit or bowel motions
- nose bleeds — sometimes this can be blood vomited through the nose
- unexplained fever
- abdominal pain
- general discomfort
- spitting blood or blood-stained saliva
- bloody discharge from ear or nose

<https://www.productsafety.gov.au/news/button-batteries-tiny-batteries-big-danger>

# Hearing Connections

Technology Update with Andrew Stewart

The sheer volume of technology available to help us with hearing loss can be overwhelming. When we think of technology, we often think of one or two specific items.

So, I have outlined below categories of technology and services – some of which you may not have thought of. You can also contact me with what you would like help with. We aim to make this process simple and easy.

## Alarm Clocks with Vibration

It can often be difficult to wake up to alarm clocks if you have a hearing loss, particularly when most of us don't wear our hearing aids or cochlear implants to bed. To avoid waking up the whole neighbourhood with excessively loud alarm clocks, we have alarm clocks with separate bed shakers that wake you up using vibrations, as well as portable vibrating and Bluetooth activated alarm clocks for travelling.

## Bellman Visit – Wireless Alerts

Some alarm clocks can be linked in with other triggers so that you are alerted or woken up to what you need to be aware of, be that the smoke detector, doorbell, personal caller, baby monitor, telephone, smartphone or your video doorbell. These systems can also be linked to a vibrating pager, loud ringer or to flash alerts throughout the house.



## Video Doorbell

I use the Ring video doorbell which links with my smartphone and my Bellman Visit alerting system.

## Bluetooth Neckloop

It is easier to see with two eyes rather than one and it's the same with hearing from two ears! A Bluetooth Neckloop enables you to connect any phone or computer with Bluetooth to any hearing aid or cochlear implant with the Telecoil (sometimes called a 'T' Switch). The neckloop gives you the ability to make the most out of your hearing from both ears.

## Hear TV – Telecoil or Headset

If you often have friends, relatives or even neighbours commenting that your TV is too loud, you may want to look into getting a TV listening system. These come with headsets for those who don't have hearing aids or cochlear implants, or a neckloop for use with the Telecoil. These systems have a separate volume control just for your ears, so it won't bother anyone else.

## Bellman Microphones

The Bellman microphones use large and simple buttons to get the best results for those with or without hearing aids. They are designed as an alternative to hearing aids, or to assist with background noise, listening to the TV and as a remote microphone to hear from a distance. They are ideal for those who may be intimidated by the 'fancier' technologies, or the miniaturisation of hearing aids making them hard to use.

## NDIS

Hearing Connections is a Registered NDIS Provider.

## Other thoughts

While these are not provided by Hearing Connections, they are worth considering

- Landline phones – I recommend the Uniden SSE45 or SSE47.
- Lions Hearing assistance dog.
- Smart watch.

Hearing Connections was started by Andrew Stewart in 2018. Andrew is profoundly deaf and now wears two cochlear implants. Andrew started Hearing Connections after working with hearing loops and hearing augmentation for over 30 years. Hearing Connections offers a wide range of products and services aimed at improving the lives of people living with hearing loss in Australia.

If you have any questions about what might be right for you please email me at [andrew@hearconnect.com.au](mailto:andrew@hearconnect.com.au) with your enquiry and we can help you find and learn to use the technology that will work for you. You can also browse and purchase these items from our website [www.hearconnect.com.au](http://www.hearconnect.com.au)

There will be more information about appliances available at Hearing Connections in the next issue of the Buzz

## VIBIO BED SHAKER

Available from Word of Mouth and Hearing Connections.

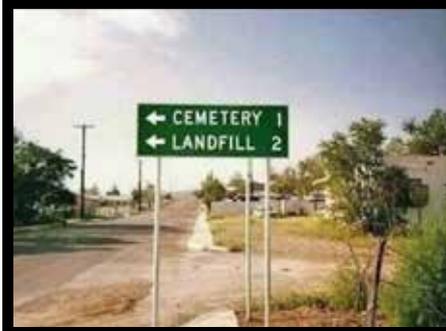
Vibio is a wireless bed shaker that connects to your smartphone via Bluetooth it's comes with a free app. It goes under your pillow and vibrates (3 different settings) to wake you as an alarm clock and optional settings to alert you to incoming smartphone calls and text messages.

It's does provide you with reassurance knowing that you can be alerted to late night calls if you were needed.

The Vibio is shown at

<https://www.hearconnect.com.au/vibio-bed-shaker>

*My wife said when I pass she would go the extra mile to give me the burial I deserve...*



**NURSE CAME IN AND SAID DOC, THERE'S A MAN IN THE WAITING ROOM WHO THINKS HE'S INVISIBLE, WHAT SHOULD I TELL HIM? THE DOCTOR SAID TELL HIM I CAN'T SEE HIM TODAY.**