



Bill's Story

A single dad from WA's South West, Bill has always enjoyed a very active lifestyle, preferring to spend his time surfing, competing in dance competitions and camping with his two sons, in between running his own fencing business.

Although born with normal hearing, at age 43 Bill's hearing suddenly began to decline. Doctors never determined exactly why, but think it possibly occurred as a side effect of a bout of Ross River Virus, which he had suffered a short time earlier.

Bill was fitted with hearing aids and for several years, he managed to 'get by' with his remaining natural hearing abilities. By age 47, however, his hearing had declined to the point where even the most powerful hearing aids weren't helpful – and his income and personal relationships had begun to suffer. He couldn't answer the phone anymore to take orders from his clients, and his kids – now teenagers – were reluctant to talk with him, as they knew he simply wouldn't be able to hear them. Conversations became frustrations.

"Living with a hearing loss, the thing I miss most is chatting with my boys," Bill said.

"As they get older and become more and more like typical teenagers, I've become very aware that every second of conversation with them is precious. It is terrible to miss out on these moments because I can't hear what they are saying.

"The hearing loss has also caused immense stress on my business – I just can't converse with my clients. The amount of business I have lost because of my hearing loss has been absolutely astronomical."

Bill was referred to Ear Science Institute Australia in 2015, and just a few months later, was put forward for a cochlear implant through the Gift of Hearing Appeal. Then, just in time for Christmas, Bill had his implant switched on.

"The cochlear implant has changed my life, especially with my boys. I can chat to them and give them advice. I can keep up with conversation at dinner. It's been truly amazing," he later said.

"We now have in-depth conversations, and I'm able to give them advice on how to be good and honourable men. These are exactly the conversations we couldn't have before; the conversations I had been missing.

"On my work front, I can now interact with my clients and suppliers properly, and give the quality of service I want to give.

"I'm just so grateful to the Ear Science Institute Australia and the Gift of Hearing Appeal.

