



Hearing Happenings in the Hill

The official newsletter of the
Broken Hill & District Hearing Resource Centre Inc.
Edition 2
March 2011

Hello Folks,

This is the second of hopefully many newsletters to let you all know how we are travelling in our endeavor to give assistance to all people who are Deaf, hearing impaired or suffer from an associated disorder of the ear.

A direct outcome from the Hearing in the Hill Seminar, this an attempt to gain a better sharing of knowledge between the various groups, organizations and the independent Broken Hill & District Hearing Resources Centre Inc. We hope to receive advice from others, build better relationships and generally keep in the loop

Mission Statement:

The Broken Hill & District Hearing Resource Centre Inc. assists and supports people who are Deaf, hearing impaired, have an associated disorder of the ear, their families and carers with information and support, for them to make an informed decision to maintain their chosen lifestyle.

International Day of People with Disability - December 3rd 2010

The HACC and Disability Interagency Dance Party was held at the Entertainment Centre with displays of singing & dancing. This is a day to show what a person with disability can achieve. It is also a day for the public to come and experience this and to see past the disability of the individual to realize that underneath they are people who like to celebrate by having fun, fun and more fun.

The Hearing Centre was invited along with all the other groups who support persons with a disability, to answer any questions, supply information and to offer support for a person to live independently at home and also to liaise with other organizations in Broken Hill on the resources we have available.



Photo: From left - Chris Rawlins, Chris Coombe, Karen Gelmi, Joan Hirschausen
Submitted by Joan Hirschausen. Chairperson Broken Hill & District Hearing Centre Inc.

Fire and Rescue NSW

(Formerly the NSW Fire Brigade)

Article: Sue Collins Station Officer

The Broken Hill and District Hearing Resource Centre in partnership with Fire and Rescue NSW (formerly the NSW Fire Brigades) are overseeing a program called Sleepsafe, designed to install up to 100 specialised smoke alarms in the homes of hearing impaired residents in Broken Hill. The city has a high number of residents with hearing loss. Many of these people are elderly and on low or fixed incomes. So far the Project has supplied nearly 50 alarms.



The aim of Sleepsafe is to provide low-income hearing impaired members of the community with a suitable smoke detector. While a regular smoke alarm might cost between \$10 and \$50, a smoke alarm suitable for the profoundly deaf can cost up to \$500 and cannot be purchased locally. This is well beyond the means of those on pensions, which comprise the bulk of the Hearing Resources Centre's clients. The project has strict criteria: in order to qualify a person must have profound hearing loss, be on a low income and living alone or with another hearing impaired or disabled person and be parents of small children with hearing difficulties.

A standard smoke alarm alerts the occupants by emitting a shrill beeping noise. Depending upon the nature of the hearing loss, people with hearing difficulties often cannot hear this tone even if they are not 'deaf' as such. For these people a beeping at a different frequency may overcome the problem. For people with severe or total hearing loss no sound emitting device is suitable. There are a number of options for people with profound hearing loss. These include anything from complex 'hard wired' electronic systems such as back-to-base monitored alarms through to 'shaker-waker' portable alarm clocks, which are activated by a standard battery-operated smoke alarm. The alarms chosen for the Sleepsafe project are 10year lithium battery Photoelectric alarms, manufactured by Brooks in Sydney. They consist of a detector, which emits a louder and sharper tone than usual, an under pillow shaker and a bedside strobe light. No system is perfect and its efficiency in alerting occupants relies on a number of variables, however when properly installed and maintained, smoke alarms do save lives. Even in cases where the occupant hasn't heard the alarm they have been saved, thanks to vigilant neighbors'. The efficacy of these alarms, or any other smoke alarm, is variable depending upon a number of factors including degree of hearing loss, how deeply a person sleeps and their stage of sleep at the time of the alarm and their level of alcohol or drug (including sleeping medication) impairment.

Fire and Rescue NSW also has a program called SABRE (Smoke Alarm Battery Replacement for the Elderly) in which firefighters will replace flat smoke alarm batteries for seniors who have no other means of doing so. The Fire Brigade recommends that the batteries are changed once a year, usually at the start or end of daylight saving. Firefighters will also install smoke alarms in the homes of seniors as well. In both cases the occupant must provide the batteries and the alarms.

For more information on "Sleepsafe", or if you would like to be considered for inclusion in the program, please contact the Hearing Centre for further details on 8088 2228 10am till 4pm.

