



Accent Hearing
EXCELLENCE IN LISTENING

The Listener



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Winter 2026



Grafton - Glen Innes

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Welcome to the Winter 2026 edition of *The Listener*. We explore helpful hearing tips on all hearing matters.

Oticon Zeal IIC/CIC: Clinical Review

The new Oticon **Zeal** Invisible/Completely-In-The-Canal (IIC/CIC) represents a structural shift in 'in-the-ear' hearing aids, effectively closing the historical gap where patients had to choose between cosmetic discretion and modern features like streaming and rechargeability.



The new Oticon **Zeal** is an impressive engineering achievement that redefines expectations for the invisible hearing aid category. It is a highly capable solution for patients demanding discretion alongside full connectivity.

Uncompromised Processing Power: Unlike previous generations of CIC/IIC devices that required sacrificing processing chips for size, the Zeal retains the full Deep Neural Network equation. This ensures patients receive premium noise suppression (up to 12 dB) and speech clarity without the traditional CIC technological downgrade.

Connectivity Innovation: The integration of the Bluetooth antenna into the extraction cord is a brilliant engineering solution, providing stable streaming and Auracast capabilities, maintaining the desired invisibility.

Same-Day Flexibility: The ability to fit a nearly invisible device on the same day using the dome system allows for immediate patient benefit and demonstration. Crucially, it still leaves the door open to order custom micro-moulds when a tighter acoustic seal or better retention is clinically necessary.

Healthy Hearing Checklist

If you are aged 50 or older and have one or more of these conditions below, a baseline hearing assessment is suggested.

- History of noise exposure
- Tinnitus (ear ringing)
- Balance problems (unsteadiness)
- History of smoking/current smoker
- History of excessive drinking
- Forgetfulness or memory loss
- Diabetes

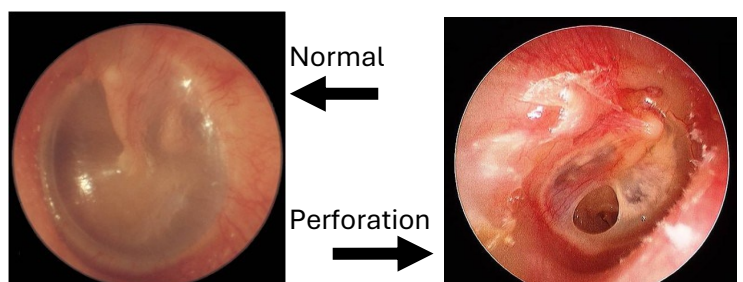
Why you should 'not' have your ears flushed anymore!

When the self-cleaning mechanism of your ears is disrupted, wax accumulates and can become impacted. Narrowing or obstruction of the ear canal, due to anatomical variations or infectious or dermatological diseases, can interfere with the normal migratory process.

Ear water 'irrigation' may seem like a simple solution to clearing out excess wax and debris from the ears at your GP Clinic. However, this practice can lead to serious complications, including infection, eardrum damage, ear canal damage, and ear wax impaction. As a consequence, one in five medico-legal cases involving GPs are related to ear syringing.

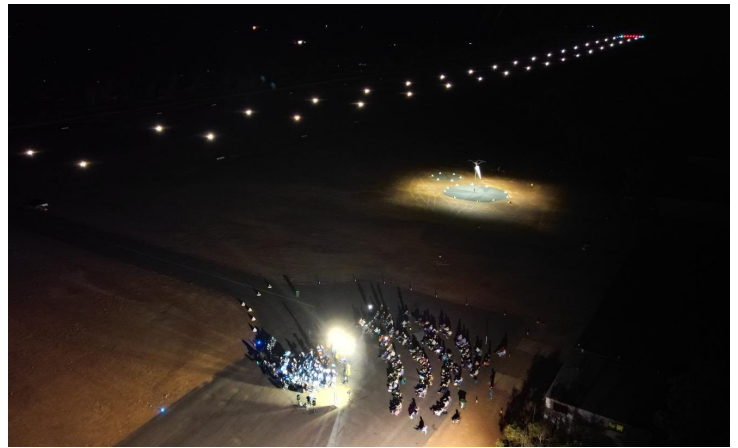
Instead of resorting to water irrigation, try safer alternatives that prioritise your ear health and well-being, such as micro-suction with an experienced clinician.

Accent Hearing provides micro-suction appointments, however, they are not covered by Medicare.



Accent Hearing Supports Orchestra's Outback Tour

Here at Accent Hearing, our commitment to regional communities extends far beyond our clinic doors. Recently, we had the distinct privilege of being the major sponsor for the Clarence Valley Orchestra's (CVO) highly successful Outback Pops Tour across regional New South Wales. Leading the charge was our very own Doctor of Audiology, Greg Butcher, who traded his otoscope for a baton in his role as the Artistic Director & Conductor of the CVO.



