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## Hazardous noise exposure and tinnitus

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## Big step forward in inclusive education

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## Solutions for hearing better in your workplace

Employers are required to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with hearing loss. What are some ways employers can make it easier for individuals to cope in the workplace?

## Canberra's first cochlear implantee can't help but give back

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## Read Our Lips Australia

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Deafness Forum Australia announces the launch of an innovative online course to teach you how to lipread at home or at work. **Read Our Lips Australia** is a self-paced e-learning platform that is dedicated to supporting those with hearing loss and their families, by improving their quality of life through increased communication skills.

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

Deafness Forum Australia is a Voice for All. It is the peak body representing the views and interests of the 4 million Australians who live with hearing loss, have ear or balance disorders, people who also communicate using Australian Sign Language, and their families and supporters. Our mission is to make hearing health & wellbeing a national priority in Australia.

## Coda caused an Oscars upset

By Steven McIntosh

Entertainment reporter, [BBC News](#)



Image source, Alamy

Statistically, Coda should not have been a strong contender to win best picture at the Oscars.

The small, independent film had just three nominations but walked away from the 94th Academy Awards with trophies for each of them - including the big one, best picture.

An acronym for Child of Deaf Adults, Coda tells the story of the hearing daughter of a deaf family, who has to balance the demands of helping them in their daily lives with her own ambitions to be a singer.

Welsh actress Emilia Jones, who plays the lead role in the movie, said she was "on cloud nine" at the film's Oscar success.

"What our movie has done, I think, it's brought people together... and I'm really hoping it opens doors," she told the BBC at the Vanity Fair Oscars Party.

In a touching moment, the audience applauded in sign language as the cast and crew accepted the best film prize.

Backstage, Jones said she was delighted to see nominees like Andrew Garfield and Ariana DeBose signing with her co-star and best supporting actor winner Troy Kotsur.

"It's been really beautiful watching people adapt and change and learn more signs," said Jones, who herself learned sign language to appear in the film. "I'm honestly so happy".

# Canberra's first cochlear implantee can't help but give back

[James Coleman](#) writing for [Riotact](#)



Desley Rocks is giving back through the Hearing Aider's Program.

Desley Rocks has been dealing with hearing issues from birth, progressively worsening to the point a cochlear implant is the only way she can experience sound today. But none of this has stopped her relentless drive to help hundreds of others dealing with the same predicament.

Today, she can be found cleaning hearing aids at nursing homes across the ACT, a cheery face greeting residents and staff alike.

Desley scraped through school – with her ever-faithful mum ever by her side – and then into the workforce, losing several jobs due to her condition.

“I worked at a pharmacist, but seeing as doctors would ring through for the scripts, and I couldn't hear them properly, it was decided I was going to end up killing a few people,” she says.

From there it was on to a fashion store before she moved to Darwin and joined the public service, met her husband and started a family. It still wasn't to be happily ever after yet, though.

“When my son was about seven years old, my hearing was getting worse and worse, and I had ear infections all the time from the humidity,” she says.

Her husband later took up a job at the Canberra Hospital, and the family moved here in 2000. Desley completely lost her hearing at the age of 48 but also became the first person to receive a cochlear implant here in the capital.

Desley is now the coordinator for the John James Foundation Hearing Aiders Program, inspired by a similar program in the UK, and locally introduced in 2010 by the ACT Deafness Resource Centre.

It was the first of its kind in Australia.

She cleans and maintains hearing aids for the residents in 17 Canberra nursing homes, but ACT Deafness Resource Centre CEO Glenn Vermeulen says it doesn't stop there.

“It enables the already stretched aged-care staff to focus on other areas of concern for their residents, ensuring a holistic approach to an individual's care,” he says.

“Working hearing aids means residents can communicate better, leading to more meaningful social interaction with nursing home staff, fellow residents, friends and family.”

Initially, several volunteers were also on board, but these have dropped off over the years.

“It started with the former CEO recruiting volunteers and I was supposed to be the coordinator, but when you have volunteers, you have to have two or three people assigned to each nursing home in case one can’t work,” Desley says.



Cleaning hearing aids is a delicate task. Photo: Mark Paton.

The program started on a grant from the ACT Government and is now partially funded by the John James Foundation. This covers most of Desley’s wage, but the program still has to charge a small fee to make ends meet.

“Every time we visit nursing homes, they can’t stop raving about what a wonderful program it is. But as soon as management hears there is a small fee associated with it, of \$180 a month, they back out.”

