

Hearing Loss in Australia and New Technology
Dr John D'Arcy – Australian Hearing Ambassador



We will cover

- **Types of hearing loss**
- **Characteristics and effects of hearing loss**
- **Hearing loss in Australia**
- **New technology now and in the future**
- **Positive steps in managing hearing loss**
- **About Australian Hearing**



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Hearing Loss - types

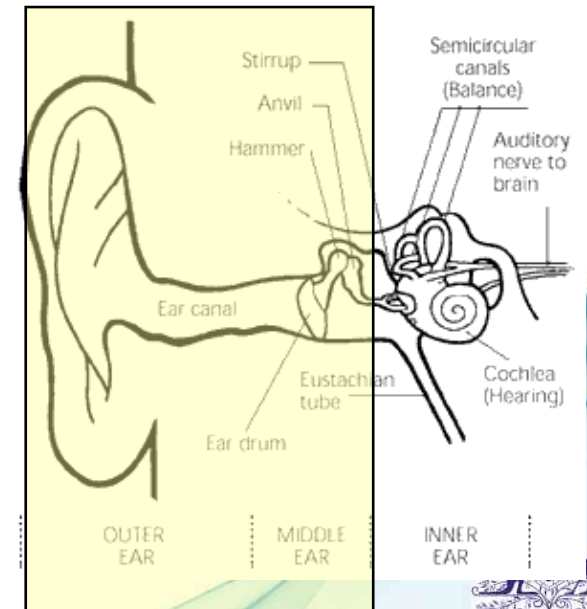
▪ Conductive

= Hearing loss caused by damage or blockage in the outer ear...

- For example:
 - Wax occlusion
 - Foreign body

...or middle ear

- For example:
 - Middle ear fluid ('glue ear')
 - Perforated eardrum

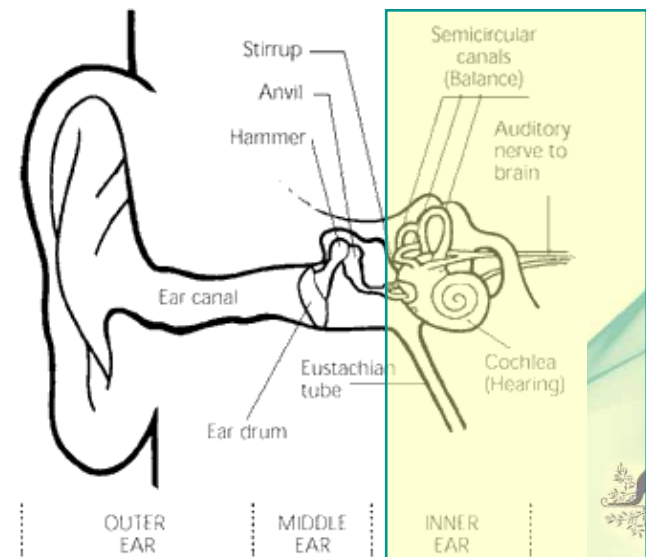


Hearing Loss - types

- **Sensori-neural**

= Hearing loss caused by damage to the hearing nerves in the inner ear or the sound pathways to the brain.

- For example:
 - Ageing
 - Noise exposure
 - Meningitis
 - Inherited deafness



Hearing Loss - types

- ... or mixed, where there is something wrong in the **OUTER** or **MIDDLE** *and* **INNER** ears

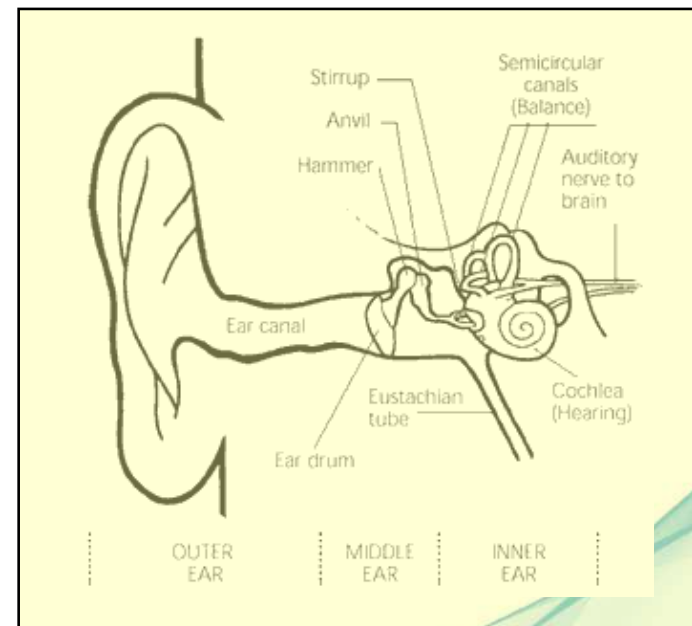
- *For example*

Wax occlusion

+ loss due to age

Perforated eardrum

+ noise exposure



Characteristics of hearing loss

Hearing loss is more than not being able to hear sounds loudly enough.

