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Please feel free to re-use material in the newsletter with appropriate acknowledgement to Deafness Forum of Australia

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Currently **one in six** Australians suffer from some form of hearing loss. This may increase to one in four by 2050. *Access Economics 2006*

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:

- o Presented an Award to Princess Alexandra Hospital, together with a seminar on best practice accessibility (see report later in this newsletter)
- o Tidied up after the 2007 Libby Harricks Memorial Oration, held in Albury in early March – great success! See our printed May newsletter for a summary
- o Discussed Communications Alliance Payphones Guideline and Deafness Forum's disappointment with some items that were excluded from this Guideline, with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
- o Held a Board meeting in Melbourne
- o Attended a National Emergency Warnings to the Community Forum in Adelaide which focused on methods, tools and communication issue relating to large scale emergencies, such as cyclones, bushfires, tsunamis, terrorism, etc.
- o Met with Office of Hearing Services (Department of Health and Ageing) for one of our regular meetings.
- o Attended National Disability Services conference in Adelaide
- o Met with representatives of a number of Deafness Forum member organisations in Adelaide
- o Had one of our regular meetings with the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
- o Met with Minister for Human Services, Chris Ellison, and representatives of the Office of Access Card and regarding the registration process for the Health Services Access Card, to ensure that people who are Deaf or have a hearing impairment are catered for in the registration process
- o Finalised the official Deafness Forum position paper on access to government information, including an "Effective Services Guide", and submitted to Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
- o Had a lovely Easter, and hopefully you did too, or at least that you enjoyed a couple of days off.



Jenny Rosen, Alex Jones, Rick Osborn and Deb Fullwood at the Oration in Albury

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.

PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL

Hospitals can provide services that help their Deaf or hearing-impaired patients.

"Many hospitals have lagged behind in the provision of services for people who are Deaf or hearing impaired" Nicole Lawder, CEO of the Deafness Forum of Australia said. But some are starting to implement more accessible arrangements, including Princess Alexandra Hospital in Brisbane, which is being recognised with an award today.

Currently one in six Australians is Deaf or hearing-impaired, and that is projected to increase to one in four by 2050, largely due to our ageing population.

Princess Alexandra Hospital has introduced facilities such as visual fire-safety alarms, televisions with caption capabilities, telephones with volume controls, sign language interpreter booking services, captioned education videos, telephone typewriters, personal listening devices and staff training on communication.

According to Director of Audiology at Princess Alexandra Hospital, Evelyn Towers, the key to implementing and improving accessibility is to think ahead. "Facility planning that considers assistive technology, processes, education, environment and services in the developmental stages can reduce costs and many difficulties," she said.

Deafness Forum is working with health systems in other States and Territories to encourage similar initiatives. Speakers, including Alex Jones, Deafness Forum Chairperson, and Peter Lindley, Chair of Deafness Forum's Advocacy Campaign Strategy Committee for Hearing Health as a National Priority, urged hospitals and other service providers throughout Australia to follow the Princess Alexandra Hospital example. Deafness Forum hopes that by recognising organisations which are making a difference and promoting the success of access pioneers, that it will encourage other organisations to do the same. "While we have seen many examples of poor service

provision to assist people who are Deaf or hearing impaired, it is exciting to see a hospital which has "gone the extra mile" in meeting their social, as well as legal, requirements". Ms Lawder said.

"When many people think about improving accessibility, they think of physical disabilities. But just as there should always be wheelchair access, there should also always be captioning, or a hearing loop in conference rooms or at counters, or interpreters, or other assistive devices." she said.

This is the first such accessibility award presented by the Deafness Forum, and follows on from their successful experience with the annual Captioning Awards, which recognises good practice in captioning in the subscription and free to air TV industries, among others.

The award was presented to the Princess Alexandra Hospital on Tuesday, 20th March at the hospital.

