



## Media release

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### Young Australians hearing the message

A new report released by Australian Hearing shows that many young Australians are heeding the warning to protect their hearing and that community perceptions of hearing aids are improving.

The report, titled *Binge Listening: Is exposure to leisure noise causing hearing loss in young Australians?* was launched by Australian Hearing today at the 2010 Audiology Australia National Conference in Sydney.

The report highlights the risk of hearing damage in young Australians who frequent loud nightclubs, live music venues and concerts.

However, the news is not all bad. The report, based on a survey of 1,000 18-35 year olds across Australia, showed that two in three young people would consider wearing a hearing aid if their hearing deteriorated. This is a significant increase (from 46%) since the launch of Australian Hearing's last hearing health report in 2008.

In other good news from the report, nine in 10 young Australians consider it very or extremely important to have good hearing while only a small minority considered hearing loss to be a concern for older people.

The report also demonstrated that just under half of Australians aged 18-35 years say they do take steps to protect their hearing. This percentage increased with age, with 54 per cent of 30-35 year olds taking steps to protect their hearing.

Professor Harvey Dillon, Research Director at the National Acoustic Laboratories, said he was encouraged by some of the findings.

"It is encouraging to see that there is widespread knowledge that excessive sound damages hearing, that damage is permanent, that there is a need to actively protect hearing in noisy places and that hearing aids are an acceptable way to compensate for hearing damage," Professor Dillon said.

However, there are many young Australians who do not yet understand each of these messages. The challenge is to find relevant ways to present these messages to them.

"Unfortunately, there are still at least 30 per cent of young Australians who do not realise that once hearing is damaged, it can not be restored," Professor Dillon said. "When damage occurs, such as at a concert or dance party, people notice that the very obvious, short-term damage recovers within a few days, and think there is no problem. They fail to notice the small, permanent damage, and this just keeps accumulating from occasion to occasion," he added.

Australian Hearing will be launching a new range of hearing aids next month. The Siemens product range feature highly discreet, personally designed hearing aids that

adjust volume and sound preferences automatically. The new devices are easy to operate, yet stylish and sophisticated.

Chairman of Siemens, Mr Barry Roberts, said that the availability of the latest technology in hearing devices seems to be having an impact.

“Hearing aids can be matched to your hair or skin colour, and can communicate directly with hands-free mobile phones, MP3 players and other electronic devices,” Mr Roberts said.

“These improvements make hearing aids much more user friendly and acceptable to a greater number of people,” he added.

“It is pleasing to see that the findings from the report indicate an increasing level of acceptance in young Australians of hearing aids as a relevant and appropriate solution to hearing loss,” he said.

Anyone who is concerned about their hearing can take a test over the telephone by calling Telscreen™ toll free on 1800 826 500.

#### **Ends#**

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

For more information or a copy of the report, contact Martin Palin ([mpalin@palin.com.au](mailto:mpalin@palin.com.au) 0418 419 258) or Karina Candia ([karina@palin.com.au](mailto:karina@palin.com.au) 0402 307 056) at Palin Communications (02 9412 2255).