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Ear health HAPEE program for First Nations kids

Hearing loss and ear disease affect one in three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. One Naaguja mother and musician is calling on families to get behind a Federal Government program picking up ear health issues early.

Online learning hard for students with disability

Higher education institutions need to respond to the learning needs of all students to ensure that students have positive learning experiences and complete their qualifications. Flexibility is needed in procurement procedures and teaching strategies. And higher education institutions need to be more innovative to meet challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Long-term impacts of constant noise

Noise affects attention, concentration and thinking. Given the high levels of noise in which we live and work, is it any wonder that Australia has a high prevalence of people with hearing impairment? One person in four is likely to develop permanent hearing loss as a consequence of excessive and damaging levels of noise.

One in Six of us lives with deafness or ear disorders. Hearing impairment is the most common disability of adulthood.

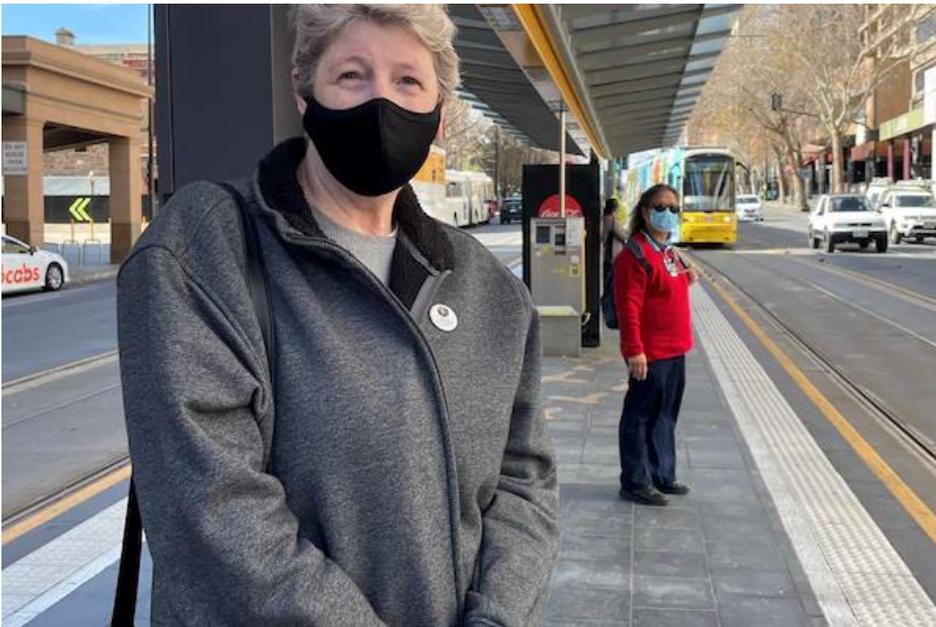
Our mission is to *Make ear and hearing health & wellbeing a National Priority in Australia*

Don't be a snitch, says SA Premier

By ABC Radio Adelaide

South Australians have been urged not to do in people without masks because they may have a legitimate exemption under emergency management directions.

Masks are mandatory in indoor public places like shops and bars, personal care settings such as hairdressers and beauty salons, public transport including in taxis and rideshare vehicles, airports and airplanes, health care, and in high-risk settings like prisons and residential aged care.



Adelaidean Julie Coulthard was among those wearing masks on public transport this week. (ABC News: Leah MacLennan)

SA Premier Steven Marshall told ABC Radio Adelaide "We don't need to be the monitor for everybody's behaviour here in SA; we've got to look after ourselves and our family, our local community. There are some very legitimate reasons why some people can't wear masks."

This included people communicating with those who were deaf or hard of hearing and visibility of the mouth was essential, and those using hearing aids of a style that made regular masks and their ear loops difficult to wear when an alternative was not available.

"What we're really looking for is a lot of kindness in SA at the moment," Mr Marshall said.

Growing Space founder and director Sam Paor said a lot of people relied on visual cues to communicate because they may have some hearing loss.