For all SABRE or alarm installation enquiries please contact the Broken Hill Fire Station on 8087 2233.

The National Relay Service.



The following information is an excerpt from Peter Cox's (NRS) presentation at the "Hearing in the Hill" Silver Jubilee Seminar, October 2010. Peter Cox is the Education and Information Officer from the National Relay Service.

What do we need to know about the NRS, the National Relay Service? It was set up in 1996 so it's been going 14 years. When it was first set up its main role was for the deaf community, for the profound deaf to communicate with hearing people by telephone. But today, it is also for people that have a hearing impairment and can still use their own voice, but it can also be used by people with speech impairments as well.

At the beginning when the relay service started it depended on volunteers to be relay officers and only operated a few hours of the day. Now it's staffed 24 hours a day every day of the year and it's staffed by professionally trained people.

There are four different call types that people can make through the relay service which depend on the user's ability to use their voice or their hearing. We will relay what part they don't have the ability for, whether we are relaying their voice or relaying the person's hearing. Another other way to make a relay call is through the Internet. You can make an Internet relay call now; you just need to be connected to the Internet already and then through a desktop computer, laptop or you can be doing it from an Internet café and with some mobile phones. The most people that ring the relay service are actually hearing people, a person like family, friends or businesses trying to contact someone that has a hearing loss or is using the relay service. The second biggest group is the culturally deaf.

I want to share with you some of the things that have come out of the surveys that have been done.

Flexibility to make a call when they want, rather than getting someone else to make it for them. The second one was security in emergency, so knowing that they had some way of letting someone know in an emergency situation was important to them, and then the third one was being able to do things independently. 'I can be the one that makes the appointment rather than getting someone else to do it.' Privacy was also important to them. They don't want someone else telling their private information over the phone. There is that social connection part, so they want to still be socially connected. That's what this service offers. How can the NRS help with awareness, because that is really what it's about. This is where I come back to catering for people with late onset hearing loss. They are the people that want to keep using their voice when they speak on the phone. It's important from a social perspective that they keep being able to use their voice and the person on the other end can hear them as well. Feedback says that people in this group don't know about the relay service or don't know that it actually deals directly to them. Equipment and cost - the TTY, the text telephone, it costs \$3 per month to rent it through Telstra, Optus, AAPT or Primus. Those are the four carriers that will rent normal handsets. They will rent a text telephone as well which is listed as disability equipment. I can tell you this project is funded by the phone companies. There is no government or taxpayer money involved in it.

For further information regarding the National Relay Service, please contact Peter Cox,

Education & Information Officer SA/NT, National Relay Service
V 08) 8100 8204 | TTY 08) 8100 8216 | M 0437 215 596 | F 08) 8232 2217
peter.cox@relayservice.com.au | www.relayservice.com.au

Or alternately,
Pop into the Hearing Centre for brochures on the National Relay Service

Website

Our website www.bhhearingresourcecentre.com.au/ is in the process of being updated.

Ideally this will be carried out every two months to keep the community informed with relevant news; this will include a Hearing Links section.

Upcoming Events

The Hearing Centre will be holding a social morning on Tuesday 1st March at 10.30am till 12 noon, please let us know if you would like to attend.

We intend to hold a Social morning in July and November, dates to be confirmed, please let us know if you wish to attend.

General meetings for 2011 are to be held on the following dates;

9th March 1pm

8th June 1pm

7th September 1pm

All meetings will be held at 187 Argent St

The 2011 AGM will be held on the 24th November 2011 at 11am – 187 Argent St, with a light luncheon to follow.

2011 Annual Membership Fee

As of July 1st 2011 our membership fees for individuals will increase to \$5.00.

All repairs made to hearing aids within the Centre will incur a \$5.00 fee: postage of hearing aids for repair will remain \$5.00.

Would you like to contact us?

Broken Hill & District Resource Centre Inc.

187 Argent Street
Broken Hill. NSW. 2880

Telephone: 08 80882228 Fax: 08 80879388

Email: hearthis@australiaonline.net.au

Website: www.bhhearingresourcecentre.com.au

We are open Monday to Friday 10am - 4pm Central Standard Time
Other times by Appointment

This newsletter was compiled by Chris Rawlins
Edited on behalf of The Broken Hill & District Resource Centre Inc. by Anne Woods.

The Broken Hill & District Hearing Resource Centre Inc. is a Non Profit organization with gift tax exemption. All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible.

Contributions to our newsletter are welcome. The editor reserves the right to use or edit as necessary.