



## Jury duty for deaf or blind people

"How can we let people with disabilities sit on juries? Even some judges would probably be nervous. A lot of it has to do with not knowing persons with a disability."

"As Deaf people, we're very much a part of society. It's time the justice system acknowledges that and makes various adjustments to include Deaf people as jury members."



## Too young for hearing loss?

Australian test cricket coach Justin Langer reckoned he was a bit young to be having hearing problems, but he has learned that it can affect people of any age.

Justin said there is a degree of embarrassment when it comes to admitting to hearing issues: "As an Aussie bloke and certainly in my role I couldn't show my (hearing difficulty to) players, or the public."



## Annual General Meeting

Members and friends of Deafness Forum of Australia are invited to attend the annual general meeting conducted via video conference at 2pm AEDT Wednesday 3 February.

Register [here](#) to attend the AGM.

## Australia Day

The Australia Day holiday raises complex questions about our country's national identity. At the heart of the matter is an ongoing debate about the meaning of our national day.

On the fun side are BBQs, parties, parades, performances and fireworks. In contrast, Aboriginal people mourn their history and call it 'Invasion Day'.

## Law reform needed to allow deaf and blind people on juries

By [Tammy Mills](#), legal affairs reporter for [The Age](#).

When Brent Phillips was called for jury duty in 2014 after studying criminology at university, he was keen to serve.

But Mr Phillips, who is Deaf, had an extra hurdle in the selection process.

Although people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, blind or have low vision are not expressly prohibited from serving on juries in Victoria, Auslan interpreters aren't allowed into the jury room and the Juries Act excludes people who have disability that could render them incapable of participating.



*Brent Phillips was blocked from serving on a jury in 2014. Credit: Luis Enrique Ascui*

His participation was prevented by what's called the 13th person rule that forbids non-jurors, including interpreters, in the jury room to protect the confidentiality of the deliberation process.

"I knew at the time Deaf people weren't eligible, but I thought I'd test the system," Mr Phillips said.

"It wasn't my ability to comprehend or follow the process, it was not being able to have a 13th person in the jury room."



It's something the Victorian Law Reform Commission wants to change.

"We are not inquiring into whether people who are Deaf, hard or hearing, blind or have low vision should have easier access, we are inquiring into how to give them easier access," chair of the commission, Anthony North, QC, said.

“What we have recognised is firstly the need for equal treatment, but we’re trying to overcome a misconception these people are not competent.”

The commission is investigating how people who are vision or hearing impaired could have access to jury duty, either by way of changing the law to allow a 13th person in the jury room, or by allowing access to documents converted into braille and other communication technology.

The commission’s work is not unique.

In Australia, the Australian Capital Territory became the first jurisdiction to change its law to allow for a 13th person in the jury room. And in the United States, the UK, Ireland and New Zealand, deaf and blind people have served on juries.

Dr David McKee, a deaf studies teacher in Wellington, told the ABC that his jury duty in 2005 was facilitated by two interpreters who alternated and it “proceeded quite smoothly.” He was elected as the jury foreperson.



*Ron McCallum, the former Dean of Sydney Law School, pictured in 2011. Credit: Louie Douvis*

Former Sydney Law School dean Ron McCallum AO, the first blind person to become a professor in any field, said blind and deaf people could sit on most juries and the circumstances where they couldn’t, such as where the major evidence was eyesight identification, would be few and far between.

Auslan, Professor McCallum said, is a language already used in court proceedings and qualified signers are bound by confidentiality.

“I really don’t see any problem,” Professor McCallum said.

“A lot of people think, how can this be? How can we let people with disabilities sit on juries? Even some judges would probably be nervous. A lot of it has to do with not knowing persons with a disability.”

Mr Phillips said his exclusion from jury duty was disappointing and he welcomed the commission’s intent to reform.

He pointed to one of the fundamental principles of the justice system - that people should be judged by a jury of their peers.

“As Deaf people, we’re very much a part of society. It’s time the justice system acknowledges that and makes various adjustments to include Deaf people as jury members.”

## Australian cricket coach on new path to promote hearing health

By [Allen Newton](#) for [Have-a-Go News](#)



*Ear Science Institute Australia chair John Shafer, CEO Sandra Bellekom and Justin Langer*

Australian cricket coach Justin Langer's father was about the same age as Langer is now, when he permanently lost his hearing.

Langer, now 50-years-old, started having his own hearing issues and worried that he was going down the same path as his dad.

Speaking to *Have a Go News* he said his own hearing issues had played a significant part in him taking up a role as an ambassador for the Ear Science Institute in Perth, which operates the Lions Ear Clinics.

Just before the first World Cup in 2019 he started to get ringing in his left ear.

"It was really bizarre," he said. "I describe it like in *Star Wars* when they start having their sword fights with lightsabers and this ringing is going on in my left ear.

