



**Media Release**

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## **Enjoy the sounds of summer for years to come**

It's that time of year again when the young – and not so young – enjoy the sounds of summer at music festivals and concerts across the country.

To ensure people are able to enjoy music well into the future, Australian Hearing is encouraging Australians to protect their hearing when attending concerts and music festivals this season.

Australian Hearing recently released new research via its research division, the National Acoustic Laboratories (NAL), on the positive effect ear plugs have in noisy leisure environments. The research found that ear plugs don't just protect hearing; regular users find that they can enhance music and make conversation easier in loud venues.

Dr Elizabeth Beach and her colleagues from NAL interviewed regular clubbers to determine the advantages and disadvantages of wearing different types of ear plugs. Those participants who regularly wore either custom made or ER-20 ear plugs, both specifically designed for loud music environments, found that they either enhanced the music or had no discernable impact on sound quality other than lowering the volume to a comfortable level.

Wearers of custom and ER-20 ear plugs at loud music venues described them as discreet and comfortable, while ER-20 ear plugs have the added bonus of being inexpensive, and convenient to carry around.

"Many of the young people surveyed found it easier to communicate with friends when wearing ear plugs, and in some cases felt that the sound quality of the music was improved," Dr Beach said.

NAL recommends ear plugs as one method of hearing protection available to concert goers and night clubbers, but there are other ways young people can protect their hearing.

"People can take breaks from loud venues by going outside or spending time in chill-out rooms, turning down the stereo at home or in the car and listening to MP3 players at safe levels," Dr Beach said.

"Music lovers, in particular, should also be aware of the signs of potential hearing damage, such as ringing in the ears. If your hearing feels muted or dull after exposure to loud noise, this can also be a warning sign," she added.

While most young people are aware of the link between exposure to loud noise and hearing damage, many do not consider themselves to be at personal risk.

"Young people need to be aware that noise damage accumulates gradually and is often not noticed until it is too late," Dr Beach said. "We encourage everyone to take active steps to protect their hearing in loud venues because once your hearing is damaged it can't be restored to its original state."

For further advice on how to protect your hearing this summer, visit [www.hearing.com.au](http://www.hearing.com.au). To check your hearing over the phone, call Telscreen™ on 1800 826 500.

**Ends#**

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