

Deafness Forum of Australia

One in Six

Welcome to our monthly News Update. Please click on the links in the contents to go to that article. Use the "Back to top" links to return to the Contents.

NB Where Deafness Forum passes on information received it does not necessarily guarantee or endorse the events or products publicised.

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Quote of the month

From Deafness Forum Board member, Liz Evans:

I just wish all hearing-impaired people would make a noise about their access needs in places like Aged Care and hospitals, hotel accommodation etc, the usual response is "we haven't had anyone ask for that".....where are the hearing-impaired people out there?

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DEAFNESS FORUM NEWS

What have we been doing in the past month?

Our work involves a number of different activities aimed at assisting you, our members; at developing relationships with key stakeholders, and furthering our lobbying and systemic advocacy work. Just a brief snapshot of some of the activities the staff have undertaken in the past month since the last newsletter include:

- Met with Senator Gary Humphries to raise awareness of deafness in Australia
- Met with Senator Rachel Siewert to raise awareness of deafness in Australia
- Met with the Minister for Human Services to raise awareness of deafness in Australia and discuss consumer matters relating to Australian Hearing
- Chaired a meeting with the Hotels, Motels and Accommodation Association
- Attended a meeting at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission regarding captioning of DVDs
- Held training for 12 people as telecommunications representatives
- Continued lobbying ACT hospitals and ACT Health regarding lack of access in the ACT health system for people who are Deaf/hearing impaired
- Organised and attended the 2007 Libby Harricks Memorial Oration in Albury
- Continued planning for an event at the Princess Alexandra Hospital (Brisbane) to be held later in March 2007
- Attended the launch of the Australian Disability and Development Council, at Parliament House Canberra
- Submitted comments on Australian Standard 1428.3
- Met with representatives of Ultimo TAFE, regarding training of stenocaptioners
- Provided comments to PDCA on issues at airports
- Provided input to Telstra's Sensis TTY Directory review
- Provided input to NRS logo and upcoming advertising campaigns
- Distributed discussion paper to members and stakeholders on Access to Government information for people who are Deaf or hearing impaired.

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Website updates

As usual, there have been various additions and updates to the main Deafness Forum Website: www.deafnessforum.org.au. Please take the time to visit the Website on a regular basis to keep up with what is happening.

Voluntary Code of Conduct for association members

A reminder that the Voluntary Code of Conduct for association members is due at the end of March 2007. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact our office to discuss. info@deafnessforum.org.au or 02 62627808

Canberra Hospital meeting

Over the past month, Deafness Forum has continued its work with ACT Health and the federal Department of Health and Ageing on systemic change following a complaint about communication access in ACT hospital and nursing home facilities.

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It's more common than you think. The incidence of hearing impairment in Australia may reach one in four by 2050.

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ADDC launch at Parliament House

Representatives of Deafness Forum attended the launch of the Australian Disability and Development Consortium (ADDC) at Parliament House on 26 February 2007. The Consortium was launched by Senator Gary Humphries and featured speakers from National Disability Services (NDS – formerly ACROD), and an international speaker on disability issues in the developing world, Mr Abdus Sattar Dulal, who is the Executive Director of leading Bangladesh disability NGO, Protibandhi Kallyan Somity.

The new Consortium comprises members of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and the National Industry Association for Disability Services (NDS – formerly ACROD). These groups have come together to pursue a mutual passion for improving the quality of support provided to people with disabilities in developing countries.

The launch also provided an opportunity to view a Photographic Exhibition containing more than 30 photographs depicting activities of ACFID and ACROD members such as Caritas Australia, Christian Blind Mission International and the Spastic Centre of New South Wales, and demonstrating Australia's world-class expertise in this field. The exhibition aims to educate the public about the relationship between poverty and disability and the importance of disability inclusive programming in Australia's efforts to alleviate poverty in developing countries.

HREOC DVD meeting

On 19 February, a Deafness Forum representative attended a meeting at the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission to discuss captioning (and audio description) of DVDs. Attendees included representatives from deafness and vision impairment organisations and the DVD industry, as well as Media Access Australia. The technical production and distribution challenges were explained, as well as the demographics of deafness within Australia and the growing demand for captioning. It was a very positive meeting and we will keep you informed of progress.

Telecommunications Representatives Training Package

Deafness Forum produced and delivered a training session, with the assistance of a grant from the Australian Government Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, to assist current, new and interested members of the community to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the work of the Deafness Forum and its work on a number of committees, fora, and panels.

The training occurred in Sydney in February 2007 with attendees from various states and territories. With the hearing loop, interpreters, and computer-aided real time transcription (CART) the needs of all attendees were encompassed.