"Then I went down for a day when I had no energy for a lot of the day – and things progressed from there. I was getting this constant tinnitus which affects a lot of people around the world, a constant ringing in my left ear and then I started getting other vestibular problems, really bad vertigo. Then I was diagnosed in January with vestibular migraines, which was having a huge impact on me personally because I just felt sick the whole time with vertigo and imbalance issues and then the ringing in my ear.

"I describe it like I was seasick and drunk for nearly nine months. But then thankfully I met an incredible vestibular physio in Perth which had a big impact, and I met an incredible neurologist Vincent Seet, who diagnosed my vestibular migraine – and from there at least I had some peace physically and mentally."

Langer said that while, at 50, he thought he was a little young to be having hearing problems, he'd since learned that these kinds of issues can affect people of any age.

“Because my father had an acoustic neuroma, which is basically a brain tumour on the auditory nerve, when he was about my age, I started getting really nervous and hoping that wasn’t what was happening to me because I was getting very similar symptoms. I had brain scans and they were all fine, but he lost his hearing permanently 20-odd years ago, after a six or seven-hour operation to have the tumour removed.”

Langer says there is also a degree of embarrassment when it comes to admitting to hearing issues.

“I’ve come to recognise it’s part of the role as a leader that you have to try and stay as calm as possible regardless of what’s going on. While I wouldn’t say I was embarrassed when my wife or the kids say ‘did you hear what I just said?’ you say ‘of course I heard’, but you start worrying that maybe something is going wrong.”

When director of the Ear Science Institute, Professor Marcus Atlas heard about Langer’s hearing issues he got in touch about him becoming an ambassador.

“The thing about the Ear Science Institute was that we have a world class research facility right on our doorstep in Perth next door to St Joseph’s Church in Subiaco which I’ve been going to since I was a little kid.”

Langer’s objective as an ambassador will be to encourage everyone to get their hearing checked and to strive for early intervention when it comes to hearing related issues, similar to his own.



*Back in the day: Justin with his mate and batting partner, Mattie Hayden*

## School readiness with UsherKids Australia

UsherKids Australia invites families to encourage educators or therapists who will be working with their children to check out the USHER IN FOCUS Webinar Series.

The sessions include important considerations for schools to ensure students with Usher syndrome have the appropriate accommodations to reduce fatigue, keep them safe in the playground and have equitable access to the curriculum.

With many children with Usher syndrome spending time in home-schooling environments in 2020, now is the time to ensure that schools have the knowledge and skills required to make 2021 a productive and enjoyable year for students with Usher syndrome.

For more information, [visit the website](#)

## Hear Here to better service

Redland City Council (QLD) has partnered with Better Hearing Australia (Brisbane) to develop a training program to help local government communicate more effectively with people with hearing loss and older residents.

Mayor Karen Williams said the “Hear Here” e-learning training package would improve seniors’ experience when accessing Council services and venues.

“When Council undertook its Age Friendly City survey in 2018, we found that hearing loss was a significant barrier for older people to participate in our community,” Cr Williams said.

“That was clearly unacceptable, so we set out to fix it by ensuring our frontline service officers were provided with the training and tools they needed to better communicate and help people experiencing hearing loss.

“We know Redlands Coast is an ageing community and Council is committed to doing all we can to ensure they can access the services and initiatives that make our city such a great place to live.”

Cr Williams said the revolutionary training package had recently been successfully trialled in Council’s customer service centre.

“The design and roll out of this training package has been made possible through an exciting partnership with Better Hearing Australia (Brisbane) to develop a specialised training package that will now become part of our corporate training, meaning it will become part of our everyday service to the community,” Cr Williams said.

“It is part of our commitment to becoming a better age-friendly city, where older people and others with hearing loss can be confident that they can engage with Council services effectively. We do not want any resident to feel isolated.

“The training will also be made available to other local governments through the Council on the Ageing Queensland, showing once again that the Redlands Coast is leading the way in creating a more accessible community.”

Better Hearing Australia (Brisbane) business manager Tony Whelan said his organisation was proud to partner with Redland City Council to deliver the Hear Here training program.

“It’s a learning environment that gives participants an understanding of some of the challenges faced by people with hearing loss, practical strategies to overcome those challenges and tools and resources to assist them in their workplace,” he said.

“We believe it sets a real benchmark in hearing loss awareness training. Now, in partnership with COTA, we’re encouraging other government authorities in Queensland to implement the Hear Here training module as well.”



# World Hearing Day

## 3 March 2021

With less than five weeks to go, the countdown has begun to the launch of the first-ever World Report on Hearing on World Hearing Day, 3 March 2021.