Desley says nursing homes do maintain hearing aids as part of their normal care routine, but due to the size of the centres and the stretched resources, it can often fall by the wayside.

Desley’s received numerous commendations for her work because she goes the extra mile, doing a lot more than changing batteries. If she notices something isn’t quite right, she is often the first to alert staff so specialist care in the hands of a doctor or audiologist can be arranged.

“One of the biggest problems I find is that people are putting batteries in incorrectly, either the wrong size or the wrong way around.”

It isn’t just about the hearing aids, either. Glenn says providing humane and personal care makes all the difference.

“That’s the big thing. There’s a real ignorance of hearing loss out there.”

## More than a quarter of Australian workers have ringing in the ears: study



Around 1 out of 4 Australian workers experience ringing in the ears – called tinnitus – and those in the construction, automotive, transportation and agricultural industries may be at higher risk.

Australian and Norwegian researchers analysed data from the Australian Workplace Exposure Survey - Hearing, examining responses from nearly 5,000 adult workers contacted between June 2016 and March 2017. They found that 26.5% of respondents reported experiencing tinnitus, which causes an individual to perceive sound in one or both ears even though no external source of that sound exists. Of that group, 6.9% have constant tinnitus, which the researchers believe translates to be more than half a million people countrywide.

After adjusting for occupation, the researchers estimate the prevalence of constant tinnitus is highest among automotive workers (16.7%), drivers (13%), farmers (12.1%) and workers in other trades (10.4%).

Additionally, male workers ages 55-64 “were most likely to suffer from constant tinnitus,” said Kate Lewkowski, lead study author and audiologist at Curtin University School of Population Health.

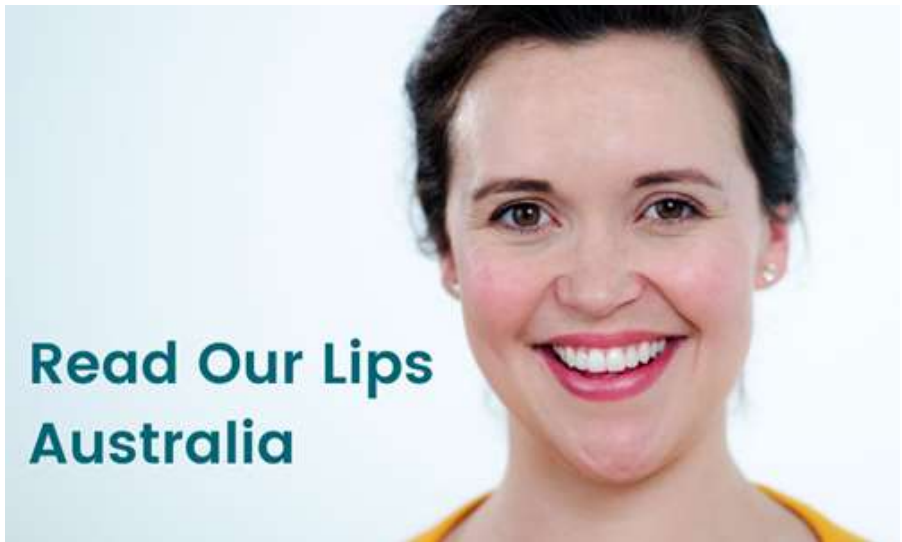
Lewkowski and her colleagues say that “workplace practices and conditions that increase the risk of tinnitus should be examined, and targeted workplace prevention strategies developed.”

However, co-author and Curtin School of Population Health distinguished professor Lin Fritschi and her fellow researchers suggest chemical exposure may also play a role. Fritschi used the transportation industry as an example.

“As drivers are not usually exposed to the same levels of loud noise as some other workers, it is interesting that this workforce has a high prevalence of tinnitus,” she said in the release. “One theory is that other workplace exposures, such as carbon monoxide in vehicle exhaust, may be contributing to the risk.

“While there is a documented link between hazardous noise exposure and tinnitus, the role workplace chemicals play in the development of tinnitus requires further detailed examination.”

The study was [published](#) in the March issue of *Medical Journal of Australia*. From [Safety and Health](#)



Deafness Forum Australia announces the launch of an innovative online course to teach you how to lipread at home or at work.

**Read Our Lips Australia** is a self-paced e-learning platform that is dedicated to supporting those with hearing loss and their families, by improving their quality of life through increased communication skills.

