



## ABOUT EAR SCIENCE INSTITUTE AUSTRALIA



Since 2001, Ear Science Institute Australia has been the only Australian medical research institute solely dedicated to ear and hearing disorders and has been at the forefront in research, delivering innovative treatments.

Ear Science is a centre of excellence, bringing together a multidisciplinary team of the brightest minds from across the globe, including surgeons, researchers, audiologists, clinicians and scientists collaborating to enhance the lives of people with ear and hearing disorders.

We own and operate 25 clinics, including a surgical facility, and are the nation's only hearing clinic network powered by a medical research institute.

We are committed to creating and implementing new treatments in clinical care and finding cures for tomorrow's generations.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our mission of ear and hearing health in 2024-2025.

Ear Science  
Institute Australia  
respects all ways  
of communication

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which Ear Science Institute Australia stands. We pay our respects to elders, past and present, and acknowledge their wisdom and contribution to positive health and wellbeing outcomes. Our Community Team are honoured to be welcomed as guests on country across Western Australia.

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Hello and welcome to everyone reading this impact report. If you are doing so, it means you have a personal interest in the Institute and I value that highly. People's contributions and interests are vital to all that we are trying to achieve on our journey. In saying that everything in our world is moving at a faster pace than ever before, so it's important what Ear Science does remains leading edge and relevant to our cause.

There are many reflections and opportunities presenting for the Board, the Executive, and the broader team at Ear Science but to highlight a few for you.

We recognise the importance of growth of our footprint in today's climate and whilst our base is strongly and proudly Western Australia, we are establishing hearing clinics in NSW and Labs in Victoria to meet the demands.

Our continued strong organic growth in WA of our Lions Hearing Clinics has been very successful and we remain the number one trusted brand in this state for the most professional and the highest quality service to our community.

There has been an unprecedented leap in our industry partnerships for research over the past 18 months and this will be a continued focus over the coming years.

We have journeyed down the difficult road of commercialisation of research devices through establishment of spin off companies and the welcomed investment of Institute friends - old and new.

We have started our own surgical facility to improve access to the best surgical services for our community.

We have made fabulous inroads to our work in remote regions in the Pilbara thanks to the very generous contributions by Mineral Resources and BHP and can't thank them enough for their support and commitment to these projects.

And importantly and the reason we exist - we have continued our work in building the largest Ear and Hearing Medical Research team in the Southern Hemisphere which we believe is an extraordinary achievement.

A special thank you to our Founding Director Marcus Atlas, The Board of Trustees, Our Board and their significant contributions, our CEO Sandra Bellekom and her executive team and the many staff of the Institute who all contribute in so many ways to making it a very special place.

We don't have unlimited resources, but we do great things with what we have, and as Chair I am very proud of that.

**Rob Gordon**

Chairman, Ear Science Institute Australia



## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

The health and wellbeing of Australians remain central to our mission. Across the nation, medical researchers are making remarkable progress in improving lives, and the longstanding divide between laboratory research and patient care is beginning to dissolve. In Western Australia, medical research institutes continue to deliver far beyond expectation, providing vital clinical services that strengthen community health while supporting the state's healthcare system.

Yet, there is still much more to be done. Transforming healthcare from a cost centre into an engine of economic growth demands courage, innovation, and vision. At Ear Science Institute Australia, we have long embraced this philosophy. Our strength lies in the integration of research excellence with patient-centred clinical care.

We often ask ourselves what more could be achieved if less of our effort was required to sustain the dual responsibilities of operating as both a business and a centre for scientific discovery. Yet, we believe that maintaining both are essential to generate relevant questions for scientists to tackle, and to translate the results of research into clinical practice and improve community health.

Western Australia is rapidly evolving into a unified and collaborative medical research ecosystem, one characterised by shared purpose, cohesive leadership, and a collective ambition to restore health and wellbeing throughout the community.

At the same time, it is fostering a strong foundation for future innovation by investing in the brightest minds our schools and universities produce. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics are not transient ideals; they are enduring pillars of progress. It is through the gathering of data, the pursuit of knowledge, and the application of rigorous science that we can truly transform lives.

The model we have created at Ear Science Institute Australia is one of which we are deeply proud, anchored in impact, collaboration, and care. Western Australia has the potential to serve as a global hub for hearing health innovation and as a gateway into Asia, offering world-class science guided by the real needs and experiences of patients. Our success is built upon the strength of our partnerships, spanning industry, manufacturing, resources, communities, government, and philanthropy, all united in a shared vision to advance hearing health.

The digital transformation occurring across medical research presents a defining moment. It provides a powerful opportunity to extend our reach beyond Western Australia, sharing our insights, data, and breakthroughs with the world. Hearing loss continues to affect millions globally, across both developed and developing nations. Through data-driven decision-making and a deep connection to patients, Ear Science Institute Australia is positioned to make a genuine global impact.

Among emerging frontiers, genetic therapies represent perhaps the most exciting and promising avenue for large-scale change. After more than three decades in audiology, I have never felt such optimism about what lies ahead. As you read our 2024-2025 Impact Report, I invite you to reflect on our collective progress and to join us in working toward an even greater impact - locally, nationally, and globally.

**Sandra Bellekom**

CEO, Ear Science Institute Australia

## OUR MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

### Our Mission

To improve the lives of those with ear and hearing disorders through prevention, research, education and clinical care.

### Our Vision

A Centre of Excellence dedicated to improving the lives of those with ear and hearing disorders through prevention, research, education and clinical care.

### Our Values



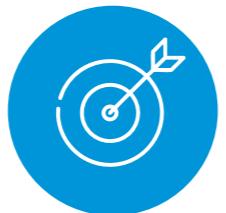
#### EXCELLENCE

We are motivated to exceed expectations and discover more. We celebrate our achievements that bring professional respect and global recognition.



#### INNOVATION

We challenge boundaries and technologies to lead the field and think outside the square. Our experience and drive ensure we remain at the forefront of our profession to discover new and better outcomes.



#### SUCCESS

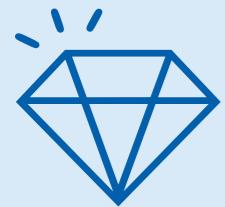
Our independence and experience allow us to devise and tailor solutions to provide people with the most appropriate care. Our leadership position inspires collaborative work with other renowned research facilities to maximise and deliver the best results.



#### AUTHENTICITY

We remain honest, open, and approachable with our colleagues and our patients. Our integrity ensures that we promote and provide patient-centred clinical care. We foster and encourage a supportive environment for all.

## 2024/2025 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



### Clinical Excellence & Access:

1 We operate **WA's largest private adult cochlear implant program**, which is internationally renowned, and one of Australia's largest private adult programmes exceeding 2,000+ recipients, fast-tracking access to implantation within 60 days.

2 Ear Science referrals represent **75% of all WA audiological referrals** for private implants.

- 3 We **own and operate 25 clinics**, including a surgical facility, delivering over 50,000 appointments annually to over 23,000 individual clients and patients.
- 4 We are one of the **largest employers of audiologists in WA**, with a unique patient-first approach and unincentivised by sales, safeguarding independent care. Our 60 clinicians work across multiple disciplines, providing rehabilitation using hearing aids, implants and best practice treatments.
- 5 Our clinical network is the only hearing provider in Australia **solely led by audiologists**, with all clinical operations managers at all levels maintaining active qualifications in Audiology.
- 6 We have **integrated university teaching** into our clinics, supporting supervision of university students during their training and their graduate internships, cementing our role as a key educator and clinical innovator for the state's future workforce.