"I've got a hearing loss, and I can always hear better when I can see, so I think it affects a lot more people than we might give it credit for, a lot of older people in the community, for example," she said.

The disability advocate said with students now required to wear masks for the first time, some students with disabilities may feel isolated and she hoped educators would utilise the time to teach others a little Auslan.

Wired by sound: the long-term impacts of constant noise

I have a favourite café that I have patronised regularly for many years. It's often crowded and noisy and, until this year, I coped with that by taking my coffee early – before the café ambience became painfully loud. But sadly, I can't go there anymore. In addition to their noisy background, they have now introduced muzak, and my tolerance for pain and discomfort has been exceeded.



Discomfort is only the beginning – excessive environmental noise is actually very bad for your health. It's responsible for over a third of hearing loss in Australia.

Even a temporary loss of hearing acuity can become permanent after consistent exposure to noise.

Loud music is probably the most obvious example of noise that damages hearing. But cafes and restaurants are also full of noise, loud speech, and loud laughter. The ceilings are low, the walls have no insulation, and the floors are bare – all of this creates a space that amplifies noise.

Noise affects attention, concentration and thinking. Given the high levels of noise in which we live and work, is it any wonder that Australia has a high prevalence of people with hearing impairment? One person in four is likely to develop permanent hearing loss as a consequence of excessive and damaging levels of noise.

Repeated exposure to noise at entertainment venues, via ear phones and electronic devices, heavy traffic, and loud conversation, among other things, puts young people at risk of ongoing damage to their hearing, which will worsen with age. This will affect their communication, learning capacities, and capacity to function well in the community.

There's no medical treatment for hearing damage (apart from hearing aids), and parents seem unaware of the risks and the need to protect their children from excessive noise exposure.

Prevention is the best option.

Eliminating or at least controlling all noise sources to harmless levels is needed to prevent environmentally-induced hearing impairment.

From [The Conversation](#)

Naaguja mum-musician Emma Donovan urges support for ear health HAPEE program for kids

By [Lisa Favazzo](#) writing for The Geraldton Guardian (WA)



Hearing loss and ear disease affect one in three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

One Naaguja mother and musician is calling on families to get behind a Federal Government program picking up ear health issues early.

Hearing Australia launched a campaign to encourage First Nations parents to access the ear health project Hearing Assessment Program Early Ears. Open to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children under six who haven't attended school yet, the program is available at 240 locations country-wide — including in Geraldton and Wiluna — thanks to a \$30 million Australian Government investment in First Nations ear health.

A TV and radio push will feature Emma Donovan, a Naaguja and Gumbaynggirr woman whose father Neville Councillor is from Geraldton. It also features her daughters Kwilena Councillor, 2, and Jirriga Councillor, 4.

Ms Donovan has been on stage and in front of the camera since she was a little girl, appearing first with her family band The Donovans and now with The Putbacks.

The cause has a special place in Ms Donovan's heart, with the program detecting her daughter Kwilena's hearing loss early, making way for quick intervention. "Good hearing makes such a difference to how kids interact with family, friends and community and to how they learn at school".

"They also need good hearing to learn about our 60,000-year-old history, our beautiful stories and our enduring culture and connection to country."

Hearing Australia's managing director Mr Kim Terrell said: "With the support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health services across Australia, we've helped over 8000 First Nations children aged 0-6 over the past 12 months. This is in addition to the services we provide to some 10,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults each year.

Read the article on the Geraldton Guardian (Western Australia) [website](#)

Optus campaign falls foul of the Deaf community

The TikTok-inspired campaign is called #SignYes and features prominent Australians including ex-Olympian Ian Thorpe, F1 racer Daniel Riccardo and Paralympians Ellie Cole and Nic Beveridge and encourages everyday Aussies to learn Auslan signs such as “How are you?”.

Optus was planning to use it as part of its Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games campaigns. But Optus’ good intentions appear to have caught the ire of the very folk it was campaigning for.

A letter sent to Optus by Deaf Victoria has labelled the campaign “disappointing” and unconsultative.