Through the global launch of the report, WHO intends to reach, raise awareness with, and mobilize action among national governments, international NGOs and development agencies, as well as all stakeholders in the field of hearing care. Please find below important information regarding the launch of the report and the World Hearing Day 2021:

**Pre-launch webinar on 3 February 2021:** to “*Countdown to World Hearing Day (WHD) and launch of the World Report on Hearing (WRH)*” WHO is organizing two webinars with the aim to share its final launch plans and materials. To know more and register, click [here](#)

**WHO hearing care FB page:** Join the WHO hosted [Facebook group](#), that will facilitate planning and conduct of WHD 2021 and WRH launch activities. In addition, it provides a platform to promote ear and hearing care to audiences worldwide.

**Advocacy and awareness materials:** The following materials are available through WHO website:

- [Communications Toolkit](#)
- [World Report on Hearing FAQ](#)
- [Template for developing a country infographic](#)
- [Awareness flyers on:](#) discharging ears, ear care and tips for hearing aid users (in 6 UN languages and many more)
- [Branding materials](#) including bags, T-shirts, FB frames and covers, website banners
- Embargoed materials (Infographics-global and regional, WRH summary, policy brief) are available upon request and after [registration of event](#)
- Information on hear-a-thon 2021: Click [here](#) to learn more

**Social media #hashtags:** Please use the following hashtags in all promotional events:

- #hearathon2021
- #worldhearingday
- #hearingcare
- #safelistening

**Note:** #hearingcare should preferably be used in all activities related to launch of the Report, when sharing these over Facebook and Twitter

**Registration:** If you have not already done so, please [Register your World Hearing Day / World Report on Hearing event](#)

**Join the [webinar](#)** on 3 February 2021 to learn more!



*Photo: Leonie and Alex*

As people return to work from their holidays they are learning about the death of Leonie Jackson.

Leonie was the chief executive for the Deaf Society NSW and a principal adviser to Deafness Forum on matters relating to Deaf community culture, bilingualism, education policy and the NDIS.

You can read the background to her untimely death and comments from her family and friends in this article in [The Sydney Morning Herald](#)

David Brady said on behalf of Deafness Forum: "The passing of Leonie means the deafness sector has lost a great friend and ally in working together to achieve outcome for all Australians with a hearing loss.

"She made a tremendous impact on the issues of concern to her Deaf community constituency, families, and organisations in and around the deafness sector.

"Her loss will be felt for a long time by many members, and current and past Directors and staff of Deafness Forum of Australia. Our thoughts are with Leonie's family and friends."



The stars are not wanted now: put out every one  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun  
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

## Registration for National Relay Service users

If you are a NRS user and want to continue to use the service, you need to register before 20 April. It is a good idea to register early. To register, you need to complete a form and provide a copy of a support document that has your name and address on it. You only need to register once.

There are different ways you can register

- Online at <https://nrschat.nrscall.gov.au/nrs/registration>
- Users of NRS Chat and NRS Captions can also register from the NRS call pages

By post:

- You can download a registration form online, complete it, and post it with a copy of your support document to:  
National Relay Service  
PO Box 691  
Ballarat VIC 3353
- The NRS Helpdesk can also post the form to you if needed.

By email:

- Download and print the registration form, complete it, then scan and email this along with your support document to [helpdesk@relayservice.com.au](mailto:helpdesk@relayservice.com.au)
- When you fill in the registration form, make sure to include all the phone numbers you make NRS calls from. If you make Video Relay calls, include your Skype ID.
- For more information about registering see [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

To stay up-to-date with the latest information about registration, sign up to receive [Accesshub News and Alerts](#).

If you need help to register or have any questions, please contact the [NRS Helpdesk](#).

The [NRS Helpdesk](#) is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm (AEST, excluding national public holidays). You can also leave a message outside these hours and a Helpdesk staff member will get back to you.

There are a number of ways to make contact with Helpdesk staff:

Phone: 1800 555 660

TTY: 1800 555 630

SMS: 0416 001 350

Online: <https://www.communications.gov.au/node/19659>

Email: [helpdesk@relayservice.com.au](mailto:helpdesk@relayservice.com.au)

## HEARING MATTERS AUSTRALIA - EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Position Vacant. Applications welcome.



**Location** - Room 600, Ground Floor, Australian Hearing Hub, Macquarie University, NSW  
**Hours** - 30 hrs per fortnight as employee or contractor. The position may be split or shared.  
**Remuneration** - \$40,000 pa including superannuation, sick leave and annual leave.  
The Executive Officer is a paid position within a volunteer organisation.

**Hearing Matters Australia (HMA)** is dedicated to helping Australians with hearing loss whose primary method of communication is through speech. We provide information and support to people with hearing loss and their families, and we advocate on their behalf to all levels of government and the corporate sector. We are a voluntary, self-funded, not-for-profit organisation incorporated in New South Wales. An important aspect of HMA is the publishing of a membership magazine four times per year.

