

Auckland Cochlear Implant Consumer Group

Minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2015 at Hearing Association, Remuera, Auckland

Present: Donna, John C, Maxine, *Gloria and John Luxford, Marian and John, *Zhang Guirong and Catherine Shie, Donald, Nic, Stuart, Louis and Mona, Pam, Kerry, Raewyn, Karel, John Holgersen, Lyn, Laurie.

Apologies: *Helena Thomas, Di Boyd-Bell, Virginia, *Barbara Cunliffe, Rosie, Raewyn Ashdown, Diana Waghorn, Anita & Frank, *Stefan Marica, Vince, *Bob Spooner.

Host-hostess: Zeta & Jed Stanley

*denotes new member

Donna opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the new venue at the Hearing Association.

As a result of Pindrop contacting the Auckland University for a mail-out with information there were a few new members. Thanks to Pindrop for this incentive. Also on the Pindrop website is information on other meetings – under the title 'our next big event'. Tauranga June 27, Whangarei July 30 (new group), Waikato August 24.

New members were requested to fill out detail forms.

Every month at our meetings 2 members are selected to provide morning tea. This became the best solution after we found everyone brought a plate and there ended up being mountains of food. With this in mind, we request a gold coin donation which covers the cost of tea, coffee, sugar and gifts for speakers.

Two recent recipients of implants were Diana and Lorna. Diana lives in Hamilton. Lorna who was a speaker at the CI forum earlier this year had waited 3 years and got 2 implants. Both are enjoying life and find their expectations have been exceeded in a small time frame.

An article in the NZWW recently was about Cilla Black and how she had received a cochlear implant. However she is still unable to hear.

Donna, Lyn and Nic went to Tauranga recently to a Hearing Expo. This was a 2 hour expo and housed audiologists, hearing therapists and technology – basically a one stop shop. It was great to see how other CI users were getting on. From Ear Health Tauranga, they were selling the ear hugs for \$20. Sizes XS-XL in electric blue. These are made from wetsuit type fabric and stretchy with a Velcro fastening. Pam had talked about using one of these last month when on Outward Bound. www.earhealth.co.nz This can be useful also to hold your processor on (great for children) and also reduces wind noise which can be distracting.

The most recent 'Hearing Matters' magazine is available. It can be downloaded in a PDF format from the National Foundation for the Deaf.

Cochlear NZ had given us some brochures which were available for members to look through. An incentive for new recipients is a welcome pack to receive a care and maintenance kit. You need to register for this.

Donna handed over to Nic who is in the process of organising the 2016 forum. To be held in Wellington, it will be shared between both the Northern and Southern Cochlear groups. She has been given some artwork which will be auctioned in the hope of getting as many members as possible to the forum. New flyers and posters were available for members to take to give to audiologists, doctors and libraries. These link back to the Pindrop website.

Nic handed over to Patricia from Reid Technology. <http://www.reidtechnology.co.nz/>

Reid Technology is the NZ stockist for all major clinical hearing equipment. They supply clinics, hearing associations and hospitals. Their equipment is suitable for hearing aids and cochlear implants. They have telephones, listening devices for watching TV and for meetings. Also important is safety in the home and a number of these alarms are for smoke alarms, door bells and baby monitors.

They exclusively sell the Bellman range which is from Sweden.

The first item was the alarm clock which has a pillow shaker which vibrates. It also has strobe lighting. This unit can be programmed for phone, smoke alarm, and pocket pager. These are altered by the pillow shaker if at night or by a mobile unit which can be moved from room to room.

Raewyn has a unit and said when she was alerted – it was quite scary.

John Luxford asked whether it could be used with regular smoke alarms. The Bellman unit is compatible only with other Bellman accessories.

The unit is wireless so does not need to have special wiring throughout the house. The battery has an 8-10 year life. There is government funding available – through Accessible or Workbridge. However this needs to be done through a Hearing Therapist. If you work, some of this equipment may be funded for your work environment also. A recent example was an alarm with pillow shaker which costs \$125, and students or workers pay \$30.

Smoke detectors and receivers are upwards of \$300. You can buy a number of different items dependent on your house size and the number of rooms you want covered.

John C has used the pager unit for 11-12 years. When it was misplaced he had 2 weeks of stress and then decided to buy another one.

A member asked whether the smoke alarm would alert the fire brigade. They had a security system which alerted a company.

John Stevenson (who is the president of the Fire Service) said it would be very expensive as it would need to be a one-off module. This could start at \$400-\$500 and possibly \$200-\$300 installation. He said all members needed to let the fire brigade know that we are hearing impaired. He said if they knew a hearing impaired person was inside, they would break the door down as soon as they arrived. Otherwise they would be knocking on your door for a while *(We are looking into this currently)*

The next unit Patricia told us about the Bellman Mino. This has headphones and a small unit which is placed near to where the speech/noise is coming from and is good for watching television, listening to radio and at meetings. The unit takes 2 hours to charge and can be used for 12 hours. The larger unit has an 18 month battery. Prices \$316 and \$470.

Donna had been a panel member for Life Unlimited recently and had seen one in action. It was interesting to note that if the unit was not focused on individual speakers, the listener thought everyone was sitting on top of each other.

For watching the TV – the microphone can be placed in front of it.

John C said as he had the N6 processor there is a unit available from cochlear which allows him to hear 100% crystal clear as it is wireless. He is able to hear up to 7 metres away and can hear surrounding sound also. A unit used previously received approx 80% clarity.

Laurie said he used wireless headphones for \$130 from Dick Smith before his implant and was still using them afterwards.

Patricia said our meeting was an excellent idea for members to share knowledge. This is where others' experience of using gadgetry meant we had input from a consumers perspective.

Telephones were next and theirs are Oricom from Sydney. They are for hearing and sight impaired and all have tone and volume adjustments. (tone on medium/low) They have cordless units which have programmable numbers for \$167. Another unit which has a base and 1 extra unit was \$310. All phones have the telecoil and all phones are compatible with the Telcom NZ network. They are put through a rigorous testing regime to receive a telepermit.

Donna said she had used a phone about 10 years ago which was meant for hearing and sight impaired people and after a time found it was not compatible any more.

People who purchase telephones from overseas may find they do not work with the network and are only good as ornaments.

Reid Technology will allow customers to take phones home for a trial period (few days) to see if the unit is suitable in their home environment.

One phone unit is called the emergency phone. You have a mobile button which can be put around your neck or put in your pocket. You are able to push the button and answer the phone. \$270.

A number of these telephones have the speaker phone ability. This means you don't have to put the headpiece up to your ear. When using with hearing aids and cochlear implants it can be difficult to position the headpiece to get the best sound.

One telephone has 6 passport-sized squares where you can put pictures of whose telephone numbers have been preprogrammed. This is also suitable for people with alzheimers. \$114.

All units are able to be secured to the wall. The most popular unit is \$270.

They sell the ear band-it for \$25 and comes in a variety of colours.

Currently no phones are compatible with wireless Bluetooth.

Patricia ended her speech at approx 11.30 and Raewyn presented her with a small gift.

Members continued discussion amongst themselves until approximately 12noon.