The letter reads: “We have had numerous Deaf community members and allies raise this issue and to date, one official complaint has been made to us which we are now escalating via this letter. While we are excited to see further promotion and increased awareness of ‘sign language’ through this campaign (we assume your intent was Auslan, the language of deaf people in Australia – however this was not clear), we were disappointed to see how this campaign was designed and rolled out.”



The letter was accompanied by a YouTube clip featuring Deaf Victoria’s general manager Philip Waters at <https://youtu.be/3btGtf1fnuo>

In a statement to B&T magazine, an Optus spokesperson said it has since paused the campaign and added the telco was “incredibly sorry to anyone who was offended” by it.

A B&T reader responded to the campaign via B&T’s online comments section: “As a Deaf person, I am shocked by this campaign. Where is the Deaf consultancy? Where is the Deaf representation? You are using Auslan (and are incorrectly calling it broadly as sign language) the language of the Deaf community and have not highlighted them. It is their language.

“Auslan is the language of the Australian deaf community. Another way to think about it would be to think of a native indigenous language. If this campaign was using your ambassadors to encourage people to ‘say yes’ in a native indigenous language (that they don’t use or know how to), would it be suitable? No, it wouldn’t and imagine that backlash.”

Read the entire article here at the [B&T website](#)

Online learning hard for students with disability: how to help

Lockdown measures to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus included closure of both basic and higher education institutions.

Because of the pandemic, most educational institutions, including universities, abruptly went online. Online learning management systems and platforms were consequently adopted.



The preliminary findings of a project by University of South Africa point to an urgent need for collaboration among educators, government and the private sector particularly as we wrestle with COVID-19. To prevent further drop-outs, lecturers need to acquire more inclusive digital teaching so students with disabilities can also complete their qualifications and live sustainable lives.

Universities can, for example, partner with the corporate sector to subsidise inclusive teacher training and reskilling initiatives. Failure to transform teacher training strategies could lead to an even higher dropout rate for students with disabilities. It could also lead to the delayed realisation of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#). This right entails ensuring “the provision of an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning”.

To ensure that students have positive learning experiences and complete their qualifications, higher education institutions need to respond to the learning needs of all students.

Teacher training curricula must change to prepare academics for current societal realities. Teaching and learning in the digital age requires all academics to constantly undergo training on learning design for online teaching and assessment. Training must consider the needs of diverse learners.

Flexibility is needed in procurement procedures and teaching strategies. And higher education institutions need to be more innovative to meet challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Governments need to view education as a basic necessity and give teachers and academic staff the status of essential services.

Lastly, teachers need to familiarise themselves with the [Universal Design for Learning principles](#). This is meant to open curriculum design and teaching platforms to accommodate diverse learning needs.

From [The Conversation](#)

New report - young Australians with a hearing loss, who were fitted with a hearing aid or cochlear implant in 2020 by Hearing Australia

Hearing Australia has published its report on young people it provided with audiological and hearing aid or cochlear implant speech processor support services, who were under the age of 26 years at 31 December 2020.

The report, for the 2020 calendar year, provides information at national and state / territory levels and includes:

- Number of children who have an aided hearing loss
- Number of newly fitted children in the 2020 calendar year
- Fitting rates of children, teens and young adults with hearing loss
- Hearing loss distribution of aided/implanted children and young adults
- Fitting rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients under 26 years of age.

The major characteristics of the report show:

- All aided and implanted children and young adults less than 26 years of age at 31 December 2020 who are identified as being 'current and active' as at 31 December 2020
- Data on children and young adults who were first fitted with hearing aids from 1 January to 31 December 2020.

Summary

Hearing Australia provided audiological services, hearing aid and cochlear implant support to 26,290 citizens and permanent residents under 26 years of age, of which 2,165 (8 percent) were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

- 23,016 were aged under 21 years
 - 8.8 percent were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- 3,274 were aged from 21-25 years
 - 5 percent were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

During 2020 a total of 2,881 clients was fitted with hearing aids for the first time. 399 of these were children born in 2020. Of the clients first fitted during 2020,

- 2,611 were aged under 21 at the time of first fitting
- 270 were aged 21-25 years at the time of first fitting

The Hearing Australia report is available on its website at the following link:
<https://www.hearing.com.au/HearingAustralia/media/assets/Documents/2020-Demographics-of-Aided-Young-Australians-at-31-December-2020.pdf>

Perth woman shares what it's like to grow up deaf

Hannah Paine writing for [news.com.au](https://www.news.com.au)

In high school, Rhianna Clarke remembers being asked a question she did not have the answer to – it led to a stunning diagnosis.