The training covered the following areas:

Section 1: About the Deafness Forum – this is background information to ensure you understand us, and our work, and how we go about our work in lobbying and systemic advocacy.

Section 2: Being a Representative – this section covers what we expect of you, and what you can expect of us, while you are a representative.

Section 3: Your Committee – this information relates specifically to the committee you are representing us on.

Section 4: Supporting documentation – here you will find additional brochures, pamphlets etc. You can also add information relating to your work, for example Agendas, Minutes, and reports relating to your work, for quick reference.

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Deafness Forum is hopeful of receiving a further grant to enable this training to become available to a wider group.

HMAA Meeting Code of Practice

Deafness Forum and the Hotels, Motels and Accommodation Association (HMAA) held one of their regular meetings during March to monitor implementation of the voluntary Code of Practice (CoP) for hotels and motels.

In May 2003 Deafness Forum lodged a complaint with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) against a number of hotels. As a result, Deafness Forum entered into an agreement with HMAA regarding implementation of a voluntary CoP (available at <http://www.deafnessforum.org.au/HMAA%20Code%20of%20Practice.htm>)

The meeting in March 2007 found that due to a number of reasons, knowledge of the Voluntary CoP had in fact decreased recently, and HMAA are working on strategies to improve awareness and take-up.

Deafness Forum will continue to meet with HMAA and progress this issue.

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GOVERNMENT NEWS

EMA Forum in March

Deafness Forum will be sending representatives to the National Forum on Emergency Warnings to the Community, run by Emergency Management Australia (EMA) in late March 2007.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

National Relay Service (NRS)

The NRS needs your help.

The NRS will pay you for your time.

The NRS helps people who have a hearing or speech impairment or who are deaf to make phone calls to family, friends, co-workers and businesses.

The NRS wants to do research with people who have a hearing impairment to find out how we could make the service work better.

We would love to hear from you if you have a hearing impairment and:

Use the NRS to make phone calls to family, friends, co workers and businesses OR

Have used the NRS in the past, but don't anymore OR

Have never used the NRS

What is the research?

The first step is a 1.5-hour interview. You will be paid \$40 for coming to the interview. If we cannot organise a face to face interview with you, we can do the interview by phone (using the NRS to help us talk to each other) or via the Internet (email or Messenger).

Why do the research?

The NRS wants to know what people who have a hearing impairment think about the NRS, so that we can keep improving our service.

If you want to do the research:

Please contact the NRS Helpdesk on 1800 555 630 (TTY), 1800 555 660 (V) or nrs_helpdesk@relayservice.com.au.

Thank you!

Caloundra City Council Installation of the new P.A. & Loop System

(Provided by BHA Sunshine coast, this is a follow up to the article in our February 2007 printed newsletter about the impending installation of the above equipment at the Council Offices)

Taken from Ron Millers Report to Management on January 24th 2007

"On 16th January 2007, six of our members, including myself, accepted Councils invitation to test out the newly installed equipment, we all have hearing aids or Cochlear implants with "T" switches.

The Council meeting chamber, a large rectangular area within their administrative building has a very high ceiling and very poor acoustics. The original P.A. System was inadequate, even for normal hearing people.

On our arrival we were greeted by Ross Mills, the Council Building Facility Manager, who in turn introduced us to the Project's Contractors staff who explained how the new system worked.

The P.A. loudspeakers were mounted high on the north wall and the entire room was Audio Induction Looped. The P.A. Loop Amplifier was mounted under a long built in work station used by the Mayor, C.E.O. and Assisitive Council Staff. An additional work station used by the ten councillors was located at a lower level in front of the administrative unit.

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Twenty desk mounted microphones complete with individual on and off switches are installed on the work stations. The meeting is controlled by the Mayor who also has a master switch. Microphone sound is fed into the P.A. Loop amplifier.

TEST PROCEDURE FOLLOWED:

A male speaker seated at the Mayor's microphone read a written article whilst we traversed around the room with our hearing aids on microphone looking for dead spots and to see if we could understand speech from the P.A. speakers.

Collectively we had a mixed result due to six different hearing losses.

THE LOOP SYSTEM

This was the most important for us. Speech was given by different voices coming individually from alternative microphones switched on when required. With our hearing aids on " T " once again we searched for dead spots and sound variations etc. We were quite surprised by the quality of the sound and how much we understood of what was read to us by the various speakers. No dead spots were found at all.

At the conclusion of the test we all agreed that the Loop System worked well for all of us and that this was a very good system that gave us access to what each speaker said and the chance to hear what is happening.

A very good result has been received.