Graeme Innes, Human Rights Commissioner, Commissioner Responsible for Disability Discrimination, was a guest speaker at the event.



Graeme Innes at the PA Hospital in March

CAPTIONING OF DVDS

Deafness Forum is representing the deafness sector on a small HREOC working party with DVD distributors and other media players, to try to come to an agreement about captioning of DVDs.

CAPTIONING IN CINEMAS

Deafness Forum and AAD have written to the cinema industry. We are now approaching the sixth year of cinema access organised through the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) agreement. Whilst the agreement has served its purpose, we feel a comprehensive review of the entire arrangement is now due.

CAPTIONING FREE TO AIR TV

AAD and DF have sent a letter to Free TV (representing the Free to air broadcasters) requesting a new agreement. We will keep members informed of developments in this area.

HEARING AWARENESS WEEK 2007

Hearing Awareness Week will be here before you know it, 19-25 August 2007. The Deafness Forum office staff have been busy working on this year's program, and posters are well underway. Posters should be available from late June. Check the Hearing Awareness Week website closer to the time to register your event and request posters.

Sponsorship packages are available. Please contact the office if you want to get national exposure for your products/services through Hearing Awareness Week.

2007 CAPTIONING AWARDS

The Captioning Awards will be in Hearing Awareness Week to provide a nationally focused event during HAW. Save Thursday 23 August in your diary (in Sydney). This year the Awards are expanding to recognise captioning in a range of other industries and events: this means new categories of awards. To sponsor this highly successful and fun night out, contact our office.

5TH NATIONAL DEAFNESS SECTOR SUMMIT

The date has been set for the 5th National Deafness Sector Summit! The Summit will take place in Canberra on 24 and 25 May 2008, immediately following the Audiology Australia conference which is also set for Canberra. Registrations will be in the \$250 range (plus conference dinner) so make sure you put a little allowance in your next year's budget now for the Summit!

SHOWCASE YOUR PRODUCTS

Want people with hearing loss, their families and loved ones to know more about your products? Then think about showcasing them at the 5th National Deafness Sector Summit in May 2008, a fully accessible conference for people with hearing loss to be held in Canberra 24-25 May 2008.

Contact info@deafnessforum.org.au or visit our website at www.deafnessforum.org.au

sport

The Australian Deaf Games website is now live and has had over 1,900 hits to date. The website will be a permanent site serving all past and future Australian Deaf Games. It is still developing with work-in-progress but please check it out on a regular basis. www.austdeafgames.org.au

government news

EMA FORUM IN MARCH

In 2005, Emergency Management Australia [EMA] was tasked through the Attorney General's Department, to review 'Government Communications During a Crisis'. As part of that review, Deafness Forum representatives had met with representatives of EMA in October 2005 to discuss the needs of Deaf and hearing impaired people in the event of emergency evacuation. EMA is now progressing all issues on a national basis.

The inaugural meeting of the National Forum on Emergency Warning to the Community in March 2007 in Adelaide brought together representatives from a wide range of Federal and State Government departments including the Attorney General's Department, Emergency Management Australia, Police, Fire, Emergency Services in all states, Local Government, Telecommunications, Media, Meteorology, Department of Families and Community Services, Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Indigenous Services, Australian Red Cross, Royal Society for the Blind, Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, Deafness Forum,



How best to warn the community in emergencies?

Federation of Ethnic Communities, Australian Communication Exchange, Surf Lifesaving Australia.

Presentations were given by Blind Citizens Australia, Deafness Forum Australia, TEDICORE, ACE, Federation of Ethnic Communities Council of Australia, Community Information Warning System, Autonomous Public Emergency Communications Systems.