### Innovation & Research Leadership:

- 1 We are home to the **largest dedicated ear and hearing science medical research team** in the Southern Hemisphere, uniting expertise across audiology, otolaryngology, molecular biology, engineering, and computational science.
- 2 We have created the **world's first hearing-only biobank** and **Australia's first dedicated ear and hearing registry and biobank**, connecting 15 groups nationwide to accelerate discovery of a cure for inherited hearing loss.
- 3 Our **innovation leadership** is demonstrated through 25 granted patents, 4 patent families and 14 pending applications, securing intellectual property that underpins new treatments and technologies.
- 4 We spun out **Clear Drum Pty Ltd**, developing the world's first prosthetic ear drum, backed by over \$10 million raised.
- 5 We spun out WA-based **Ear Science Therapeutics Pty Ltd** for gene, RNA, and small molecule therapies targeting sensorineural hearing loss – a condition ranked the second largest disability worldwide.
- 6 We have been awarded **\$20M+ government grants** since 2018, a 60% increase, building WA's strength in medical research and technology.
- 7 We have had over **450 peer-reviewed publications** published in the last decade (255 in the past five years, including 50 in cochlear implantation), contributing to globally recognised evidence that shapes clinical and research excellence.
- 8 We are **leaders in multinational clinical trials**, embedding consumer and community involvement from the outset to ensure rapid translation of research into real-world patient outcomes.
- 9 **Dedicated Commercialisation Team**, driving translational outcomes through multiple spin-outs, industry collaborations, and clinical pipelines.



### Global Recognition & Community Reach:

- 1 **Internationally recognised** by being the World Health Organisation's first designated Collaborating Centre for ear and hearing health in Australia, serving the West Pacific region with strong ties to China.
- 2 Our Community Lions Hearing Van & Screeners reaches **over 473+ people across communities in WA**, providing hearing screening, education, and prevention programs.
- 3 **Pilbara's first and only Ear Health Coordinator role**, delivered in partnership with Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service, with telehealth and surgical pathways established in collaboration with Perth Children's Hospital and industry partners BHP and Mineral Resources. • **3,721** children treated.
- 4 Fostering **global industry partnerships** with companies such as Cochlear and MED-EL (both on-site), Oticon, Sonova, and Audeara, ensuring WA is a key player in the world's ear and hearing innovation ecosystem.
- 5 Global humanitarian commitment includes our **Hearing Aid Bank**, providing refurbished aids for children in Nepal, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Middle East.
- 6 With the **Gift of Hearing Appeal** now in its 15th year, Ear Science continues to raise philanthropic funds to advance research discoveries, clinical care, and innovation pipelines, with a total of **\$24M raised** so far.

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT



### Meet Dr Rob Eikelboom

- Research Manager Corporate
- Head of Hearing Outreach
- Adjunct Professor, University of Western Australia

Named Australia's 2025 leading researcher in audiology, speech and language pathology by the Australia Research Magazine, Dr Eikelboom works closely with our dedicated team of researchers and clinicians at Ear Science as well as collaboration with national and international institutions.

Dr Eikelboom's collaborative approach in integrating research with clinical practice has led to his outstanding success. His ability to bridge the gap between cutting-edge research and evolving patient needs has made him a standout in the field, contributing significantly to the work being done not just at Ear Science but also within the clinical operations of Ear Science's Lions Hearing Clinic and Implant Clinic.

His ability to continuously refine clinical offerings at our Lions Hearing Clinics, informed by ongoing research, has made his work particularly relevant and often cited within the field.

In 2024, Dr Eikelboom co-authored nine peer-reviewed publications, totalling to over 250 publications over his career. Over the past two years he, along with co-investigators, has been awarded over \$4.5 million in research funding. His contributions to the research community include being a panel review member for the Medical Research Future Fund and Western Australia's Future Health Research and Innovation (FHRI) Fund, an associate editor of the International Journal of Audiology, and a member of Standards Australia committee where he developed a telehealth standard.

Dr Eikelboom's collaborative approach is crucial to improving the lives of those with ear and hearing disorders and is a valued member of our team.

#### Dr Eikelboom's key areas of expertise:

- Clinical Research
- Telehealth
- Epidemiology



### Meet Jordan Bishop

- Business Development Manager for Western Australia and New South Wales
- 10 Years with Ear Science Institute Australia

Starting with Ear Science a decade ago, Jordan was the friendly face of the newly opened Bunbury Lions Hearing Clinic. Establishing strong relationships with the local GPs and community groups was key to Jordan's success in raising awareness for hearing health and advocating the services available to those in the region.

Over time, her passion for hearing health advocacy and referrer engagement took centre stage. Today, Jordan leads as the Business Development Manager, working across Western Australia and New South Wales to connect referrers and communities with both Lions Hearing Clinic and Ear Science Implant Clinic services.

#### Lions Hearing Van

A standout initiative for Jordan this year is her continued efforts in growing the Lions Hearing Van with increased event participation and screenings across Western Australia.

"The Lions Hearing Van is such a great initiative to help people take that first step on their hearing journey," Jordan says. "It feels less formal and makes it easier for people to ask questions. Earlier this year I screened a client who has significant hearing loss but had been avoiding clinics. Thanks to the van, she felt comfortable enough to take that next step, and later booked a full assessment."

#### Accessible Hearing Checks

Jordan has been a key part of the introduction of new screening technology that allows clients to check their hearing with the ease and convenience of using headphones and an iPad.

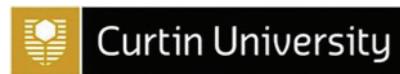
In her role, Jordan also successfully coordinates the institute's major public engagement events, including; Ageing Well Expo, Have a Go Day, General Practice Conference & Exhibition (GPCE), and NSW Seniors Expo.

Beyond the numbers, what continues to drive Jordan is the positive feedback she hears from clients and referrers across the state.

*"It's inspiring and motivating to hear how our services are making a difference. I love being part of a team that genuinely improves people's lives."*

Jordan is a valued member of our team, playing a key role in driving community awareness and engagement across both Western Australia and New South Wales. Her dedication, creativity, and connection to the community continue to strengthen our brand and expand access to hearing health services where they're needed most.

## OUR COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS



Demant



McCusker  
Charitable  
Foundation



## OUR GRANT SUCCESSES

We had a highly successful year in securing competitive grant funding, while also advancing research projects supported by grants awarded in the previous financial year. For the 2024-2025 financial year (FY), total grants awarded amounted to \$1,941,611, reinforcing our commitment to pioneering ear and hearing research.

These funds are critical to driving innovation, supporting our researchers, and progressing toward transformative outcomes for individuals affected by hearing loss.

### SUCCESSFUL GRANTS AWARDED

July 2024-June 2025

#### Research Infrastructure Support (2025) from the FHRI Fund

##### *Supporting infrastructure that drives medical research excellence*

This competitive award from the Future Health Research and Innovation (FHRI) fund acknowledges our leadership in building sustainable research infrastructure that enables our researchers and scientists to make high impact discoveries while working towards improved health outcomes. The funding serves to cover indirect and operational costs of shared infrastructure, strengthening the research ecosystem in Western Australia.

#### Early Career Innovation Fellowship from the FHRI Fund

##### *Fabrication of tuneable silk packing materials for ear, nose and throat (ENT) clinical applications*

Dr. Pramod Dorishetty has been awarded an Innovation Fellowship to develop a novel silk-based wound packing material for treating chronic otitis media (CSOM), a condition disproportionately affecting Aboriginal children in Western Australia. The project aims to create a biocompatible, absorbent, and injectable silk foam that can be used in both surgical and non-surgical settings, ideal for remote communities with limited access to health care. With strong support from Ear Science and consumer engagement from the Pilbara region, this innovation could transform ENT treatment and reduce healthcare costs across Western Australia.

#### Channel 7 Telethon Trust Research Grant

##### *A novel bone conducting hearing aid*

Dr Rob Eikelboom has been awarded the 2024 Channel 7 Telethon Trust grant to develop a novel headset designed specifically for Aboriginal children with conductive hearing loss. The device will be lightweight, durable, and culturally co-designed to ensure comfort and usability in remote settings, both in and outside the classroom. With features like Auracast broadcast capability, it aims to improve hearing access, educational engagement, and social wellbeing. This project builds on strong community partnerships and has the potential to transform hearing care for vulnerable children across Western Australia.