- *Soft sounds can't be heard*
- *Key parts of particular speech sounds might not be audible*
- *Separating sounds may be difficult*
- *Sound heard may be distorted*

⇒ a person with a hearing loss might “hear” speech but not understand it



Impact of hearing loss

- **Strained relationships**
- **Frustration, isolation, loneliness, embarrassment and/or depression**
- **Incorrect labelling - rude, senile**
- **Danger - can't hear phone ring, doorbell or intruders**
- **Children: educational delay**



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Deaf or hard of hearing?

- Just like there are different degrees of vision loss, hearing loss can vary in degree – mild, moderate, severe or
- The *degree of loss* relates to the *degree of handicap* the loss causes in everyday life



Simulation of Hearing Loss

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog

- What does a *mild* hearing loss sound like?

The _i_ brown _ox jum_ed over the lazy dog



Simulation of Hearing Loss

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog

- What does a *moderate* hearing loss sound like?

_e _i_ brown _o_ jum_ed over _e _azy dog



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Simulation of Hearing Loss

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog

- What does a *severe* hearing loss sound like?

_e _i_ brow_ _o_ _um_ed o_er _e _a_ do_



Simulation of Hearing Loss

The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog

- What does a *profound* hearing loss sound like?

_e _ _ _ow_ _o_ _um_ _o_ _e _a_ _o_



Hearing Loss in Australia – *facts & figures*

- **3.55 million Australians of all ages have some form of hearing loss**
- **6 in 10 people over the age of 60 have a loss**
- **7 in 10 over the age of 70 have a loss**
- **Men are at a greater risk than women**



Adult Hearing Loss in Australia

- **Many older people wait 6-10 years before taking action**
- **Around 400,000 Australians have a hearing aid**
- **1.3 million more could benefit from an aid**
- **More than 87% of those over 65 who have a hearing loss don't wear an aid**
- **Other people usually notice the loss before the person who has it**



Hearing Loss in Australia

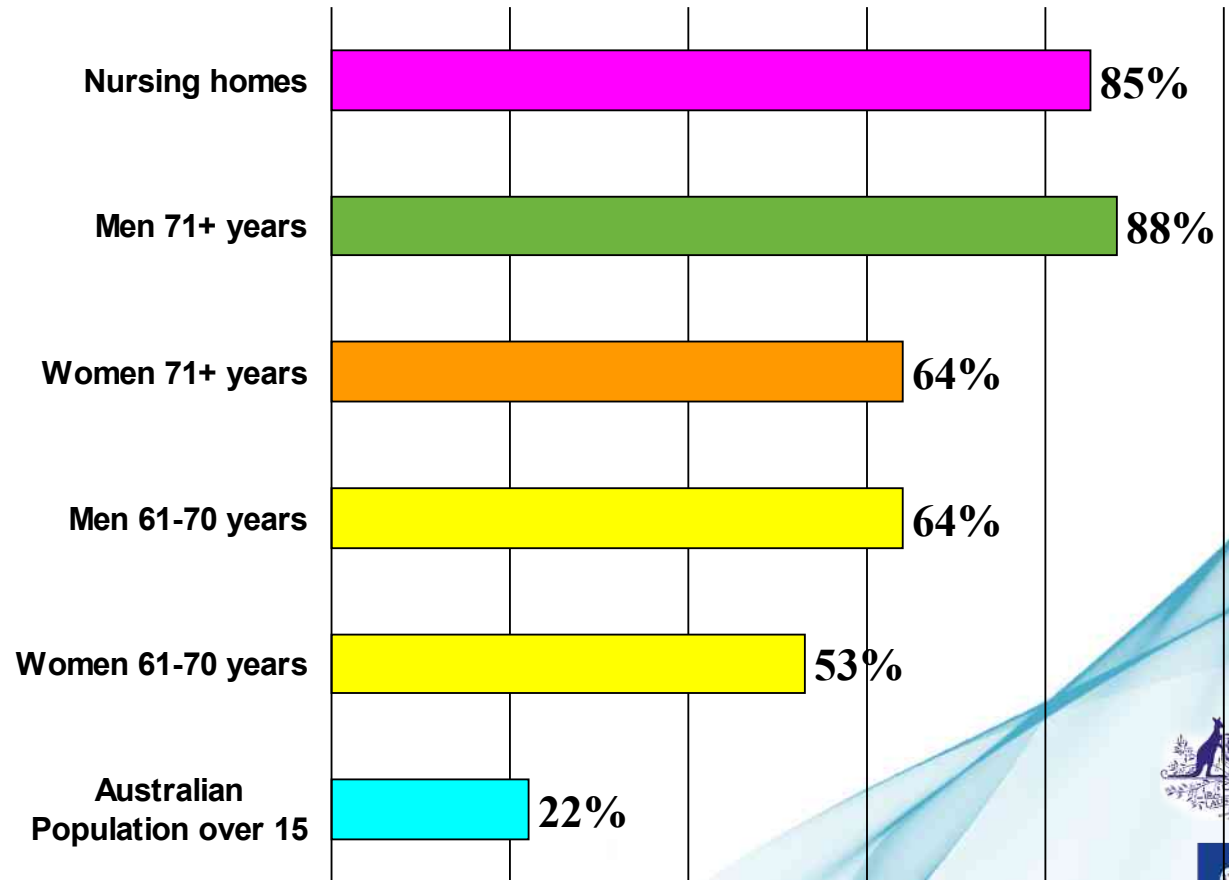
- **37% of hearing loss is due to excessive noise exposure – most common single cause of hearing loss**
- **Direct costs to the health system due to hearing loss total \$674 million**
- **Hearing loss ranks with asthma, diabetes and musculoskeletal diseases in terms of burden of disability**
- **Every Australian will be touched by hearing loss during their lifetime**