**The Executive Officer** will provide continuity and efficiency to Hearing Matters Australia. They will be required participate in and support activities of the organisation including advocacy, co-ordination of volunteers, communicating with members, and membership drives. An awareness of issues concerning the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (D/HoH) community, insight into living with hearing loss, and ability to communicate effectively with D/HoH people is an essential criterion for this role.

The Executive Officer is expected to be on site at the Australian Hearing Hub at least two days per week as it is important for HMA to maintain an active presence within the Hearing Hub community and for visiting members. While the Executive Officer will work out of the HMA office for the majority of hours, some remote work arrangements may also be negotiated.

The Executive Officer will need to work independently some of the time, whilst maintaining a high level of communication and transparency via online communications, and document and task sharing. Familiarity with online document sharing platforms will be an advantage.

They will be proactive, enthusiastic about making changes, and demonstrate initiative to improve HMA's operations and membership interactions. Recruiting and driving membership will be an essential part of the role. Experience working in membership-based organisations would be an advantage.

In addition, the Executive Officer will need to be familiar with or willing to learn MYOB, Microsoft Office, social media and website software. The HMA office currently has both Apple and Windows 10 applications and training will be available in these systems if required for the right candidate.

### **The Executive Officer will:**

1. Be the primary point of contact for HMA members, public enquiries and business contacts, and primary responder to any matters raised.
2. Work with the HMA Board, HMA members and prospective members and volunteers to support their activities on behalf of HMA
3. Advocate for and support D/deaf and hard of hearing people when the opportunity arises,
4. Manage the HMA website and social media, including updating and monitoring news and information pages, member communications, membership and payment systems.
5. Manage membership drives and renewals, including responding to membership enquiries
6. Administer the association including being responsible for banking, office management, account payments, and liaison with regulatory organisations such as ATO and Fair Trading NSW as required.
7. Work with and support the Board to develop and actualise a vision for HMA as a leading self-help organization.

*HMA is committed to providing an inclusive and diverse workplace where all employees and volunteers are valued. We encourage applications from people from diverse backgrounds.*

For further information or to apply, contact HMA President, Christine Hunter at [christine.hunter@hearingmattersaustralia.org](mailto:christine.hunter@hearingmattersaustralia.org).

Applications should include a covering letter and CV.

**Applications close on 28 February 2021.**

## Australia Day

Each year, the Australia Day holiday raises complex questions about our country's national identity. At the heart of the matter is an ongoing debate about the meaning of our national day.

On the fun side are BBQs, parties, parades, performances and fireworks.

In contrast, Aboriginal people mourn their history and call it 'Invasion Day'.

The historical events of 26 January mean that many Australians perceive it as the commencement of a long history of violence and trauma.

Dr Lowitja O'Donoghue, Aboriginal Australian of the Year 1984 said, "Let us find a day on which we can all feel included, and can celebrate with pride our common Australian identity."

Aboriginal hip-hop musician Jeswon (Thundamentals) expressed his hope:

Some say what's in a date?  
Some say what's in a name?  
Australia day  
Invasion day  
Homie, that's one and the same  
And I ain't pointing no fingers  
I ain't throwing no blame  
Just saying that we can do better  
You know that it's time for a change



## Annual General Meeting

Members and friends of Deafness Forum of Australia are invited to attend the annual general meeting conducted via video conference at 2pm AEDT Wednesday 3 February.

The meeting will:

- accept the minutes of the previous AGM
- accept the annual report, auditor's report and annual financial statements
- appoint a paid auditor
- confirm appointment of directors

Register [here](#) to attend the AGM. But if you can't attend, use [this proxy form](#) to appoint another person to vote on your behalf at the meeting.



**Professor Harvey Coates** will deliver the 2021 Libby Harricks Memorial Oration in a webcast from Perth in Western Australia to mark World Hearing Day in March.

The Libby Harricks Memorial Oration series began in 1999. It raises awareness of issues of hearing health, deafness and ear and balance disorders.

Harvey Coates has a lifelong interest in otitis media in Aboriginal children.

Read more [here](#)

## Working from home, or living at work?



IG: ZENACOMICS

## Know someone who would like to get One in Six?

Drop us a line: [hello@deafnessforum.org.au](mailto:hello@deafnessforum.org.au)

We acknowledge the traditional owners of country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay respect to them and their cultures, and to elders past, present and future. We acknowledge the challenge of overcoming high levels of ear health issues among First Nation people and its role in Closing the Gap. We acknowledge the risk to indigenous sign languages of disappearing and the importance of Auslan.

People with disability have and continue to be subjected to isolation, exploitation, violence, and abuse in institutions. We thank the Australian Parliament for its bipartisan support of a Royal Commission into the evil committed on people with disability.

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