We were also informed by Ross Mills and other normal hearing council staff that the sound from the P.A. loudspeakers was a vast improvement on the original system.

Congratulations to Council on their initiative also to Ross Mills and the contractors who supplied and installed this equipment they have done an excellent job. "

I believe Council are including an article in the local newspaper and intend to publicise the equipment as well, none of this would have been achieved without the participation and persistence of Ron Miller who is also to be congratulated for his work in helping make this project a success, now there is hope that other councils might follow the lead of Caloundra and make access for HI people at Council meetings possible.

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Deafness Resources Australia upgrades website

DRA has just launched its upgraded website.

We're delighted about this and trust that the changes have resulted in a site that is even more appealing and user-friendly.

Please take a moment to browse the site: www.deafnessresources.net.au

If you like it and would like to tell your clients / members about it, please feel free to mention it in your next magazine or newsletter, or at your next meeting or event. For your convenience, I've attached some text you might like to use, or feel free to create your own.

DRA's products can make a significant difference to the quality of life of your clients / members, as well as to the people who live or work with them. I'm sure they'd appreciate you bringing the upgraded DRA site to their attention.

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Grommets unnecessary?

From ABC Health Update, 6 March 2007

Almost every child at some time will develop fluid in the middle ear, that's the section beyond the ear drum. If the fluid lingers it's called glue ear and one of the commonest childhood operations is to insert grommets - tubes through the eardrum to dry things out. The reason

It's more common than you think. The incidence of hearing impairment in Australia may reach one in four by 2050.

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for grommets is the belief that hearing loss from glue ear damages children's intellectual development.

Well according to the final part of a long and large study, that belief is no longer justified in healthy children. Following over 6000 children from early infancy to the age of 11 who had no known risk factors for developmental delay, researchers randomly assigned those with persisting fluid to early insertion of tubes or to delayed surgery 9 months later – or none if it had cleared up.

The good news is that for the otherwise healthy child, waiting to see what happens to the fluid for up to a year – and possibly even longer does no harm to any aspect of the child's development including learning abilities. In fact the most likely thing is that the glue ear will get better by itself, so no operation at all is needed.

For reference

Stephen Berman, M.D. The End of an Era in Otitis Research. Editorial. [New England Journal of Medicine](#) 2007;356;3:300-302

Paradise JL et al. Tympanostomy Tubes and Developmental Outcomes at 9 to 11 Years of Age. [New England Journal of Medicine](#) 2007;356;3:248-261

More Info?

[Glue ear - Health Matters Fact File](#)

[Grommets and glue ear - Health Report 12/02/2007](#)

Attend a Free Information Session on Captioning!

Media Access Australia will be running some FREE information sessions about captioning over March and April.

Do you want to know more about captions (teletext) on television? Have you seen bad quality captions on your television and want to know what to do about it? Would you like to see captioned movies at your local cinema? Do you want to know more about captioning and subtitling on DVDs, including Australian programs?

All these topics and more will be covered at a series of free information sessions run by Media Access Australia. Places visited will include Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast, Newcastle, the Central Coast, Sydney, Melbourne, Launceston, Hobart, Adelaide, Perth, Darwin and more.

For more details please contact Media Access Australia on Ph/TTY (02) 9212 6242, fax (02) 9121 6242, email info@mediaaccess.org.au or visit www.mediaaccess.org.au .

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FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY

Review of the provision of telecommunications equipment to consumers with disabilities

The *Review of the provision of telecommunications equipment to consumers with disabilities* consultancy report examined information and data on the current arrangements for providing this equipment. This included looking at

- current consumer needs;
- the effectiveness of current equipment arrangements in meeting those needs;
- the likely demand for specialised equipment in the next five to ten years; and
- the impact of emerging technologies on consumers with disabilities in the next five to ten years.

You can view the report at

http://www.dcita.gov.au/communications_for_consumers/telephone_services/access_for_people_with_disabilities/reports/review_of_the_provision_of_telecommunications_equipment_to_consumers_with_disabilities

Assessment of Text Any-to-Any Connectivity Options

The *Assessment of Text Any-to-Any Connectivity Options* consultancy report assessed the technical feasibility and financial viability of a text server proposal developed by the then Australian Communications Industry Forum (ACIF, now Communications Alliance) to enable any-to-any text connectivity solutions for people who are deaf or have a hearing and/or speech impairment.

The report also identified alternative solutions for providing any-to-any text connectivity for this group, and assessed the suitability of these solutions in addressing these needs within the next one to five years.

http://www.dcita.gov.au/communications_for_consumers/telephone_services/access_for_people_with_disabilities/reports/assessment_of_text_any-to-any_connectivity_options

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Audit of Telstra CDMA coverage complete

The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Helen Coonan today announced that the first of two national coverage audits has now been completed as part of Telstra's transition from CDMA to its new third generation (Next G) mobile network.