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Who Has Hearing Loss?

Hearing loss is more common than you think!



Hearing Loss in the Future

- Australian's are being urged to work longer, issues like hearing loss in the workplace are set to become increasingly important
- Hearing loss is costing Australia \$12 billion per year through people not working because they can't hear well enough
- Currently 1 in 6 Australian's is affected by hearing loss
- By 2050 one in four will be affected by hearing loss



Hearing Aids

- **Big advances in last few years.**
- **Almost everyone with a hearing loss – even a mild loss will get great benefit from a well fitted aid**
- **Success for more severe losses also depends on how well the auditory nerves are able to pass the message from the ear to the brain.**
- **Those with a severe to profound loss will find a Cochlear Implant beneficial.**



Binaural or Monaural

- 80% of our clients have two aids for good reason...they have two ears



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- *Two aids are better than one as they give a more natural, **balanced** sound and help you work out where sound comes from.*



Baby Boomers Drive New Market



- Baby boomers are driving new designs in hearing aids.
- Technology is more important than hiding device – design based.



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Why Don't People Do Something About It?

- **“My hearing isn't bad enough.”**
- **“I know people who wear a hearing aid and don't like it.”**
- **“A hearing aid is inconvenient to wear.”**
- **“A hearing aid may make my hearing worse.”**
- **“People will think I'm old if I wear a hearing aid.”**
- **“I won't be able to manage it.”**



Key Steps To Doing Something About It

- **Have a free hearing screening, it takes 10 minutes**
- **Consult a doctor to check that there is nothing that requires medical attention**
- **Check your eligibility for access to the Government Hearing Services Program**
- **See an Audiologist or Audiometrist for a thorough hearing assessment**



Government Hearing Services Program

Operated through the Federal Department of Health and Ageing

- ***Administer the 'Hearing Services Program' or Voucher application process (Office of Hearing Services OHS)***

Eligible persons must be:

- ***Aged pensioner***
- ***DVA client with Gold or White treatment card***
- ***Child under 21***
- ***Indigenous Australian aged 50 years or over or participating in a CDEP program***



Office of Hearing Services

Through the Office of Hearing Services' (OHS) Hearing Services Program eligible Australian's are entitled to:

- *Free assessment / hearing tests*
- *Fully subsidised hearing aids*
- *Repairs and batteries on payment of low annual fee*
- *Ongoing rehabilitation and advice*



About Australian Hearing

- **One of the largest hearing service providers in the world (www.hearing.com.au)**
- **An Australian Government agency working under the Office of Hearing Services scheme**
- **106 Hearing Centres nationally, staffed by qualified clinicians**
- **Offer a full range of digital hearing devices from leading manufacturers**
- **Provide a full range of assessment, fitting and maintenance services for clients**



What is a Hearing Screening?

- **Quick and painless hearing check – 10 minutes**
- **Questions regarding hearing asked**
- **Ears checked**
- **3 or 4 frequencies tested**
- **Results explained & written information given**
- **Referred for further help if needed**



Organising a Screening in your local Shed

- **Ask the other men in your local shed if they are interested in having a free hearing screening**
- **Contact your local Australian Hearing Centre by calling 131 797 (you will be directed to your local centre, there are 106 nationally)**
- **Arrange a date that is convenient for as many interested men in your local shed**
- **Australian Hearing will come out to conduct a free screening at your shed**
- **Alternatively come to one of our centres for a free screening**



In Summary

- Hearing loss has a high prevalence in our community:
1 in 6 Adults
- Adults **wait** before they take action
- **Technology** has greatly **improved**
- A **hearing aid** is now **beneficial** to even those with a mild loss
- **Easy access to services/information** – through Australian Hearing by calling **131 797**



References

Roy Morgan – How Are We Ageing, March 2006

Hearing Impairment in an Australian Population, 1998

Hearing Loss & the Farming Community, 2002

Access Economics – Listen Hear, May 2006