More than 20 years on, Rhianna Clarke still remembers that day clearly. She was in a year 9 science lesson and looking at her textbook when her teacher asked her a question: had she done the homework that was assigned last class?

“Because it wasn’t written up on the board I didn’t do it. I didn’t know that I was supposed to have homework,” Ms Clarke told [news.com.au](https://www.news.com.au).

Growing up in a small country town in Western Australia, Ms Clarke never knew anyone who was deaf. It wasn’t until a school nurse flagged soon after the science class incident that Ms Clarke’s hearing might be an issue that doctors began investigating.

“I thought that what I was going through at the time, I thought that it was the same for everybody.”

But getting a diagnosis wasn’t simple, with doctors instead suggesting Ms Clarke was making up her hearing problems for attention.

“He asked my mum if there was a possibility I’d been abused, because that’s why I was so off to the side, I wouldn’t answer questions,” she said.

Eventually, Ms Clarke was fitted with a hearing aid at 14 – which she said was life-changing – and at 17, she moved to Perth where she was able to connect with other deaf teenagers.

“I had friends telling me, ‘Oh you can put captions on your TV,’” she said. “Then I was asking, ‘How did you go when you were in class at school, how did you cope with that?’ And then one of my girlfriends said to me, ‘Oh I had a note taker,’ and I was thinking, ‘What, you had a note taker and I had nothing.’”

While Ms Clarke was able to form connections with people her age who were deaf, she still faced difficulty at work or in social settings. Dating was worse, with Ms Clarke dreading the idea of talking to someone on the phone.

“If I could turn back the clock and be hearing? Yes, I would,” she said. “It would make my life so much easier, because I come from a hearing family and I would have all those opportunities that I missed out on.”

Ms Clarke hopes that by sharing her story, people who don’t struggle with their hearing can be more empathetic to those who are deaf.

“Deaf people are not stupid, just because you’re deaf doesn’t mean you don’t know things,” she said. “I think that the hearing community just need to be aware that if someone can’t hear you, don’t brush them off.”



Auslan assistance for the Census



[We have Auslan video assistance available](#) to help you complete the Census household form.

Introduction and instructions

[Introduction video](#) (open new tab)

[Household form instructions](#) (open new tab)

[How to get more help](#) (open new tab)

Census form questions

We have [Auslan assistance](#) (open new tab) for every question on the paper household form.

Frequently asked questions

There are Auslan videos to assist you with [Frequently asked Census questions](#) (open new tab).

More information about Census questions

See [Help with questions asked in the Census](#) for more information about:

Why we ask each Census question?

How to answer Census questions?

Closed captioning and transcripts

We have closed captioning and transcripts available for our video content.

To download a transcript:

open the video link

click the download button in the top right hand corner of the video titled 'Download transcript'.



When selected, a PDF or Word version of the transcript will download.

National Relay Service

The [National Relay Service](#) is available to assist you to [call us](#).

Auslan videos about the Census

[Why have a Census?](#)

[How do I complete my Census?](#)

[Ever wonder how Census data is used?](#)



Creating new guidelines for Teleaudiology services

Audiology Australia is working with Deafness Forum of Australia, its members and friends on a project to develop teleaudiology guidelines for hearing health care practitioners in Australia.

Deafness Forum of Australia is a member of the Working Group overseeing this project bringing an important consumer perspective.

What is teleaudiology? It involves a hearing health care practitioner delivery hearing services to a person in a different location. Teleaudiology may involve a phone call, communication by post or email, using Apps or websites, video caption phones or videoconferencing.

Audiology Australia is now seeking feedback on draft guidelines.