#### Channel 7 Telethon Trust Equipment Grant

##### *CELLCYTE X Live Cell and Spheroid Imaging System*

Sandra Bellekom, Adjunct Associate Professor was awarded a 2024 Channel 7 Telethon Equipment grant towards the acquisition of CELLCYTE X live cell and spheroid imaging system; the first of its kind in Western Australia. The CELLCYTE X will support our Hearing Therapeutics team to fast track their research in developing drug therapies to tackle childhood hearing loss, in Western Australia. It will allow us to rapidly screen and test potential treatments, bringing us one step closer to changing the lives of those affected by conditions like CSOM and Usher syndrome. By enabling real-time, high-throughput drug screening and cell health monitoring, the system will support research that directly benefits over 25,000 children across Western Australia. The equipment will play a vital role in advancing therapies that improve hearing, learning, and quality of life for vulnerable children.

### Innovative Solutions - Digital Health

#### *Reinventing Audiology with 'RealSound'*

Dr Christo Bester, Head of Implant Innovation has been awarded \$500,000 for their innovative proposal to develop a novel hearing testing platform, RealSound, aimed at transforming the current landscape of hearing diagnostics in Western Australia and around the world. Traditional hearing assessments predominantly rely on pure tone audiometry conducted in quiet sound-proof booths. However, substantial evidence indicates that these methods can fail to capture the complexities of 'real world' hearing difficulties experienced by patients. 'RealSound' addresses these limitations by leveraging the latest advancements in virtual and augmented reality technologies to create an immersive hearing testing platform. This innovative system simulates real-world listening challenges in a three-dimensional space, providing a more accurate assessment of an individual's auditory capabilities.

#### The Ian Potter Foundation- Medical Research Grant

##### *The Aussie Ear Bank - Biobanking platform enabling future gene-therapy treatments for hearing loss*

Ear Science has been awarded a prestigious Ian Potter Foundation grant to establish the Australasian Hearing Registry and Biobank (AHRB), better known as The Aussie Ear Bank. A national first for genetic hearing loss research, this state-of-the-art biobanking platform will enable the collection, preservation, and analysis of genetic samples to accelerate the development of gene therapies for conditions like Usher syndrome and other genetic-associated hearing disorders. Established at and run from the Ralph and Patricia Sarich Neuroscience Research Institute, The Aussie Ear Bank will support collaborations across Australia and pave the way for personalised treatments that could transform the lives of thousands of children and families affected by hearing loss.

#### Innovation Fellowship from FHRI Fund

##### *Preparations for Manufacturing and Clinical Trials of ClearDrum: Pioneering the First Tympanic Membrane Prosthetic Device.*

Driving commercialisation in middle ear innovation, Dr Filippo Valente secured a 2024 FHRI Innovation Fellowship to advance ClearDrum — the world's first bioengineered tympanic membrane prosthesis — toward manufacturing and clinical trials. The device has demonstrated one-year storage stability and passed comprehensive chemical safety testing, marking key milestones toward clinical approval and patient use. Positive feedback from the U.S. FDA further highlights ClearDrum's potential as a safe, effective treatment for people living with chronic ear disease.

In a world-first breakthrough, ClearDrum provides a ready-to-use, off-the-shelf implant designed to repair damaged eardrums and restore hearing in a single, minimally invasive procedure. Chronic tympanic membrane perforations affect millions worldwide and are a major cause of hearing loss, with current surgeries often complex and prone to complications. By simplifying treatment and improving long-term outcomes, ClearDrum represents a transformative step forward in regenerative ear care and demonstrates ESIA's commitment to translating science into life-changing impact.

#### MedChem Australia and WEHI National Drug Discovery Centre - Pilot Project Program

##### *Novel small molecules for treatment of sensorineural hearing loss*

Dr Elaine Wong, Head of Hearing Therapeutics was awarded a Medchem Pilot project scheme, funding the in-kind support of a medicinal chemist from the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute of Medical Research (WEHI). The medicinal chemist will provide strategic advice to develop Federal Drug Administration (FDA) approved small molecules for the treatment of sensorineural hearing loss. The ability of drugs to cross the round window membrane will be an ongoing challenge and will require key partnerships from Medchem experts. The project positions the Hearing Therapeutics team for follow on funding with MedChem for a high throughput drug screening and paves the way for future clinical trials.

## Innovation Fellowship from FHRI Fund

### Precision Diagnostics in Cochlear Implant Recipients – understanding the healing process

Driving innovation in cochlear implant care, Dr Christo Bester Head of Implant Innovation, has secured a 2024-25 FHRI Innovation Fellowship grant to develop and refine precision diagnostics to improve our understanding of how the ear responds to cochlear implantation. Cochlear implants are an incredibly effective treatment of severe to profound hearing loss, but there are gaps in our understanding of how the body's healing process affects user's ability to get the best outcomes with their cochlear devices. Dr Bester's research addresses a critical gap: how the body's healing process following cochlear implantation affects a user's success with their device. Dr Bester will investigate these fundamental mechanisms to develop a set of precision diagnostics that can identify these individual differences.

The project's primary aim is to translate these novel tests from the laboratory to the clinic, improving patient outcomes and solidifying Western Australia's position as a leader in hearing innovation.

### PROJECT UPDATES ON GRANTS AWARDED

July 2023-June 2024

#### Telethon Trust

##### Channel 7 Telethon Trust

Led by Dr Rob Eikelboom, Head of Hearing Outreach, and generously supported by the Channel 7 Telethon Trust, the Ear and Hearing Care project in the East Pilbara delivered critical insights into childhood ear disease across five remote Aboriginal communities. Through comprehensive community consultation and data collection from over 600 children, the project produced the first in-depth overview of ear and hearing health in the region. These findings have already catalysed important discussions around improving service coordination and delivery. The project was completed on time and within budget, marked by strong community engagement and a clear commitment to lasting, positive impact.

#### FHRI: Western Australia Near Miss Awards: Ideas Grant 2023-24

##### Novel nano targeted gene therapy for hearing loss

Dr Elaine Wong, Head of Hearing Therapeutics, has led research on a novel nano-targeted gene therapy for hearing loss, funded by the FHRI Ideas Grant 2024-25. This research focuses on developing advanced gene therapies that target three critical genes involved in supporting cells within the cochlea, using nanotechnology to precisely deliver therapeutic agents. By integrating small molecules, gene therapies, drugs, and scaffold systems through nanotechnological platforms, this project aims to revolutionise treatments for hearing loss by promoting the repair and regeneration of damaged auditory cells. This funding has enabled in-depth study of cochlear supporting cells and the development of inner ear organoids to test new therapies *in vitro*. The ultimate goal is to generate functional replacement cells capable of reversing hearing loss.

## RESEARCH DRIVEN, care focused

At Ear Science Institute Australia, our integrated model brings together world-renowned research, clinical services, and community outreach to deliver treatments for today while driving the discovery of cures for tomorrow. As a for-purpose organisation, we are powered by science, not sales. Through our national network of Lions Hearing Clinics, we provide trusted, evidence-based hearing care where the focus is on people. Our clinics directly support and inform our research, while in turn our groundbreaking studies in brain and hearing, therapeutics, implants, and genetic ear disorders guide the decisions we make in clinical care. This unique cycle ensures that every person who walks through our doors benefits from the very latest in science-backed knowledge and treatments, delivered with compassion and excellence. At the heart of it all is our integrated model - a seamless connection between research, clinical care, and innovation - ensuring better hearing health outcomes now and into the future.





Child receiving hearing assessment in the Pilbara through our Healthy Hearing Outback program

*"Our Hearing Outreach team delivers vital ear and hearing services to communities in need, both nationally and internationally. At the core of their research is a focus on understanding and addressing ear and hearing disorders in Aboriginal communities in Western Australia."*



Scientific Lead: **Dr Rob Eikelboom**

## EAR AND HEARING CARE IN THE PILBARA

Dr Rob Eikelboom and the Hearing Outreach team including - Emma Ireland, Community and Education Project Officer; Jessica Yiannos, Audiologist and Research Assistant; Dr Anton Hinton Bayre, Clinical Lead; Lucy Mitchell, Ear Health Coordinator and Sandra Bellekom, CEO - have been working on developing a better understanding of the delivery of ear and hearing care services in the Pilbara. Funded by the Telethon Trust, this \$115,000 project collated critical ear and hearing data collected by various health agencies from 2014 to 2024. This was supplemented by consultations and workshops with clinicians, data custodians and indigenous leaders across various communities.