Created by experienced lipreading instructors, users are guided through online modules at their own pace to identify key mouth movements. Identifying and understanding lip movements is a skill that can be improved with regular practice, time and patience.

Read Our Lips Australia is the first of its kind in this country and the course is available to purchase online. It has been made possible by funding from the Australian Government Department of Social Services. Go to [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au) for more information.

Read Our Lips Australia is a great introduction to lipreading. You might find it easy in some parts and really challenging in others, but it is always enjoyable.

You can do it in your own time and at your own pace. [www.readourlips.com.au](http://www.readourlips.com.au)

# NSW schools provide Auslan classes to students next year

By [Ruby Cornish](#) for [ABC News](#)



Auslan is the first language for many students at Strathfield South High School. (ABC News: Ruby Cornish)

From next year, schools across New South Wales will have the option of providing Auslan classes to students from kindergarten to Year 10.

It is the first time Australian sign language has been included as a syllabus in NSW and is part of a broader curriculum review currently being undertaken by the state government.

Education Minister Sarah Mitchell described it as a "big step forward" in inclusive education.

"Auslan is a great national language, one that we should be proud of and encouraging in our schools," she said.

"We've got more than 30 languages that are available for students to study ... but one really obvious omission was Auslan."

Strathfield South High School in Sydney's inner-west provides specialised classes for deaf and hard-of-hearing students. It will be among the first to introduce the syllabus into classrooms.

Deputy principal Danielle Coonan said many of them had never accessed structured Auslan lessons.

"For many of our students, Auslan is their first language, so to be able to formally study that at school is incredible ... to support them socially, to support their access to the deaf community," she said.

"We're hoping to start with our Year 7 students, so as soon as they enter the school they start learning Auslan. I think we will have a big uptake."

Year 9 student Andy Chen, who is hard of hearing, said he was pleased that his peers would have an opportunity to sign.

"It's good to learn Auslan because when you meet some people who have hearing loss you can sign and they can understand," he said.



Andy welcomes the idea that fellow students will know how to sign. *(ABC News)*

Some schools already teach Auslan as a School Developed Board Endorsed Course, which they must design themselves when the needs of their students cannot be accommodated.

Speaking through an interpreter, Strathfield High School learning support officer Clint Branson said learning Auslan at a young age would help deaf and people who are hard of hearing later in life.

"After school, they'll be able to get involved in the deaf community and deaf social events, so it will be very worthwhile for them," he said.



Mr Branson says learning Auslan early will have long-lasting benefits for students. *(ABC News: Ruby Cornish)*

Ms Coonan said everybody, young and old alike, should make the effort to learn a little Auslan if they could.

"I'm learning myself, I'm doing my Certificate II so I'm slowly getting some words. I'm loving it," she said.



# NATIONAL HEARING DOG DAY

Tuesday April 19th, 2022



National Hearing Dog Day will be held for the first time on Tuesday 19 April. On this day 40 years ago, the first Hearing Assistance Dog in Australia was delivered to someone suffering profound hearing loss. More at [www.lionshearingdogs.com.au/hearingdogday](http://www.lionshearingdogs.com.au/hearingdogday)

## Rehab at home for adults



MED-EL has released an exciting new rehabilitation resource suitable for adults using any brand of hearing implant. **Rehab at Home for Adults** consists of 13 videos that explore ideas and activities designed to help adults who use hearing technology rehabilitate at home. All fully captioned to assist those new to listening, the series progresses through increasingly more challenging Everyday Listening Goals. The first video, which demonstrates the Ling sound test, was released on 28<sup>th</sup> March; [Rehab at Home for Adults: Mastering Everyday Listening Goals - The MED-EL Blog \(medel.com\)](https://medel.com/blog/rehab-at-home-for-adults-mastering-everyday-listening-goals). New videos will be posted once per month alongside a blog post with additional tips, strategies and rehabilitation resources. All the videos were produced in Queensland over the past eight months. They were filmed and directed by a MED-EL cochlear implant recipient and feature MED-EL hearing implant users and their families telling their genuine rehabilitation stories. MED-EL Australasia is proud to have been given this opportunity to produce a global rehabilitation product that will contribute to hearing implant users around the world reaching their listening potential. Subscribe for free to the MED-EL blog to receive notification of the release of each video. [Subscribe - The MED-EL Blog \(medel.com\)](https://medel.com/blog/subscribe)



# SKILLSIQ

CAPABLE PEOPLE MAKE  
CLEVER BUSINESS

## Translating and Interpreting - open for consultation

SkillsIQ has undertaken a project to update the Diploma of Translating, Diploma of Interpreting, Advanced Diploma of Translating, Advanced Diploma of Interpreting - this **includes Auslan** interpreting.

