



HEARING AWARENESS WEEK 2009

Media Release

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The electronic device that can stimulate your love life: A hearing aid

Older Australians are touting the benefits of effectively managing a hearing loss, with one in ten aged over 65 saying that using a hearing aid has improved their love life.

New research¹ into the social and lifestyle benefits of hearing aids has been released for the launch for Hearing Awareness Week, which is being held nationally this week.

The survey, conducted by Galaxy Research with a sample of 300 Australian Hearing customers aged 65 and over, highlights the link between better hearing and better relationships.

It found that while the majority (80 per cent) of people with hearing loss previously found it difficult to connect with family and friends, more than half of those who wear a hearing aid 'all the time' have seen a large improvement their social life.

Janette Thorburn, Principal Audiologist at Australian Hearing, said that the figures highlighted the link between better hearing and good relationships.

"Three quarters of our clients said that hearing aids make it easier to have intimate conversations," Ms Thorburn said. "This research illustrates the positive benefits that managing a hearing loss has on a person's social life and relationships."

Research released by Australian Hearing in 2007 found that people who had hearing problems often displayed many symptoms of depression.

"We encourage anyone aged over 60 to get their hearing checked every two years. The benefits of using a hearing aid are significant and our range of devices are so sophisticated and discreet," she said.

Australians can also check their hearing over the telephone using Telscreen™ toll-free on 1800 826 500.

Hearing Awareness Week is a national event coordinated by the Deafness Forum of Australia. Visit www.hearingawarenessweek.org.au for more information.

Contact: Kate Dorrell 02 9412 6968 or 0404 691 838

Reference: Galaxy Research, *The social and lifestyle benefits of hearing aids*, July 2009



Fact sheet

About Hearing Awareness Week

Hearing Awareness Week (HAW) is an industry-wide promotion of hearing held each year in the last week of August. HAW is an initiative of the Deafness Forum of Australia, the peak non-profit body for the hearing impaired community.

This year, HAW is being held from Sunday 23 to Saturday 29 August. However, Australian Hearing promotes HAW for the entire month of August via a program of national and local activities.

Summary of the report

The survey asked 300 Australian Hearing clients about their hearing loss and hearing aids. A summary of its findings related to hearing loss and relationships is listed below.

- For two in three people (66%) with hearing loss, hearing aids help overcome the difficulty in connection with family and friends.
- For more than half hearing aids bring an improvement in their social life. One in four people (23%) said that hearing aids made a large improvement to their social life. A further 31% said they made a small improvement.
- The main benefits of hearing aids are that they allow the user to hear better and more clearly and thereby to also participate in things that the normal of hearing may take for granted such as listening to the television or having intimate conversations. Specifically :
 - 90% say they understand speech better.
 - 88% say they can listen to music or the television.
 - 86% say hearing aids have improved the quality of sound they hear.
 - 84% say it's easier for people to talk to them.
 - 75% say it's easier to have intimate conversations.
 - 73% say people don't have to talk loudly to them.
- Hearing aids have improved the love life of 11% of those surveyed. No one reported that their love life had got worse.
- 72% of those surveyed live with a husband, wife or partner. A further 10% live with family.
- Most people (81%) survey have a fully subsidised hearing aid under the Australian Government's hearing program for age pensioners and veterans.