The project provided a comprehensive understanding of childhood ear disease in the region, including outreach ENT services, audiology services, access to hearing devices, and related surgical pathways. Community engagement was prioritised with five on-country consultation sessions to gather feedback from clinicians and community members.

Our key partners contributing to the success of the project were, Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service (PAMS), Hearing Australia and the Western Australia Country Health Service. This has created the first comprehensive overview of ear health in the East Pilbara region, and addressed the Western Australia Government's Closing the Gap Implementation Plan (2021) by evaluating the outcomes of early childhood programs on Aboriginal families and children. The project confirmed that Aboriginal children in the Pilbara carry one of the highest burdens of ear disease in the world. While some service delivery aspects are efficient, several shortcomings related to cross-institutional communication and coordination were revealed.

Insights were shared with key stakeholders, community clinicians, and community members in a culturally safe manner. Ongoing community conversations provided feedback on ear health services and suggestions for future improvements, and appropriate ways to share the findings with the wider community.

This work is aligned with other ongoing research at Ear Science, including SoundSmiles, a \$1,498,810 collaborative project funded by the WA Future Health Research Innovation Fund, aimed at raising awareness of the impact that hearing loss has on mental wellbeing.



Dr Dona Jayakody performing dementia diagnosis in Lions Hearing Clinic

## BRAIN & HEARING



Our Brain and Hearing team focuses their research on healthy hearing for healthy aging.



Scientific Lead: **Dr Dona Jayakody**

### HEARING TEST FOR DEMENTIA

As Australia's population ages, the health and wellbeing of older Australians has become an urgent national priority. Dementia is currently the leading cause of disability and the second leading cause of death among Australians aged 65 and over, costing the community an estimated \$36.8 billion annually. With no cure in sight, prevention and early intervention have become critical pillars in the global fight against dementia.

Hearing loss has emerged as the number one potentially modifiable risk factor for dementia. With one in six Australians affected by disabling hearing loss, hearing clinics are seeing a growing number of patients who are either at risk of, or already experiencing, cognitive decline. However, standard hearing assessments often rely on subjective responses, which can be unreliable in individuals with cognitive impairments, making diagnosis and intervention more challenging.

In response to this, our Brain and Hearing research team, led by Adjunct Associate Professor Dona Jayakody, is at the forefront of developing innovative solutions to this growing issue. Under the Ear Science-Oticon affiliation agreement, and in collaboration with Professor Tele Tan, Deputy Head of the School of Electrical Engineering, Computing and Mathematical Sciences at Curtin University, the team is working on a project that includes:

- An objective hearing biomarker for prodromal dementia: Designed to detect the earliest signs of dementia, this biomarker aims to support timely diagnosis in hearing, memory, and general practice clinics.
- An objective hearing threshold test: Tailored for individuals who cannot provide reliable subjective responses, this test ensures accurate hearing thresholds during hearing assessments regardless of cognitive ability.

Funded by the William Demant Foundation, this project has the potential to revolutionise the way hearing and timely cognitive impairment are assessed, especially in older adults.

Once implemented, this biomarker and threshold test could significantly enhance clinical decision-making and early intervention, improving outcomes and quality of life for countless Australians.



Dr Filippo Valente working with silk strands in the Ralph & Patricia Sarich Neuroscience Research Institute (Sarich) laboratory

The Surgical Science team is a collaborative group of clinicians, medical doctors, and researchers working at the intersection of science and surgical care. Their focus lies in translating research into real-world clinical outcomes, particularly through the development of new drugs and treatments for middle ear disease and hearing loss. The team also contributes to advancements in cochlear implant technology and surgical techniques, driving innovation to improve patient care and long-term hearing outcomes



Clinical Lead:  
**Professor Marcus Atlas**



Scientific Lead:  
**Dr David Sly**



R&D Manager, Biomaterials Lead:  
**Dr Filippo Valente**

## CLEARDRUM

In a significant leap forward for ear surgery, the Ear Science Surgical Science team, in collaboration with Deakin University's Future Fibres Hub, is transforming the treatment of chronic eardrum perforations with a groundbreaking innovation, ClearDrum.

ClearDrum is the world's first prosthetic eardrum, designed as an implantable scaffold made from silk fibroin, a biocompatible material known for its strength and flexibility. This prosthetic eardrum offers a next-generation solution for the repair of chronic tympanic membrane (eardrum) ruptures, addressing many of the limitations of current surgical methods.

Unlike traditional grafts used in eardrum repair, ClearDrum provides a consistent, engineered structure that supports tissue regeneration while being easy for surgeons to use. Beyond structural repair, ClearDrum also has the potential to revolutionise treatment for chronic middle ear infections through its capacity for sustained drug delivery. The prosthetic can be loaded with therapeutic agents, enabling targeted, localised treatment over time, minimising the need for repeated interventions or systemic medications.

To bring this innovation to market and ensure global access to the technology, Ear Science has established ClearDrum Pty Ltd. This spin-off company is focused on the commercialisation and clinical translation of ClearDrum, ensuring that surgeons and patients worldwide can benefit from this world-first advancement in ear health.

This collaboration exemplifies Ear Science's commitment to merging cutting-edge research with clinical applications, delivering practical, life-changing solutions in hearing science.

[cleardrum.com.au](http://cleardrum.com.au)



Our Hearing Therapeutics team is at the forefront of developing drug and gene-based treatments for hearing loss and middle ear disease. Their research explores the potential of personalised regenerative medicine and gene therapies to repair and regenerate the inner ear tissue. This work represents a critical step toward transformative care, offering new hope for restoring hearing through targeted, science-driven solutions.



Scientific Lead: **Adjunct Associate Professor, Elaine Wong**  
- Principal Research Fellow and Head of Hearing Therapeutics at Ear Science Institute Australia

## THE AUSTRALASIAN HEARING REGISTRY AND BIOBANK: THE AUSSIE EAR BANK

The launch of the Australasian Hearing Registry and Biobank, better known as The Aussie Ear Bank, marks a transformative milestone in hearing health research across Australia and beyond. Led by Adjunct Associate Professor, Elaine Wong - Principal Research Fellow and Head of Hearing Therapeutics at Ear Science Institute Australia, The Aussie Ear Bank is poised to revolutionise our understanding and treatment of hearing loss. With 1 in 6 Australians affected by hearing loss and mounting evidence pointing to genetic causes, The Aussie Ear Bank is set to become a cornerstone in the pursuit of personalised medicine and innovative therapies.

The Aussie Ear Bank serves a dual purpose: to collect and analyse biological samples to better understand the mechanisms of hearing loss, and to build a platform for developing genetic therapies. As highlighted by Dr Christo Bester, Project Lead, 50% of childhood hearing loss is already known to be genetic, and recent studies suggest a similar genetic contribution to age-related hearing loss. This underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive resource like The Aussie Ear Bank.

