



18 AUGUST 2015 HCIA PARLIAMENTARY BREAKFAST

WELCOME FROM THE HCIA CHAIRMAN

Good morning everyone. My name is John Pappalardo. I am the Chairman of the HCI and it gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our 4th annual parliamentary breakfast held during hearing awareness week.

On behalf of HCIA let me welcome Senator Nash, Minister Marise Payne and Mr Nick Champion, representing the Leader of the Opposition, and other very distinguished guests. Thank you for being here so bright and early. HCIA is very pleased that so many parliamentarians saw fit to accept our invitation today, and many of you have been to every event we have held here.

We are also very pleased to welcome representatives of the key professional bodies: Professor Louise Hickson, President of Audiology Australia and Dr Tony Coles CEO of Audiology Australia; and Dr William Vass Executive Committee Member of the Australian College of Audiology.

And we especially welcome the key consumer groups represented here today by David Brady Chair of the Deafness Forum of Australia, Dr Jim Hungerford CEO of The Shepherd Centre for Deaf Children, and Pete Halsey CEO of the ACT Deafness Resource Centre.

HCIA works very hard to make sure these relationships are both respectful and productive.

Every day, the hearing care sector works hard to make life better for deaf and hearing-impaired people. It is my privilege to Chair the Hearing Care Industry Association. We represent private providers of hearing devices and services for hundreds of thousands of hearing impaired Australians nationally. Our association's members help clients make informed choices about their hearing and we provide them with excellent care.

As an Association, we seek to provide credible input into government policy making at all levels. We're pleased our views are often proactively sought from all sides of politics. We have an excellent relationship with the Office of Hearing Services and we are delighted that Tracey Duffy, the Director, is here today. Tracey is a robust, thoughtful, public servant and we greatly appreciate her input into the sector.



We have had a number of successes this year that I would like to share with you. I am delighted to report that our campaign to restore WorkCover eligibility in NSW for those with work-induced hearing loss has been a huge success. This month, the NSW Coalition Government announced major reforms that will see enhanced benefits for hearing impaired workers. Benefits previously lost through changes made in 2012 have been restored. The compensation benefits to injured workers requiring hearing aids, batteries and related medical expenses have now been extended for life. We thank the NSW Government for listening to our case and for dedicating precious resources.

The Australian Government too, has been willing to hear and respond to the community when it comes to hearing policies and regulation. In the last year, HCIA has provided balanced input into the Australian Government's consideration on the future of Australian Hearing, and on a National Code of Conduct for Healthcare workers. The community has been keen to ensure that high quality, national hearing services currently delivered to children, indigenous and rural communities and others throughout Australia under the Community Service Obligation are maintained into the future. Minister Payne we wish you well with your deliberations on this matter.

I am proud that people who work in our industry are very highly trained. Our clinicians are government-accredited specialists who work with the latest hearing technology. This technology often has its start in excellent Australian research, like that conducted by the National Acoustics Laboratory and the HEARing CRC and that is why we were so pleased that Professor Robert Cowan accepted our invitation to speak. In the past we have had Professor Harvey Dillon from NAL speak and we welcome such broad engagement.

Before Professor Cowan begins his talk we wanted to give you all an idea of what it is like to be hearing impaired.

Dr Ben Fernee, the National Audiology Manager at Oticon Australia will demonstrate the Experiential Hearing Loss simulator to show the effects of hearing loss – in particular, to experience the effect of even mild hearing loss on conversational speech, so we can all consider the impacts for those affected.

(Then hand over to the simulation people.)