SkillsIQ is a national not-for-profit organisation supporting industry to develop standards to equip the people-facing workforce with the right skills for jobs now and in the future.

A consultation involving a broad range of stakeholders is now being conducted to obtain feedback on the drafts, as developed by the Translating and Interpreting Technical Advisory Committee.

Please [click here](#) to access the documents, including a Consultation Guide.

SkillsIQ will be undertaking a number of webinars to engage industry stakeholders. To register for a webinar, please [click here](#).

For more information, contact Devika Mudaliar at [devika.mudaliar@skillsiq.com.au](mailto:devika.mudaliar@skillsiq.com.au)

**To Fit or Not to Fit!**  
Strategies for Fitting  
no-to-mild Hearing Losses

with Dr. Brent Edwards

April 6th 2022 at 6:00pm EDT  
April 7th 2022 at 8:00am AEDT

  
NATIONAL ACOUSTIC  
LABORATORIES

Should hearing devices be recommended to people with no-to-mild hearing loss?

How well can hearing devices benefit them?

[Register here](#) for Dr. Brent Edwards' Soundbites webinar 'To Fit or Not to Fit! Strategies for Fitting no-to-mild Hearing Losses'.

## Solutions for hearing better in your workplace



From [Hearing Review](#)

Government figures estimate that 22 million employees in the United States are exposed to potentially damaging noise at work every year. US\$242 million is spent by employers on workers compensation for hearing-related claims.

Employers in the U.S. (and here in Australia) are required to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with hearing loss. What are some ways employers can make it easier for individuals to cope in the workplace?

In this article, we'll share the highlights, edited and adapted from the [Hear-it website](#).

Limit background noise such as radiators, radios, ventilators, or speakerphones. These sounds may obscure a hearing aid user's ability to understand conversation as well as being distracting.

Modify the ringer sound on a telephone to help a person distinguish the sound from others that may sound similar. Add a flashing indicator light or vibration option as a back-up if the ringer cannot be heard.

Being in a well-lit room allows the person to view the people who are speaking. This can be crucial for lipreading and viewing facial expressions during a conversation.

Keep as few sound sources as possible in the room. Having to choose between competing sources of sound at varying volumes can be both distracting and confusing for people with hearing issues.

Fitting a doorbell with a vibrator or flashing light alert can be helpful for notification of visitors.

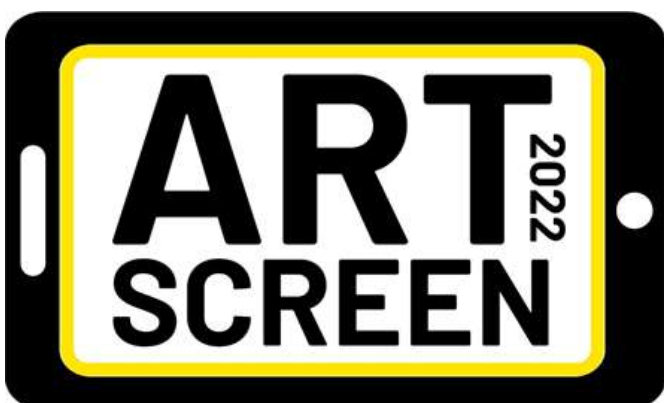
Certain environments such as bare, hard surfaces produce an echo, increasing hearing difficulty. Installing acoustic waffles, cushions, carpeting, curtains, and partition walls can improve acoustics.

Sending emails or other written messages is another good way to supplement communications.

There are numerous amplification technologies available, including hearing aids, personal sound amplification products, meeting/class room amplification systems, telecoils, and more.



On World Hearing Day (3 March), Deafness Council Western Australia held a webinar event "[You Can Ask That](#)". A range of people shared their hearing loss journey. And following this was a discussion involving four hearing health professionals.



Applications are now open for [ArtScreen 2022](#). This project supports video artists from NSW with disability or who are d/Deaf to develop video artworks for International Day of People with Disability.

## Know someone who deserves their own copy of One in Six?

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

Contact us to receive this publication in an alternative file type.

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