



## Improving communication

This issue we're focusing on improving communication in the home, more specifically house acoustics. Getting the basics right within the home will go a long way to improving communication, regardless of whether a hearing loss is present or not.

Whether you're building, renovating or simply have the capacity to do some rearranging, these tips can help improve the acoustics in your home. You may even like to consider them for your workplace.

### What are acoustics?

Room acoustics is the broad term used to describe the behaviour of sound waves in a room. The size, surfaces and objects in a room will alter how these sound waves interact, affecting the quality of the sound reaching our ears. Every speaker will sound slightly different in different rooms.

Hard surfaces such as bare walls, hard floors and undressed windows will cause a lot of reverberation and reduce speech intelligibility.

To reduce reverberation, consider the following:

- Install carpet where possible, or use rugs on hardwood, tiled or concrete floors.
- Hang pictures on the walls, but avoid glass in the frames as this will reflect sound.
- Use soft furnishings to absorb sound, such as curtains, cushions and fabric couches.
- Place TV's and speakers up against external walls rather than internal walls. This will help reduce sound transmission from room to room.
- Extra insulation in the ceiling and walls will help reduce transmission of sound through the house.
- Use tablecloths while dining to avoid sound reflecting off the table.

## Building or renovating



If you are building or renovating, it is a great opportunity to take control of your home acoustic environment. The general principle is to avoid large spaces with hard surfaces - high ceilings, big glass windows, hard floors all increase reverberation and the difficulty of communication, particularly when there are lots of people around, e.g. when entertaining. You will reap the benefits from thoughtful acoustic design. Consider the following throughout the design and building phases:

- Design the house so that noisy areas and quiet areas are kept separate, ie locate laundry, play areas, kitchen and stairs together and away from sensitive living areas.
- Ensure windows and doors are not opposite each other internally, or externally with the neighbour's house.
- Waste pipes and plumbing are away from sensitive living areas.
- Place TV antenna sockets on external walls.
- Use a denser plasterboard than the standard. Most manufacturers will have a purpose made sound-reducing product.
- Add bulking insulation into cavity construction
- Invest in solid doors, ensuring they seal well.

## Hearing aid maintenance

We often see hearing aids in the clinic that are in need of a little TLC. We remind all hearing aid users to regularly change their wax filters, domes and slim tubes, if applicable.

It is difficult to give anyone an exact timeframe of when to change them, as every ear is different. However, a general timeline to follow is:

- Change **filters** at least once a month
- Change **domes** at least once every 3 months
- Change **slim tubes** every 6 months.

If you would like a refresher on how to properly maintain your hearing aids, please come into your local Gippsland Audiology clinic. We would be happy to give you and your hearing aids some expert attention.

All consumables, including filters, domes, tubes and batteries, are available from all our clinics, or through our online store at [www.gippslandaudiology.com.au](http://www.gippslandaudiology.com.au)

## Go GREEN to WIN WIN WIN!

In an attempt to become more environmentally friendly, we are trying to increase the number of newsletters we send by email.

Visit our website and register your email address by Friday May 6th to go in the draw to win your choice of one of the following:

**\$350 Gippsland Audiology voucher**

*to use at any of our clinics on services or products, including hearing aids.*

**\$200 VISA debit card or**

**\$200 Bunnings voucher**

Register your details now at:

**[www.gippslandaudiology.com.au/newsletter](http://www.gippslandaudiology.com.au/newsletter)**

The winner will be notified by email on 09.05.2016 and published in our next newsletter. Gippsland Audiology produces this newsletter 3 times a year. We do not wish to be intrusive. If you do not wish to receive further editions of our newsletter please contact us and we will remove you from our mailing list.



## Tech Update

Many of our clients have enjoyed the benefits from the **Starkey Made for iPhone** Halo hearing aids, connecting and controlling their hearing aids directly from their iPhone. On March 16, Starkey launched Halo 2, Muse and SoundLens Synergy on a new platform using quad core twin compressor technology. With five times the processing power, it aims to seamlessly and automatically handle complex listening situations.



**Widex** has released their new Bluetooth streamer, the COM-DEX. It functions very similarly to the UNI-DEX, but communicates wirelessly with a mobile phone, rather than via a cord. Compatible with all wireless Widex devices, it is available from Gippsland Audiology for \$385, plus fitting fee.



Both **Unitron** and **Phonak** have released a remote control app to work with their latest respective streaming devices, the Unitron uDirect3 and the Phonak ComPilot II. With BIG buttons and a visual display, it's a great solution when you do not want to fiddle with the buttons on the streamer or hearing aids. The app is compatible with both Apple and Android phones. Simply download the FREE Unitron uControl app or Phonak RemoteControl app to start using it in conjunction with your streamer.

## Less tired but not retired!

Sue has been surprised by the response of some of her clients she has met in the street since she and Neil handed over the reins of Gippsland Audiology to Meg and Andrew. It seems that many thought she had retired completely - she wishes! Sue has merely freed up her time with less management duties, enabling her to focus on her clients and audiology while at work. Sue continues to enjoy keeping up-to-date with the most recent hearing aid technology and taking care of the needs of her existing clients. While Sue does not usually see new clients, she is happy to take on new clients that have been specifically recommended to her by her existing clients. With her vast experience, Sue is an excellent resource for all audiologists at Gippsland Audiology.

Sue continues to work 2 days a week between the Morwell and Sale offices, and in her spare time focus on her other project, EARtrak - the system she developed for audiology clinics to measure their performance. And of course, she has more time to catch up with her other many interests - children and grandchildren, travel, ukulele playing and yes, even cycling!

To make an appointment with Sue to discuss your hearing needs, please call your local office to make an appointment.



A biker goes to the doctor with hearing problems. The doctor says, "Can you describe the symptoms to me?" He replies, "Yes, Homer is a fat, lazy, yellow bloke, and Marg is a skinny bird with big blue hair."

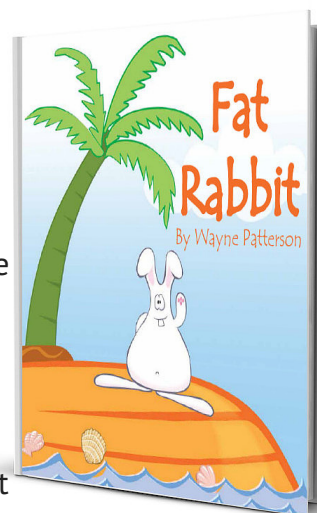
*Billy Connolly - Hearing HQ magazine*

## Staff Profile: Alex



Alex and her husband, Daniel, moved from the Gold Coast to Sale after Daniel was relocated to the Sale RAAF base mid last year. Alex started with us shortly after in the Sale office and you will occasionally see her lending a hand in the Morwell office. We love Alex's happy and friendly manner which always brightens the office. In her spare time, Alex enjoys a daily walk with her dog around Lake Guthridge, camping with friends and hiking at Wilson's Promontory.

If you have been in one of our waiting rooms recently, you may have noticed the "Fat Rabbit" children's book, written by Wayne Patterson, Alex's father. Apart from being an adorable book, proceeds from the purchase of the book go towards finding a cure for motor neurone disease. We encourage you to support this cause. The books are available to purchase for \$15 from the website [www.carrotopisland.com.au](http://www.carrotopisland.com.au) or any of our clinics in Warragul, Morwell and Sale. You can also read about the author by visiting the website.





## The Team

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Looking for the same expert service and care in Melbourne? Visit us at Richmond Audiology



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