Your perspective as a user of hearing services can help shape these guidelines.

Audiology Australia would like to know your thoughts on what a hearing health care practitioner should consider before, during, and after a teleaudiology appointment so that people get the best outcomes.

Would you like to be part of a group discussion in August 2021 to share your point of view?

Group discussions will run for about 90 minutes. They will be held online, using a video-conference platform (such as Zoom). Live captions will be used.

Participation is voluntary. Other than your first name, no personal details will be shared with other group members or any other parties.

Do you have a partner/family/friend who might be willing to share their thoughts with us? Often, a partner/family/friend is required to help during a telehealth appointment. We want to hear about their needs, experiences and opinions. We encourage you to bring a partner/family/friend to your session or to attend a different session if preferred.

To register for a focus group session on 12, 19 or 26 August, please click [here](#). Please select only one date. Your partner, family member, or friend can use the same link to register.

After you register, we will send you some information about the guidelines to help you prepare for the group discussion session. The same information will be sent to your partner/family/friend after they register.

For any questions or for further information, please contact Karen Barfoot on teleguidelines@audiology.asn.au

You can search for the support you need with the Disability Gateway



The Disability Gateway is here for us.

Finding reliable information about disability services is important for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, and their family members and carers.

Finding the right services and support can help us all to live the best life possible.

The **Disability Gateway** can provide all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability, and those who support them, with a range of options for seeking support and information.

Eric Brown is a proud Yuin, Gundungarra man with disability who competes at an elite level in Crossfit internationally.

Eric says he encourages Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability to use the Gateway to find the information they need to live positive lives and be the best they can be.

“Making targeted information more easily accessible will empower my people to be able to better support themselves and their loved ones,” he says.

“Having information at hand could possibly assist our people to access services early on. Don’t be shame to ask for help and support.”

The Disability Gateway can help you to find out about employment, housing, day to day activities, transport and more.

Visit www.disabilitygateway.gov.au

Auslan-embracing band Alter Boy



Alter Boy powerfully welcomes 'Act of God', the first single from their upcoming debut EP, with an emotionally charged music video.

The Perth-based band is a six-person powerhouse, comprising three deaf/hard-of-hearing members.

It continues to influence a greater understanding of how deaf/hard-of-hearing individuals experience the power of music through their dark, shiny pop hits all performed in Auslan.

Celebrated for transforming the traditional perception of pop, Alter Boy's combination of chaotic live performances featuring transgender, disabled bodies and carefully considered, unique uniforms serve the band's collective motivation to challenge the music industry's status quo and influence a new relationship with music.

'Act of God' delves into the childhood experience of band member Jack who, like many other deaf/hard-of-hearing individuals, was unable to find his supportive community - where one can call home. Powerfully portrayed and performed in the video clip, this devastating reality restricted him from experiencing a sense of belonging and struggle with self-identity.



Read more at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C3bGvcI7tBU>

Button Batteries in hearing devices

The Australian Government made mandatory safety and information standards for button batteries and consumer goods containing them.

The latest edition of the Hearing Services Program newsletter reports the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission (ACCC) has developed [A Guide for the Business on the Application of Mandatory standards](#).

The purpose of this guide is to help suppliers understand the requirements for secure battery compartments, child resistant packaging and warnings and information.

The ACCC has also developed a [fact sheet](#) which summarises the new standards for the benefit of suppliers. Both documents are available on the [Product Safety Australia website](#).



The Commonwealth Department of Health is hosting a webinar tomorrow (Thursday 5 Aug) to answer vaccination questions and provide support through the COVID-19 vaccination program.

11:30 AM – 12:30 PM AEST. Register here: <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/dept-of-health-meeting-for-people-with-disability-their-families-carers-tickets-165210120919>

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

Drop us a line: hello@deafnessforum.org.au

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

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, to elders past, present and future. We want to be part of the effort to overcome the unacceptably high levels of ear health issues among First Nation people; and we understand that it is an essential component of Closing the Gap. We understand the risk to indigenous sign languages and the cultural loss it would cause.

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