

3<sup>rd</sup> March 2022

## ON WORLD HEARING DAY AUSTRALIATRAK 2021 SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE AMONGST HEARING AID USERS

### HCIA Calls for a Government Funded Awareness and Education Campaign to Support Survey Findings

Hearing loss in Australia is a relatively common condition that affects approximately one in seven people in Australia. The recently released *AustraliaTrak 2021* survey on hearing loss and the use of hearing devices found that 14.2% of adult Australians think they are living with hearing loss.

Chair of the Hearing Care Industry Association (HCIA) Mr Ashley Wilson AM stated, *"Hearing loss imposes a significant reduction on an individual's wellbeing and the social and economic contribution of that individual. Deloitte Access Economic estimated that loss in Australia at \$21.2 billion in 2019-20."*

*"On World Hearing Day the HCIA want to highlight the need for increased awareness of hearing health and encourage those with hearing loss who have not taken the important step of having a hearing test, to get tested. For many in the community this testing will be free of charge, and as we all catch up on our healthcare post-COVID, hearing care must be part of that back to health plan."*

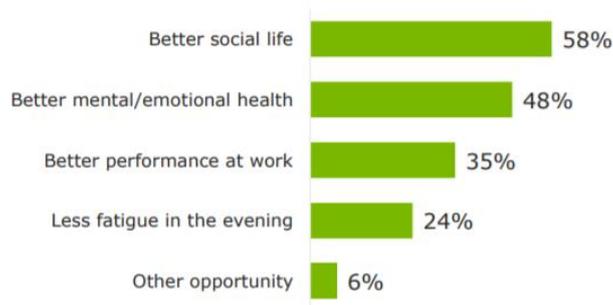
*"We know from previous studies that older Australians wait on average five to seven years before seeking treatment for their hearing loss. The AustraliaTrak 2021 survey is important as it helps us understand behaviours, motivations and the benefits derived from those who have acted on their hearing loss, said Mr Wilson."*

*"There is increasing evidence of the links between hearing health and other conditions, including mental health and dementia, reinforcing the importance of ensuring awareness of eligibility and promoting early access to hearing health programs, particularly for older Australians," added Mr Wilson.<sup>ii, iii</sup>*

*"For example, **94% of the hearing aid owners in the survey declared that their hearing aids improved their quality of life** 'all of the time' or 'some of the time', while 86% of those in the workforce stated their hearing aids were useful at work and found that hearing aids increased their chances of getting promoted, getting the right job and a higher salary."*

*"Individuals using hearing aids also reported less fatigue in the evenings and improved quality of sleep. Most importantly, **76% of all hearing aid owners in the Survey said that they should have gotten their hearing aids sooner**. The main reason for this was missing out on social life when not using hearing aids." These are important insights,"*

**Why they should have got their hearing aids sooner...**



Base: n=522

*“Given these positive outcomes, it is concerning that the Survey found that only 44.7% of those who said they had a hearing loss actually used hearing aids.”*

This means many Australians’ quality of life is unnecessarily impacted by hearing loss. Daily activities such as participating in group activities and relationships at home, work and socially are more difficult than they need to be.

The Survey also highlighted some common misconceptions that served as inhibitors to individuals seeking out hearing healthcare, in particular **affordability**.

*“Encouragingly, 80% of those with hearing aids in Australia had received some form of reimbursement. However, amongst non-owners, only 23% were aware that the government or private health insurance offered free or subsidised hearing healthcare,”* said Mr Wilson.

*“Australia has had a free hearing services program for concession card holders for several decades, so survey responses which highlight cost as the reason for individuals not addressing their hearing loss is very disappointing.”*

*“HCIA has been asking the Government to raise awareness of the Hearing Services Program voucher program, and these results reinforce the need for this campaign,”* said Mr Wilson.

There is also a lot of misconception about the quality of hearing that can be achieved through the use of hearing aids.

*“The survey found that amongst those who had not sought out hearing healthcare, their decisions were being made on inaccurate information about the effectiveness of modern assistive hearing technologies. This compares with those who had hearing aids, with 87% reporting their hearing improvement was ‘better than expected’ or ‘as expected’.”*

The Survey also highlighted improvements of between 5% and 16% in customer satisfaction across a range of listening situations, compared to, *AustraliaTrak 2017*.

Mr Wilson commented that, *“the Survey has highlighted how hearing healthcare can have a significant positive impact on an individual’s quality of life, but misconceptions and a lack of awareness about the Government’s hearing health program continue to limit uptake.*

*“On World Hearing Day this survey reminds us of the importance of our hearing health. HCIA encourages anyone with loss who have not taken the important step of having a hearing test, to get tested.”*

HCIA member network provide access to hearing healthcare, hearing aids and assistive hearing technology through over 1,390 locations Australia wide.

### **About the survey**

The AustraliaTrak 2021 survey was designed and carried out by the Swiss analysis firm Anovum on behalf of Hearing Care Industry Association (HCIA) in Australia and the European Hearing Instrument Manufacturers Association (EHIMA). The survey consisted of around 14,600 interviews.

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<sup>i</sup> [Hearing for Life – The value of hearing services for vulnerable Australians, Deloitte Access Economics](#), p.iv.

<sup>ii</sup> [Roadmap for Hearing Health](#), p.16.

<sup>iii</sup> [Dementia, Hearing Loss and Hearing Care: Saving Australia’s Minds](#)

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