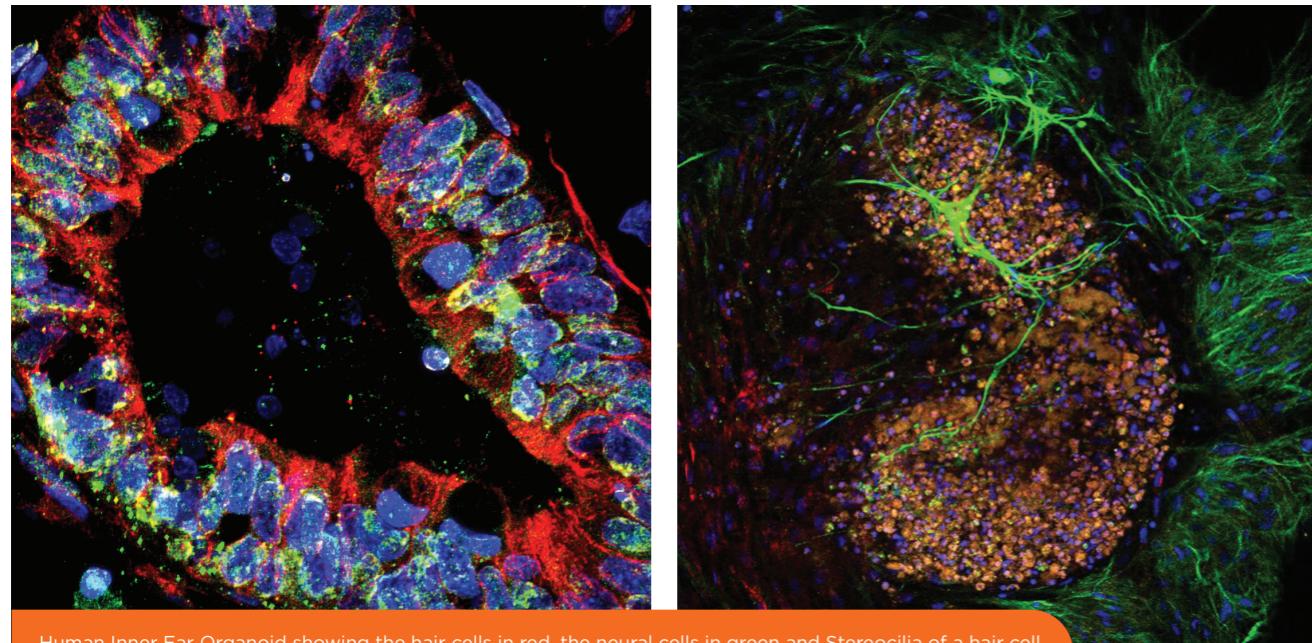
The Aussie Ear Bank is not working in isolation; it is the product of a vibrant national collaboration. Partnerships have been forged with the Lions Eye Institute, Western Australia Department of Health, Genetic Services of Western Australia, University of Sydney, Murdoch Children's Research Institute, and a network of clinics and hospitals across multiple states. Internal collaborations with the Hearing Therapeutics and Hearing Devices teams, along with data-sharing projects involving our Lions Hearing Clinics, are bridging genetic and audiometric databases to create a comprehensive resource for our research team.

Looking ahead, the Aussie Ear Bank team is focused on several ambitious goals:

- Expanding sample collection across additional sites nationwide
- Enhancing genetic and sequencing analysis with capacity to unlock new insights
- Preparing for clinical trials of novel hearing therapeutics within the next five years

The long-term vision is clear; to develop and deliver targeted genetic therapies capable of preventing or reversing hearing loss in both children and adults. While these therapies are on the horizon, the team emphasises that conventional treatments, such as hearing aids and cochlear implants, remain essential and will continue to complement future gene-based approaches.

The Aussie Ear Bank stands at the forefront of a new era in hearing health, merging cutting-edge science, strategic collaboration, and a steadfast commitment to improving lives. By building a national resource for genetic research and therapy development, the Aussie Ear Bank is laying the groundwork for a future where hearing loss can be effectively treated, and even prevented, through personalised medicine.



Human Inner Ear Organoid showing the hair cells in red, the neural cells in green and Stereocilia of a hair cell bundle of the Human Inner Ear Organoid at High magnification Scanning Electron Microscopy 10,000x power.



As research progresses and partnerships deepen, the promise of restoring hearing for millions of Australians is closer than ever before.





## HEARING DEVICES & IMPLANTS



By recreating everyday soundscapes such as busy streets, social gatherings and home environments, RealSound provides a more accurate picture of how people hear and process the real world.

The Ear Science Hearing Devices and Implant Innovation team continues to lead the way in pioneering technologies that enhance the diagnosis and treatment of hearing loss. Their research involves developing new hearing tests, devices and digital tools for monitoring and improving hearing care for individuals with hearing impairments.



Scientific Lead: **Dr Christo Bester**

### REALSOUND

Our Hearing Devices and Implant Innovation team took a major step forward in revolutionising hearing diagnostics with the launch of their latest research project, RealSound. Currently in its pilot phase, this project led by Dr Christo Bester, Head of Implant Innovation, and Dr David Sly, Chief Operating Officer: Research, is a groundbreaking initiative which received a grant from the Western Australian Government's FHRRI fund, which supports innovation and capability-building in Western Australia's health and medical research sector.

With over 1.5 billion people affected by hearing loss worldwide, the need for more accurate, accessible, and real-world relevant testing is urgent. Current hearing assessments rely heavily on pure tone audiometry in sound-proof environments that don't reflect the complex listening conditions most people experience daily. These conventional methods often fall short in identifying how individuals hear in environments filled with background noise or multiple competing sounds. At Lions Hearing Clinics alone, audiologists report seeing around a thousand clients each year who struggle in complex listening environments. Audiologists don't yet have the tools to measure their specific difficulty, nor do they know the best hearing treatment for patients that experience these difficulties.

RealSound aims to bridge this gap by, developing a novel hearing test platform using virtual and augmented reality technologies to simulate realistic listening scenarios in a three-dimensional space. By recreating everyday soundscapes, like busy streets, social gatherings, or home environments, RealSound provides a more accurate picture of how people hear and process sound in the real-world.

The impact of RealSound goes beyond testing hearing in a real-world scenario. The platform is designed to inform real-time personalisation of hearing care enabling audiologists to fine-tune hearing aids and treatment strategies based on how each person performs in realistic scenarios. This tailored approach holds the promise of significantly improving outcomes for people with hearing loss.

This personalised approach promises to enhance the effectiveness of hearing interventions significantly. Also, the mobile and digital nature of this technology could bring high-quality hearing assessments to remote and underserved areas of Western Australia, where traditional testing facilities are often unavailable.

Bringing this vision to life is our newly appointed Virtual Reality Developer, Laurence “Larry” Valentini, who joins the team with a strong background in immersive gaming technology and human-centred design. Larry is collaborating closely with our expert audiologists at Lions Hearing Clinic to ensure the platform reflects best-practice clinical standards and delivers measurable benefit to patients.

RealSound exemplifies the innovation and collaboration that defines research at Ear Science. With cutting-edge technology and clinical excellence working hand-in-hand, we are proud to be reshaping the future of hearing health - right here in Western Australia.

**Minister for Science and Innovation, and Medical Research, Stephen Dawson, has shown his support for the project and the benefits it will offer.**

“

RealSound is doing fantastic work to revolutionise hearing tests by using immersive virtual and augmented reality to better reflect real-world settings.

The Cook Government’s FHRI Fund is helping drive a new era of innovation in health and medical research across Western Australia.

Through supporting transformative projects like RealSound, we are enabling world-class researchers to deliver practical solutions that improve lives, support clinicians, and tackle major health challenges.

”



## THE LIONS HEARING DIFFERENCE

Lions Hearing Clinic is the only hearing clinic network in Australia owned and operated by a medical research institute. We deliver the highest standard of care that is grounded in science, ethics and a long-term vision for better hearing health.

We offer our clients an experience that sets us apart in the industry, including:



### Independent Advice

We offer a broad range of solutions from the world’s leading manufacturers but are not tied to recommending any one brand.



### Commission-Free Care

Our clinicians receive no financial incentives and provide clients with honest, unbiased recommendations, keeping their best interest at heart.



### Personalised Care

We take the time to listen, offering longer appointments than the industry standard. This ensures every solution is customised for clients’ hearing profiles, lifestyles, and comfort.



### Long-Term Support

Choosing an independent, commission free provider means that we are dedicated to supporting clients beyond their hearing aid fitting, with regular annual reviews ensuring outcomes remain optimal.



### Hearing Implant Referral

When a hearing aid is no longer enough, we support clients with a referral for a hearing implant assessment.

Our clients choose Lions Hearing Clinic not only for our excellent care, but because we are proudly part of a purpose medical research institute. By choosing us they become part of something bigger - supporting pioneering medical research into ear and hearing disorders, and ultimately, contributing towards finding a cure.

With 1 in 6 Australians experiencing hearing loss, and that number projected to steeply rise, the need for independent, research-driven, and purpose-led hearing care has never been greater. Lions Hearing Clinic is proud to be leading that charge, providing ethical, evidence-based care today while driving innovation for tomorrow.