In no particular order are some of identified issues:

- Information needs to be available to the right people at the right time and how that can be accomplished in rural and remote areas.
- The use of technology was a recurring matter. It seemed to me that in general, at this stage anyhow, alerting devices were based on sound. One presentation demonstrated an alert system that had three different 'sounds', All of these whilst being very loud, would not be of any use to a Deaf or hearing impaired person, a matter which was duly noted.
- There was some emphasis on the use of telephone alerting. A call system would be devised to ensure that the call was received and understood. There was an issue of privacy regarding such a system.
- The communication needs of ethnic communities brought up issues of translation services.
- The special needs of the ageing and people with dementia
- This of course led into the needs of any group with higher support requirements or requiring special consideration.
- Cultural considerations.
- Family ties - e.g. one member would not leave without another.
- Concern for animals.
- Locational ties.
- Lack of awareness re danger.

Time was spent on 'break-out' sessions which groups worked on to identify key strategies and development of priorities.

With many thanks to Ruth Fotheringham for attending this Forum on behalf of Deafness Forum and providing this report.

international news

CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

On March 30, 2007 the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was signed by more than 80 countries in a special ceremony. This new human rights treaty was the culmination of five years of hard work. International Federation of Hard of Hearing (IFHOH – of which Deafness Forum is a member) was one of the non-government organizations that worked on the convention and lobbied for the recognition of hard of hearing persons within it. We were part of a coalition of 70 international, regional and national organizations that came together at the global level to form the International Disability Caucus to fight for this treaty.

The convention ensures that persons with disabilities enjoy the same human rights as everyone else, and are able to lead their lives as fully-fledged citizens who can make valuable contributions to society if given the same opportunities. It covers rights such as equality, non-discrimination and equal recognition before the law; liberty and security of the person; accessibility, personal mobility and independent living; right to health, work and education; and participation in political and cultural life.

The passage of the Convention is one step forward. IFHOH will continue to ensure that the provisions of the treaty pertaining to hard of hearing persons are enacted in everyday life. IFHOH will seek to ensure that the Conventions sections on communications and accessibility, as well as education, embrace the requirements of hard of hearing persons.

Jan Peter Strömrgren, IFHOH President

<http://www.ifhoh.org>

focus on technology

A BAD CALL

Confused about who to call when you just need to check a telephone number? Is it 013? 1223? How about 12456? Or could it be the easiest number of all to remember: 1234?

Go to:

<http://www.smh.com.au/news/planning/a-bad-call/2007/03/26/1174761375176.html?page=fullpage#contentSwap1>

(from CTN Webnews #147)

TEDICORE'S MOBILE PHONE SURVEY

You can link to the survey from TEDICORE's home page at: <http://www.tedicore.org.au>

We are keen to have your responses so that we can inform government and industry of your requirements for mobile phones. A report based on the analysis of the survey is expected to be completed in June.

Please pass the survey link on to friends and family and to other lists. Thank you for your input.

Gunela Astbrink

National Coordinator, TEDICORE

Email: g.astbrink@tedicore.org.au

DCITA has approved a new consultancy (by restricted tender) to look at the usage of disability equipment - the consultants will be going into peoples homes to examine how disability equipment is used.

community news

ATTEND A FREE INFORMATION SESSION ON CAPTIONING!

Media Access Australia is running **FREE** information sessions about captioning over the next few months.

- o Do you want to know more about captions (teletext) on television?
- o Have you seen bad quality captions on your television and want to know what to do about it?

- o Would you like to see captioned movies at your local cinema?
- o 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.

The venues are:

Perth Friday 20 April 2007 at 7pm

Deaf Community Centre

Suite 46 / 5 Aberdeen Street East Perth

The Sunshine Coast Monday 23 April 2007 at 2.30pm

Beausang Room, The Events Centre

20 Minchinton Street, Caloundra

Canberra Friday 4 May 2007 at 10.30 am

Ainslie Football Club

52 Wakefield Ave, Ainslie, Canberra

Newcastle Monday 30 April at 2pm

Australian Hearing

241 Denison St, Broadmeadow (near Belflora)

Cairns Thursday 10 May at 6.30pm

Venue to be advised

Ballarat Wednesday 16 May at 7pm

Ballarat Business Centre

15 Dawson St South Ballarat

Hearing loops and Auslan interpreters will be available in most locations – please check with Media Access Australia for details.

