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Healthy hearing expo to highlight hearing loss and Australia's world leading expertise in hearing technologies

An increasingly noisy world and new technologies such as portable music players are exposing the ears of Australians to harmful noise that is causing more people to have hearing loss.

To help the people of Brisbane gain a better understanding of how hearing loss happens, and more importantly, how it can be prevented, the XXXIII World Congress of Audiology is holding the *Hear For The Future Expo* at the Brisbane Convention Centre on Sunday, 4 May from 12.30 - 3.30pm.

President of Audiology Australia (Australia's professional member-based organisation for audiologists) Professor Louise Hickson said the *Hear For The Future Expo* brings together hearing health professionals, hearing science researchers and members of Brisbane's Deaf community to show how people can look after their hearing while enjoying life to the fullest.

"Most people don't realise how common hearing loss is in Australia. It's actually on the rise with one in four Australians expected to have a hearing loss by 2050. Our lifestyle choices and living in an increasingly noisy world are some of the reasons why, but there are many ways it can be prevented and managed," Professor Hickson said.

"Recent advances in cochlear implant and hearing aid technology, both I am proud to say Australia is a world leader in, have made significant steps in providing viable and effective options for people managing hearing loss."

The *Hearing for the Future Expo* will provide public information on all aspects of hearing from prevention of loss through to living with a hearing loss.

"We have also made sure there will be something for everyone regardless of age. Kids will be able to see and understand what is a safe volume level when using iPods and other music devices. Hearing healthcare professionals will be on site to talk about hearing loss and to screen people's hearing. Members of Brisbane's vibrant deaf community will also be on hand to show how people are living rewarding lives through their interest in arts, sport and other pursuits," Professor Hickson stated.

"Local sporting celebratory, **Jamie-Lee Lewis**, will also be making an appearance at the Expo's opening."

Born with a hearing loss, Jamie-Lee acquired a cochlear implant as a young child at the Brisbane-based *Hear and Say Centre*. Since then, she has gone on to become a highly accomplished water polo player presenting Australia on many occasions. Jamie-Lee considers herself very lucky she had the support of her family, including her well known sports presenter father **Wally Lewis**, and the dedication of the staff at *Hear and Say Centre*.

"Being deaf is difficult, but it should never be used as an excuse. We should try to be as good, if not better than the players we are playing against," Jamie-Lee said.

Two very young cochlear implantees will also share their thoughts about having cochlear implants at the Expo opening that to the *Hear and Say Centre*.

Cochlear Implant inventor **Dr Graeme Clark** will also make an appearance at the Cochlear Ltd booth during the Expo.

The *Hearing for the Future Expo* will conclude with the *Denis Byrne Memorial Lecture* delivered by research audiologist Dr Chris Lind (Flinders University) who will provide insights how life partners, family and friends play an active role in helping people with hearing loss better understand conversations and correct other miscommunications.

For more information go to: www.hear.net.org.au/hear-for-the-future

For further information including media interviews please contact: Greg Lawrence, XXXII World Congress of Audiology, Media Manager. E: glawrence@hearingcrc.org, T: +61 39035 3987, Mob: +61 431 426 623