## LIONS HEARING CLINIC IN THE COMMUNITY

It's been another successful year in bringing hearing health directly to the community. Our team provided screenings for more than 450 people across Western Australia through the Lions Hearing Family Van and new mobile iPad-operated screening technology rolled out at selected GPs. With over 20 dedicated screening days and visits to locations ranging from GP practices and shopping centres, to Bunnings and seniors' expos, we've made hearing care more accessible than ever. This year also saw the introduction of innovative iPad-based hearing checks, helping us reach even more people in collaboration with the Lions Hearing Foundation and local GP practices. Across every stop, we've proudly connected community members with their local Lions Hearing Clinics team, bringing clinical care, education, and support right to their doorstep.



## CLIENT STORY

*I hadn't realised just how much I was missing out on*

“

My name is Mike Forster, a seven-year Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) veteran who served through the late 1970s and 80s and saw much of my service in RAAF Butterworth, Malaysia. It is from this time I attribute most of my hearing loss from exposure to jet noise. On discharge, I realised I had a high frequency hearing loss and tinnitus. For many years I ignored it and worked around it, until I realised it was increasingly affecting my work, home, and social life.

Like many veterans, I tried to adapt in silence but eventually sought help; and the impact was life-changing.

Lions Hearing Clinic changed many things for me through meticulous attention to my hearing loss. They also arranged, through the DVA, a Roger remote microphone system to help in social events and crowded places, to pick up voices far better. I have nothing but praise for their service; transforming my work and social life. I hadn't realised just how much I was missing out on.

”



By **Mike Forster**

Clinicians and researchers at Lions Hearing Clinics have observed that for many veterans, it is tinnitus, not just hearing loss, that profoundly affects their quality of life. The persistent nature of the condition can impact sleep, concentration, and mental health, making daily life more challenging for those affected.

## EAR SCIENCE IMPLANT CLINIC

Our Ear Science Implant Clinic is one of the largest adult implant programs in Australia and is owned and operated by Ear Science. This means we deliver a higher standard of care that is grounded in science, ethics and a long-term vision for better hearing health. We offer our private adult patients:



### Personalised Care

Because each hearing journey is unique, we personalise every step to match clients' goals. Patients are connected in a mentor program, or they can join a candidacy information event for support.



### Research based care

We provide patients with accurate, research-based information so they can confidently make informed decisions about the right option for their hearing.



### Independent advice

Patients can choose the implant technology and the manufacturer that suits their lifestyle and unique needs.



### A multi-disciplinary team approach

Our team of dedicated Implant Audiologists work closely with Fellowship trained surgeons, ensuring patients' hearing is cared for by the most advanced multi-disciplinary team. Our network of surgeons are committed to prioritising client referrals to minimise wait times.



### Long term care

Our team is dedicated to support patients beyond their implant activation, providing regular rehabilitation, reviews and assessments.

## A YEAR OF GROWTH AND IMPACT

The past year has been a period of significant success for the Ear Science Implant program. We are proud to reflect on a year marked by growth, innovation, and meaningful impact on the lives of our clients. In partnership with our fellowship trained surgical teams, we reached a major milestone by implanting 100 cochlear devices, transforming lives and reaffirming our commitment to delivering world class hearing solutions.

Our community engagement efforts have continued to expand with increased demand for our candidacy events. We hosted four cochlear implant and one bone conduction implant candidacy session; all met with strong attendance and high levels of engagement. The highlight of these events was hearing from more than 14 implant recipients, who generously shared their hearing journeys. Their stories provided encouragement and insight to prospective candidates and their support networks.

Our team's expertise was also recognised on national platforms. Sebastian Ryan, National Manager Clinical Services, David Sly, Chief Operating Officer Research, and Dr Rob Eikelboom, Research Manager Corporate, represented the program at the Audiology Australia Conference in Adelaide, contributing to key conversations in the field. Ronel Chester-Browne, Manager of the Ear Science Implant Clinic, presented a compelling clinical case and joined a panel discussion at a Cochlear-hosted event, demonstrating the depth of clinical knowledge and leadership within our team.

We are also proud to report a record number of referrals this year, with over 50% coming from our own Lions Hearing Clinic audiologists. This reflects the strong interdisciplinary collaboration across our organisation and reinforces our ability to provide integrated, client-centred care for a wide range of ear and hearing conditions.

As demand continues to grow, so does our team. We are delighted to be welcoming new clinical professionals in the coming months, ensuring we remain equipped to deliver the highest standard of care to every person we support.

This year's achievements are a testament to the passion, expertise, and dedication of our team, and the strength of our partnerships. Together, we continue to advance our mission to improve the lives of those with ear and hearing disorders through research, education and clinical care.



## CLIENT STORY

*I feel like I have joined the world again*

“

As a child, I experienced regular earaches, and my family has a history of hearing loss.

I worked as an engineer for many years, with exposure to factory noise and machinery. We never wore hearing protection of any kind.

In 1988, I moved from the UK to Australia. After living with terrible tinnitus for a fair while, I first sought help for my hearing around 2009, and I was fitted with bilateral hearing aids. However, I stopped using my left hearing aid about five years later, due to limited benefit.

My audiologist recommended Ear Science Implant Clinic and in 2023 I received a cochlear implant in my left ear. The surgery was really easy to deal with, and went very well. It's been a remarkable change – my tinnitus has gone completely, and my wife Barbara and I have regained our ability to have conversations with each other. I feel like I've joined the world again.

”



By Leonard Roy Peet

## EAR SCIENCE ON COUNTRY

At Ear Science, we're proud to have worked alongside Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service (PAMS) for over a decade to deliver the Healthy Hearing Outback Program. This initiative provides essential audiology and ENT services to the Martu and Nyiyaparli communities in Newman and the Western Desert, helping to detect and treat ear conditions that can significantly impact health and wellbeing.

In recent years, the program has expanded to include a stronger focus on community engagement, health promotion, telehealth services, and building local workforce capability. This focused development aims to deliver sustainable care that meets the needs of the community.

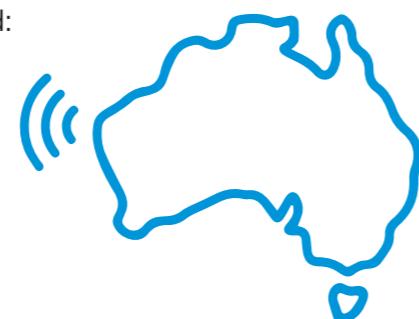
### EAR SERVICES

Since 2014, the Healthy Hearing Outback team has delivered:

**3,721** Consults

**1,310** ENT Consults

**66** Surgeries



*Kunawarritji (Canning Stock Route Well 33) - Debra Thomas.*

### SURGERIES

Surgery support has been a major focus this year, delivering outstanding outcomes for children living on Country. Surgery numbers increased by 62.5% from FY23-24 to FY24-25 highlighting significant progress in service reach and impact. Importantly, the median wait time for surgery also decreased, reflecting improved access and greater system efficiency.

This progress has been made possible through the strong support of our program partners. BHP's ongoing investment has helped remote families overcome substantial barriers to accessing surgical care. In addition, Rural Health West's Outreach program, funded by the Australian Government Department of Health, has been instrumental in expanding service capacity. The dedicated efforts of Ear Science's Ear Health Coordinator, supported by Mineral Resources (MinRes), have also played a vital role in delivering improved outcomes for our communities.



### HEALTHY HEARING OUTBACK PROGRAM PARTNERS

The Healthy Hearing Outback Program is made possible with the support of our long-standing partners:

- **Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service**
- **BHP**
- **Mineral Resources**, and
- **Rural Health West's Outreach program**, funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.



## INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION: WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAM

Our Healthy Hearing Outback Program team members work closely with our partners to address the hearing needs of the community, particularly for children. Our Audiologist, Selina Moyle, initiated a work experience program with Jigalong Remote Community School where students can learn more about a career in audiology.

In the 2024-2025 FY, we were proud to welcome five students into the program, giving them hands-on experience and insight into the world of ear health.

Koby said: "I enjoyed looking in people's ears with Ear Science. I liked to learn what was in the ears and looking at them with the machine. It was amazing helping organise the students. Thank you for having me on your team!"

Mahalia said: "It was really good working with Ear Science. I loved examining students' ears for problems so they can be made better. It will be lovely to work with you guys in Perth—maybe one day I could be a nurse. Thanks for letting me help you."