If you wish to attend, please contact Media Access Australia on Ph/TTY (02) 9212 6242, Fax (02) 9121 6242 or email info@mediaaccess.org.au so we can cater accordingly.

JOB CAPACITY ASSESSMENTS

Have you undertaken a Job Capacity Assessment (JCA)? Deafness Forum, and other peak bodies, through the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) are collecting case studies from those who have been required to undergo a JCA either as a result of volunteering to return to work, or as their most recent review for the DSP.

The collection of these Case studies need not be arduous; AFDO has a volunteer staff member who is prepared to sit on the end of the telephone and take down the details in a standardised format. Please help us to collect the evidence that DHS always requires when we seek to challenge these changes to the welfare system. Please contact

info@deafnessforum.org.au if you would like to provide information for a case study and we will pass on contact details for AFDO.



upcoming events

MAY 2007			
Mon 21 May - Tue 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			
Wed 6 Jun (2.00 - 4.00pm)	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 Jul	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
AUGUST 2007			
19-25 Aug	Hearing Awareness Week	National-wide	Email: info@deafnessforum.org.au Web: www.hearingawarenessweek.org.au
23 Aug	Captioning Awards	Sydney	Email: info@deafnessforum.org.au Web: www.deafnessforum.org.au
SEPTEMBER 2007			
4-7 Sep	Hear, Speak, Live Conference It is hosted by the Deadly Ears Team - the Statewide Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Ear Health Program (RCH - Brisbane)	Gold Coast, Queensland	Bonny Marsh Deadly Ears - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ear Health Program Community Child Health Service 184 St Paul's Terrace SPRING HILL Qld 4002 Email: RCH-deadlyears@health.qld.gov.au

			Fax: 07 3250 8509
OCTOBER 2007			
14 Oct	Deafness Forum AGM	Melbourne	Email: info@deafnessforum.org.au Web: www.deafnessforum.org.au
MAY 2008			
24-25 May	5 th National Deafness Sector Summit	Canberra	Email: info@deafnessforum.org.au Web: www.deafnessforum.org.au

international noise awareness day

26 April 2007

One in six Australians are currently affected by hearing loss. That's over 3.55 million people. For more than a third of them the hearing loss was entirely preventable because it was caused by exposure to excessive noise. In fact, according to the World Health Organization, exposure to excessive noise is the major avoidable cause of permanent hearing impairment worldwide.

Continuous exposure to noise above 85 decibels can be harmful to hearing and documented research has found noise does not have to be that loud to lead to physiological changes in blood pressure, sleep, digestion and other stress-related disorders.

Observe one minute of NO NOISE from 2:15-2:16 p.m (regardless of location)

RECIPE FOR A QUIET DIET

Take these few, simple steps to preserve the peace and quiet in your life:

ALL DAY:

- Pay attention to the noise you make and respect your neighbour's right to peace and quiet.
- Turn down the volume two notches on your radios and personal stereo systems with headphones.
- Turn down the volume one notch on your television.
- Do NOT honk your horn, except in the case of imminent danger.
- Avoid noisy sports events, restaurants, rock concerts and nightclubs unless you use hearing protection.
- Replace noisy activities with quiet ones such as taking a walk, visits to libraries and museums.
- Ask your health club instructor to lower the music.
- Ask the movie theatre manager to turn down the volume.
- Wear adequate hearing protection if you must be in a noisy environment (the subway, mowing the lawn).
- Turn off the television during dinner and have a quiet conversation instead.
- Get a free hearing screening.
- Organize a town meeting to review (or develop) a local, enforceable noise ordinance.
- Spread the word about the danger of noise.

(from League for the Hard of Hearing)