

HEAR TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE: QUEENSLANDERS URGED TO SHOW A LITTLE LOVE DURING HEARING AWARENESS WEEK

World-leading hearing loss charity Hear and Say is calling for people to give their ears some love during – and most importantly beyond – this year’s Hearing Awareness Week.

The not-for-profit, which has been teaching deaf children to listen and speak since 1992, will use the annual awareness week from March 3-9 to highlight its ‘Love Your Ears’ campaign that urges both adults and youngsters to take steps to protect their hearing.

This includes wearing ear protection in noisy environments, using headphones wisely, turning volumes down and not remaining in noisy situations for extended periods.

Hear and Say CEO Chris McCarthy said statistics show hearing loss affects about one in six Australians and is set to rise to a quarter by 2050.

“We want everyone to be thinking about the health of their ears, be it the level they are hearing at now or how the activities they are enjoying today will impact them in the future,” he said.

“Noise-induced hearing loss is a serious concern, with concerts, construction sites, pubs and other loud environments all having the potential to adversely affect our hearing.

“It’s also vital that people make a conscious effort to consider warning signs that may indicate they already have hearing loss as the sooner we can address such issues, the better the results will be.”

With Hearing Awareness Week boasting the theme ‘Check Your Hearing’, Hear and Say will be hosting a free hearing screening booth at the Aveo Springfield retirement village on Saturday, 9 March.

“Regular screening is vital, especially as people age and become more susceptible to hearing loss,” Mr McCarthy said.

“Sometimes people don’t realise the extent of their loss or make excuses for why they are missing parts of conversations. The best outcomes are achieved when early detection and intervention is coupled with leading technology and listening and speaking therapy.

“We also have our Hear to Learn screening program that goes into schools and helps identify children, particularly Prep students, who may have undiagnosed hearing loss.

“With a 14 per cent onward referral rate, we are picking up quite a few children who aren’t hearing as well as they could in the classroom and that can have an enormous impact on their ability to learn.

“We often get teachers or parents saying their children are naughty or won’t listen, but the truth is they can’t hear. If we can pick up the hearing loss, we can work with families and use early intervention to make a difference.”

Mr McCarthy said people should consider the following 10 warning signs for themselves and their loved ones and, if concerned, visit a local GP to obtain a referral for a hearing test.

- Partner, parental, friend or work colleague concern about a hearing ability
- Speech or language delay or difficulty
- Inappropriate responses to requests or questions (eg: regularly asking 'what?' or 'huh?')
- Difficulty hearing in one or both ears when on the phone
- Not startling to very loud sounds or asking for the volume to be turned up on electronic devices, such as the television
- Unable to detect what direction sounds are coming from
- Inattentiveness, daydreaming
- Frequently asking for repetition or difficulty following directions
- Watching others for visual cues
- Academic or work difficulties and/or, for children/teens, behavioural problems

Hear and Say is also a keen supporter of Australian Hearing [Big Aussie Hearing Check](#) initiative.

For more information or to book a hearing test, visit www.hearandsay.com.au or phone 3850 2111.

ENDS

For more media information please contact Meg Ockleshaw, Communications Manager on 07 3850 2111 or meg.ockleshaw@hearandsay.com.au.