Programs like these are essential in inspiring the next generation of health professionals, building local capacity, and strengthening long-term healthcare outcomes for remote communities.

We express our thanks to Cochlear Limited who supported this program through their Gift of Hearing Donation.



## CELEBRATING A DECADE OF DEDICATION

This year, we proudly celebrate a major milestone in the program, 10 years of dedicated service by Selina Moyle, our experienced and passionate audiologist. Selina has played a central role in shaping the Healthy Hearing Outback Program since its early days. Her deep connection with the community, particularly with children and families across generations, has made her a trusted and respected figure. Her enduring commitment has been vital to the program's success in addressing the ear health needs of remote communities. Selina's leadership and presence continue to foster strong relationships and lasting impact; ensuring culturally safe, compassionate, and high-quality ear care reaches those who need it most.

Selina, Healthy Hearing Outback program Ear Health Coordinator

## EXPANDING LOCAL EAR AND HEARING CARE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S WESTERN DESERT

Access to ear and hearing care in the remote areas where we operate in Western Australia's Western Desert has taken a major step forward, thanks to a collaboration between Ear Science's Healthy Hearing Outback team, BHP, and Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service (PAMS). In May 2025, newly supplied medical equipment, generously sponsored by BHP, was delivered and installed across PAMS clinics in Newman, Jigalong, Parnngurr, Punmu, and Kunawarritji, supporting the delivery of ear and hearing services to the local community.

To support this rollout, hands-on clinical training was conducted in May 2025 at our Subiaco headquarters. Led by ENT Dr Luke O'Neil and Audiologist, Jessica Yiannos, providing training to Dr Cara Sheppard, GP and Senior Medical Officer and Suhas Putta, Remote Area Nurse, on advanced diagnostic and treatment tools now available in remote clinics.

*"Training doctors and nurses on the ground in the use of suction and a microscope will enable patients to access healthcare they would otherwise have to travel to Perth for," said Dr Luke O'Neil, ENT Consultant. "The utilisation of the equipment will also enable regular medical staff to discuss clinical cases with ENT surgeons in Perth with more information, assisting in diagnosis and management."*

The new equipment includes an Ambu Nasolaryngoscope, two Zeiss OPMI Pico microscopes, five Vorotek micro-suction units, and a Vorotek binocular scope. This equipment enhances the capability to deliver on-Country care, significantly reducing the need for community members to travel long distances for specialist treatment.

*"Suction and a microscope are vital pieces of equipment for an ENT surgeon," Dr O'Neil added. "Having them on Country enables us to make better clinical diagnoses and decisions, thus saving patients costly and disruptive trips to Perth."*

*"The practical training with the ear suction machine was the most valuable part of the training for me," said Suhas Putta, Remote Area Nurse at PAMS. "I can now use the equipment in daily practice to remove discharge, wax, or foreign bodies, which will improve the ear health outcomes for the people in the communities that I work in."*

Clinical training on suction and microscope at the Ear Science Subiaco headquarters



## Gift of Hearing 2024

The Annual Gift of Hearing Appeal dinner in 2024 was held in the elegant Perth State Buildings. The evening was a testament to the unwavering support from our community of dignitaries, donors, board members and team. A special acknowledgment was made in recognition of the significant support by BHP, with their \$825,000 funding over a three-year period allowing us to collaborate with Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service (PAMS), the wider community and other stakeholders to further improve the ear and hearing health outcomes for Aboriginal families in the East Pilbara region.

Ear Science is proud to call BHP and Mineral Resources true partners in advancing hearing health across the Pilbara. Together with PAMS and PAHA, we are working to enhance the quality of life for the Martu and Niyarparli peoples across the communities of Newman, Jigalong, Punmu, Kunawarritji, and Parnngurr through our innovative projects and shared commitment to better hearing outcomes.

Further to this, the McCusker Foundation was also recognised for their generous support of \$100,000 and the Stan Perron Charitable Foundation, for their donation of \$20,000.

These donations have expanded our laboratory capacity and brought experienced clinical audiologists into the research team.

Our CEO Sandra Bellekom's presentation touched on many of the institute's recent achievements but also provided the audience with real insight into how the support of donors is helping people to hear better, from Indonesia with our Hearing Aid Bank, to the East Pilbara through our outreach program.



## OUR INCREDIBLE SUPPORTERS

### Our Incredible Supporters in 2024

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Stephen & Janine Lauder  
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# Gift of Hearing 2025

This year's Gift of Hearing evening was an intimate and heartfelt celebration of generosity, innovation, and hope. The event welcomed some of our most long standing and committed donors for a gathering, with the distinguished presence of Former Prime Minister, The Hon. John Howard OM AC, who has made no secret of his long struggle with hearing loss.

A highlight of the evening was the official launch of The Aussie Ear Bank, the world's first biobank and hearing registry dedicated to hereditary hearing loss. This groundbreaking initiative marks a major milestone in our mission to discover treatments and ultimately cures for hearing loss. On the night, we invited our supporters to join us in raising \$500,000 towards our \$10 Million goal by 2030 and to help realise the full potential of this vital project.

The evening was made even more special by the inspiring presence of the Doak family - 12-year-old Eamon, together with his parents, Bronwyn and Andrew - who courageously shared their personal journey with Usher syndrome and genetic hearing loss. Eamon's moving speech served as a powerful reminder of why our research matters, and how The Aussie Ear Bank has the potential to transform the lives of children like him.



Eamon Doaks delivery sharing his journey with Usher syndrome

## OUR INCREDIBLE SUPPORTERS

### Our Incredible Supporters in 2025

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Philip & Janine Fisher  
Rob & Barbara Gordon  
The Sports Café Australia Pty Ltd - David & Melanie Schwartz  
Theodore & Diane Kailis  
Tom & Liz Perrott

## BOARD AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Our Boards and Executive Leadership team are committed to representing all our stakeholders in pursuit of better hearing outcomes for our clients and the community.

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**Prof. Marcus Atlas**  
Trustee

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**Rob Gordon**  
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### EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM



**Sandra Bellekom**  
CEO & Board Member



**Alex Woodman**  
Financial Controller

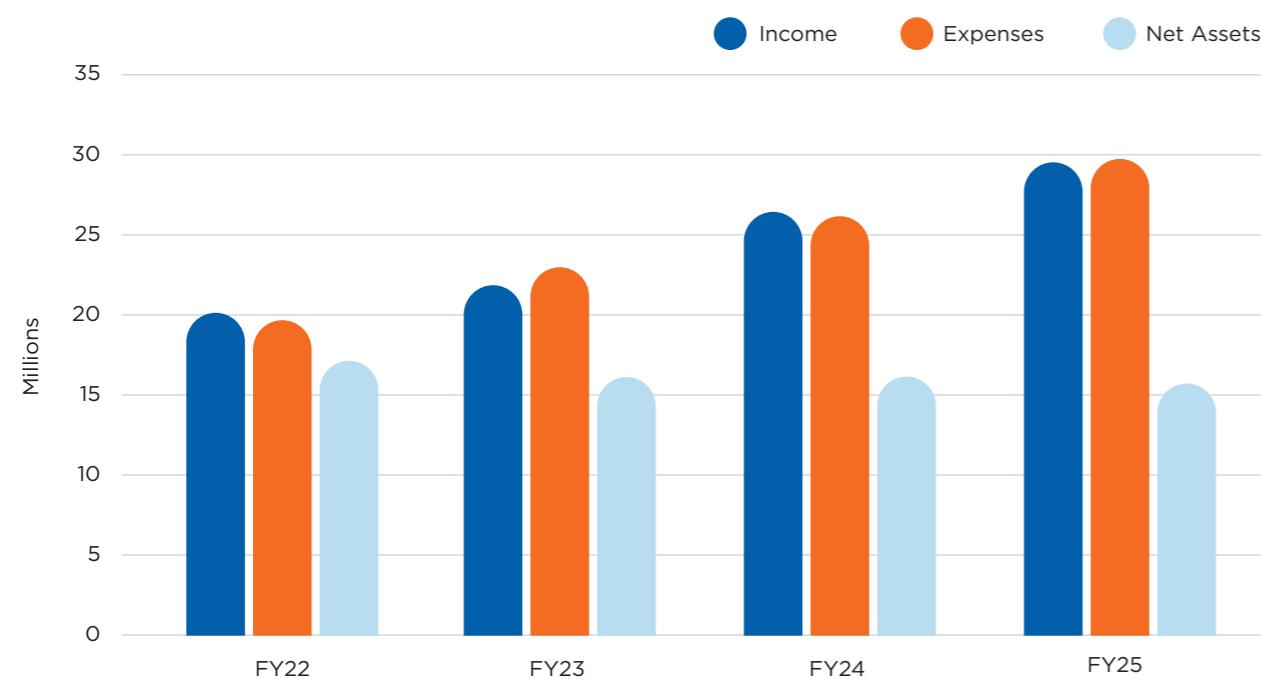


**David Sly**  
Chief Operating Officer - Research

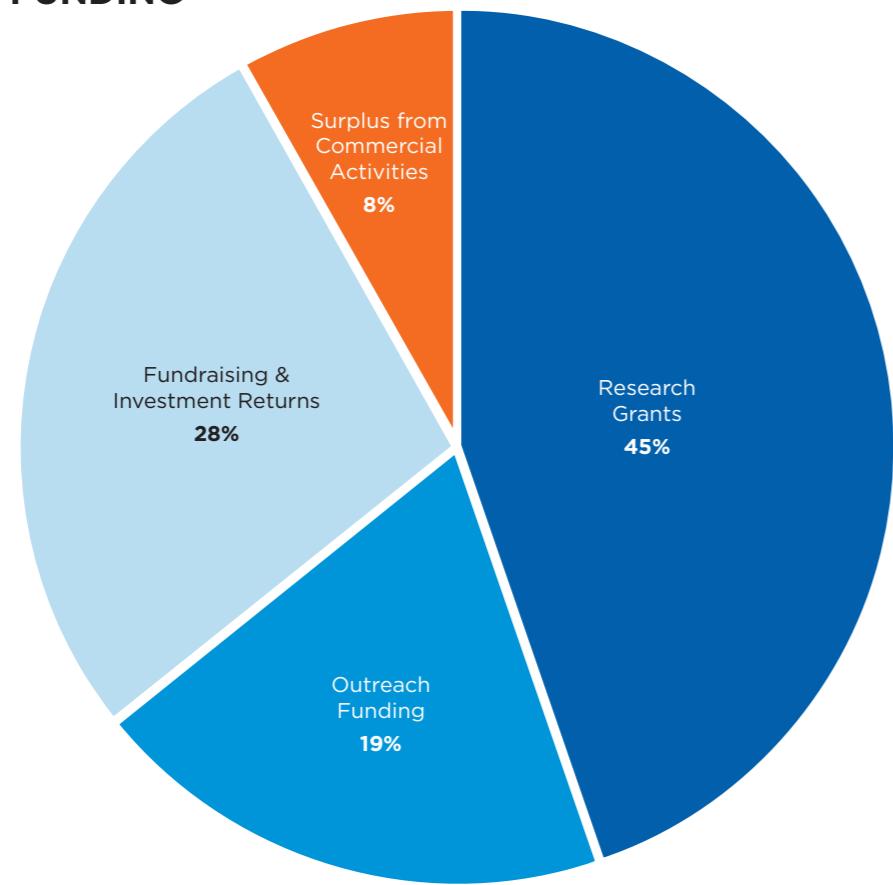


**Jacci Williams**  
Chief People & Strategy Officer

## FY24/25 FINANCIALS



### RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH FUNDING



FY25 marked another period of robust growth and impact for the Institute.

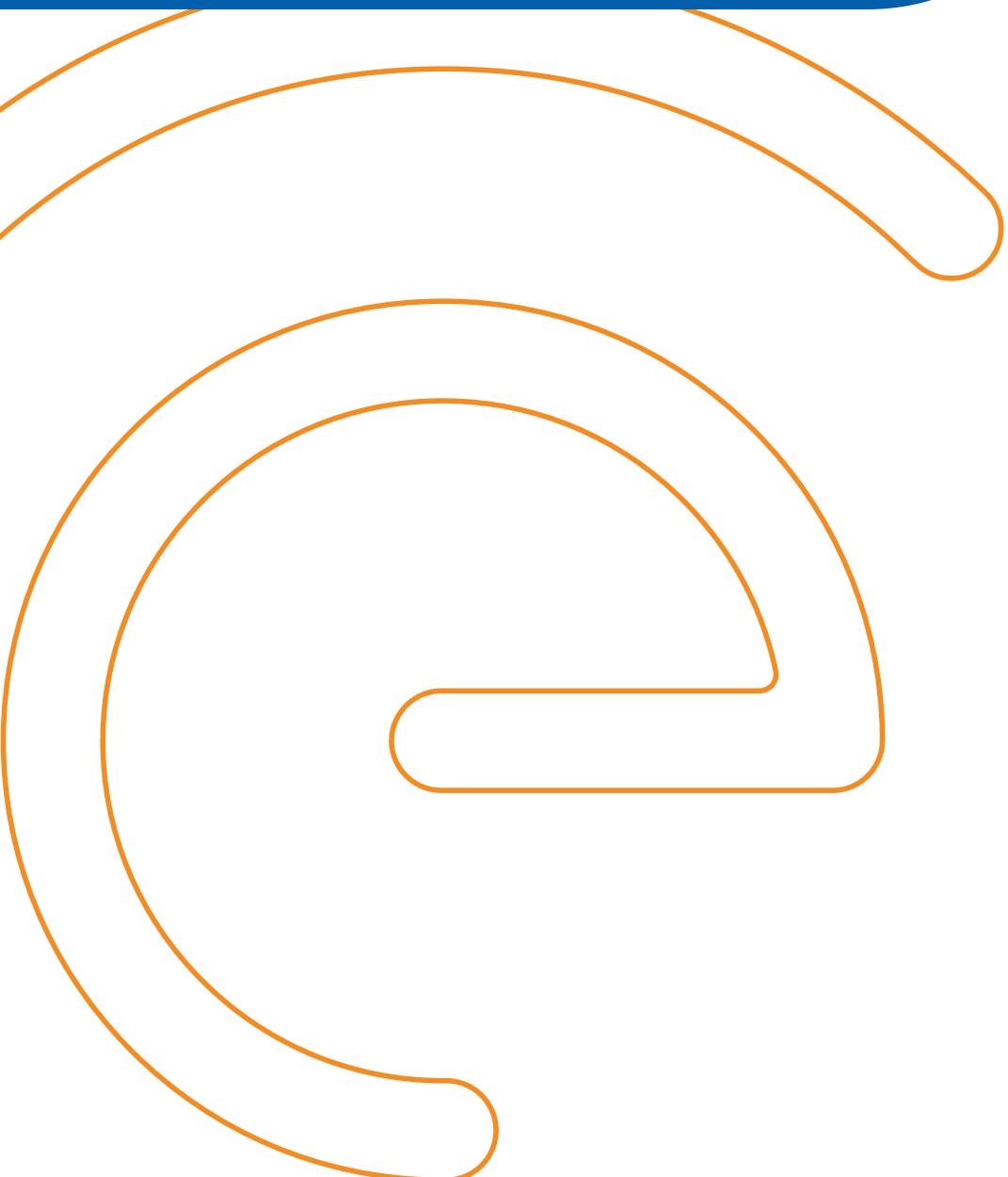
Our commitment to research excellence and innovation, community outreach, and high-quality ear and hearing care was reflected in both our operational achievements and financial performance.

Our clinics continued to play a crucial role, with proceeds supporting vital research and enabling us to deliver evidence-based care to thousands of Australians. The clinics' success, combined with philanthropic support and government partnerships, has ensured we remain at the forefront of advancing hearing health.

As we look ahead, our strong financial foundation will enable us to invest further in research and drive innovation that transforms lives. We extend our deepest gratitude to our supporters, partners, and the broader community for making these achievements possible.



Thank you to all our collaborators, supporters, clients and donors for making our mission of providing ear and hearing health through our research, education and clinical care, a reality.



[earscience.org.au](http://earscience.org.au)

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Perth, Western Australia | ABN 48 804 903 003