Go to:
http://www.minister.dcita.gov.au/media/media_releases/audit_of_telstra_cdma_coverage_complete

(from CTN Webnews #143)

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Communication and Speech Difficulties Project

As a provider of services to people with disabilities, CAUS would like to introduce to you a new national project currently in development that will link people with communication or speech difficulties into telecommunications.

The project is promoting Telecommunication within the speech impaired community. The objective of this project will involve meeting with people who experience communication or speech difficulties throughout Australia and identifying their telecommunication needs e.g. mobiles, national relay service, internet, telephones and any barriers preventing them from accessing these services. CAUS will promote and raise awareness about telecommunication

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to people who experience speech and communication difficulties and ensure that appropriate training and support exists to build confidence in using the technology provided.

There will be Focus Groups held in each major city Australia wide in early 2007 and questionnaires will be available for your service users to fill out.

The Telecommunication Focus Groups will be held in NSW on the Thursday 15th March and Friday 16th March.

If you provide services to people who experience communication or speech difficulties and know that this project will benefit them please register your expression of interest via email to mwilliams@caus.com.au or contact: 03 9557 5551, rural: 1800 995 383

(from CTN Webnews #143)

lemma promises mobile phone terror alert

NSW Premier Morris lemma has announced new counter-terrorism measures, including an alert system able to send text messages to all mobile phones in a suspected target zone.

Go to: <http://www.smh.com.au/news/NATIONAL/lemma-promises-mobile-phone-terror-alert/2007/02/26/1172338513339.html>

(from CTN Webnews #143)

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High speed broadband

The issue of high-speed broadband (eg. at least 20Mbs assured) and how Australians might get it has been on the agenda for a while now.

Telstra has just launched a "Broadband Australia Campaign" to seek grass-roots support for ensuring all Australians have access to high speed broadband, no matter where they live. Telstra believes that to deliver this outcome will require very substantial infrastructure investments and that the business case for such investments is currently not viable due to regulatory uncertainty.

You might have your own views and ideas on this. You can join the debate: It may be access to education, health, counselling and employment services, for you or your children or your grand-children. It might be reductions in oil usage or water usage or just being able to "visit" your family who are overseas by video-telephony or being able to tele-work from home and rebalance that family-work struggle. There are many benefits that will result from greater take-up of high speed broadband. You can start making a noise about it!

You can check out the Telstra campaign, and join in if you would like to be kept up-to-date, at <http://www.nowweareretalking.com.au/Home/Page.aspx?mid=282>

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Mobile phone survey

A survey is being conducted on mobile phone usage and needs for people with disabilities, by TEDICORE (Telecommunications Disability Consumer Representation). Completion by as many people as possible would be desirable. This survey will only take a few minutes to complete.

The survey can be found at <http://tedicore.pilot4.sgizmo.com>

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Upcoming Events

| Date | Topic | Location | Contact |
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| MARCH 2007 | | | |
| 20 March | Deafness Forum award of recognition to Princess Alexandra Hospital for accessibility initiatives for people who are Deaf/hearing impaired | Brisbane | Email: info@deafnessforum.org.au |
| 24-25 March | Deafness Forum Board of Directors meeting | Melbourne | Email: info@deafnessforum.org.au |
| MAY 2007 | | | |
| Monday 21 May - Tuesday 22 May (2 day seminar) | Advanced Auditory-Verbal Therapy - Auditory-Based Learning For Children Who Are Deaf And Hard Of Hearing Presented by: Dr Ellen Rhoades, Ed.S., Cert. AVT | Renwick Centre, RIDBC (Sydney) | The Renwick Centre Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children Private Bag 29 Parramatta 2124 Fax: (02) 9873 1614 Email: cpe@ridbc.org.au |
| JUNE 2007 | | | |
| Wednesday 6 June 2007 (2.00 - 4.00pm) 2 hour session | Auditory System and Hearing Impairment Presented by: Genelle Cook, Audiologist, Jim Patrick Audiology Centre, | Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (Sydney) | The Renwick Centre Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children Private Bag 29 Parramatta 2124 Fax: (02) 9873 1614 Email: cpe@ridbc.org.au |
| JULY 2007 | | | |
| 6-8 July | Conference of Aus & NZ Educators of the Deaf 'Down Under and Leading the World' Hosted by National Association of Australian Teachers of the Deaf (Inc) | Hobart TAS | Email: gcolloff@aapt.net.au Web: www.anzced2007.com.au |

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