

NEW ZEALAND AND AUSTRALIA

Hearing Loss Statistics

- Hearing loss affects up to 17% of the population.
- There are over 250 million people worldwide (World Health Organisation “WHO” statistics) with hearing loss and the WHO places it as the sixth greatest cause of the global burden of disease in the South Asia region (including New Zealand) accounting for about 3% of the DALYs (disability adjusted life years).
- Hearing loss ranks with asthma, diabetes and musculoskeletal diseases in terms of burden of disability and should be considered as a national health priority.
- It is estimated that about 2 of every 1000 children are born with significant hearing impairment. Our current age of detection is 4 years which is too late to provide interventions. New Zealand is implementing a national programme of newborn hearing screening to reduce this age to 3 months.
- Claims to ACC for workplace noise-induced hearing loss have been steadily increasing and are now at about 6000 claims per year. ACC distributes about \$50 million annually for rehabilitation costs for hearing impaired workers.
- Noise exposure accounts for 16-30% of the adult hearing loss and is mostly preventable.
- Glue ear affects about 1 in 4 children.
- It is estimated that 30-40% of those in prisons have some form of hearing impairment.
- Hearing loss is significantly more prevalent among Maori and Pacific peoples.
- One in six Australians has some form of hearing impairment – that’s 3.55 million people. Deafness is one of the most common disabilities worldwide.
- According to Australian estimates, the number of hearing-impaired people will increase to about 26% of the population or 1 in 4 people by 2050 because of the increasing life expectancy.
- An Australian economic analysis assessed the direct cost of hearing loss as 1.4% of GDP. Translated to New Zealand this would be about \$2.5 billion. Productivity loss related directly to hearing impairment accounts for well over half (57%) of the total financial costs. The cost of hearing aids is a small fraction of the direct cost of hearing loss.

For further Australian statistics, see the report on hearing loss in Australia by Australian Hearing <http://www.hearing.com.au/upload/media-room/Hearing-loss-in-Australia.pdf>