Open Air CVO RFDS Fundraiser Concert - Lightning Ridge Tarmac

Taking an orchestra on the road is a monumental task, but in mid-April, Greg and the ensemble set off on an ambitious journey that brought world-class music to communities across the state. The tour covered an impressive expanse of the NSW Outback, with spectacular performances in Glen Innes, Narrabri, Cobar, Broken Hill, and Lightning Ridge. The orchestra was also joined on the road by a very special guest artist, the renowned international soprano, Mirusia Louwerse, whose incredible vocal talents thrilled audiences at every stop. While sharing the joy of music was a primary goal, the heart of this tour was deeply rooted in community support and philanthropy. Several of the stops were dedicated charity concerts, specifically designed to give back to vital organizations that keep regional and remote Australia thriving.

Through a combination of dedicated entry fees and the enthusiastic sale of raffle tickets at the events, the CVO raised approximately \$10,000 for local charities. These much-needed funds were directed towards Rotary Clubs, the Red Cross and the Royal Flying Doctor Service, organizations that provide indispensable support and emergency care to outback communities.



We are incredibly proud to have served as the major sponsor for this initiative. Greg's dedication to both hearing health at Accent Hearing and cultural enrichment through the Clarence Valley Orchestra and beyond perfectly reflects our core values: community connection, professional excellence and supporting the regional areas we call home. It was a tour to remember!



Consumer Alert:

Identifying Unethical Sales Practices in Hearing Clinics



If you have recently visited a hearing clinic and felt overwhelmed by aggressive sales strategies, it is important to recognize

that these are not standard or acceptable practices within the audiology industry.

Please exercise caution if you encounter any of the following red flags during a consultation:

Drastic Price Fluctuations: Being quoted an exorbitant initial price (e.g. \$14,000) that is suddenly and heavily discounted (e.g. to \$10,000) to create a false sense of urgency or an illusion of savings.

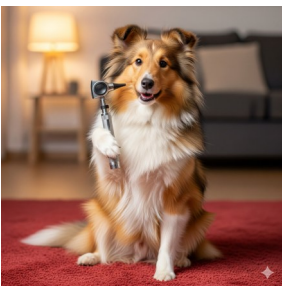
High-Pressure Environments: Experiencing coercive sales techniques or feeling pressured to remain in the consultation room until a purchase agreement is signed.

Commission-Driven Recommendations: Tactics designed primarily to secure sales commissions for staff; a practice frequently observed within some large, nationally integrated hearing aid chains, rather than focusing on patient-centred care.

Reputable hearing healthcare professionals prioritise your clinical needs, providing transparent pricing and allowing you the time and space to make an informed decision without coercion.

If you have encountered these practices, please know that you are not the only one. You have every right to walk away, seek a second opinion from an independent, clinically-focused audiologist, and report such behavior to local consumer protection agencies.

A word from Dr Vinsky, The Sheltie Hearing Doctor!



Believe it or not, a buildup of earwax is responsible for approximately 95% of sudden hearing aid breakdowns. If your device stops working out of nowhere, there is usually a very quick fix. Try inspecting the tubing for blockages or stiffness and check the tiny white wax stop filters (if you have them) at the end of your earmould or under the small plastic dome. A quick regular check keeps your devices clear and prevents sudden breakdowns, saving you and your family plenty of frustration.

Closing Our Inverell Visiting Clinic

For over 14 years, Accent Hearing has had the absolute privilege of serving the Inverell and surrounding communities, helping you stay connected to your loved ones through better hearing.

At the end of this financial year, we are writing to share some bittersweet news. After much consideration, **Accent Hearing will be permanently closing our visiting clinic in Inverell.**



While this was a deeply difficult decision to make, it allows us to consolidate our resources and focus on delivering the highest level of dedicated care at our permanent location and Glen Innes Clinic. We want to express our deepest gratitude to the Inverell community, the staff at the Community Health Centre, and most importantly, **you**, our wonderful clients, for welcoming us and trusting us with your hearing health.

What This Means For You

We want to assure you that your hearing journey does not stop here. Your continuity of care is our absolute priority, and we have made arrangements to ensure you aren't left without support.

Your Records Are Safe: All of your patient files, clinical history and warranty details remain securely on file with Accent Hearing.

Ongoing Care & Support: Dr. Greg Butcher and the team remain fully available to manage your hearing health. You can still reach us for phone consultations, troubleshooting, or booking appointments at either Glen Innes or Grafton.

Batteries & Consumables: Need replacement batteries, wax filters, or domes? You can order these directly by calling our main office, and we will happily post them straight to your door. However, you may want to transfer to another hearing provider in Inverell.

Where to Find Us Next

If you are able to travel or require an in-person diagnostic appointment, we would love to welcome you at our other locations:

Clinic Location

Address

Grafton Clinic (Main)

23 Queen Street, Grafton

Glen Innes Clinic

113 Meade Street, Glen Innes

Telephone: 1300 859 828 or 6643 4044

Turning down music in fitness classes helps save hearing without impacting workout intensity....



New research published in *JAMA Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery* (March 2026) suggests that fitness centers can protect members' hearing without ruining the "vibe." A study conducted by researchers at the University of Southern California found that **reducing music volume in group classes does not decrease a participant's perceived workout intensity.** **Goal:** To encourage fitness facilities to adopt safer acoustic practices and increase education regarding hearing health.

- **The "Loudness" Myth:** While high-volume music is traditionally thought to drive motivation, the study found no meaningful difference in perceived exertion when the volume was lowered.
- **Volume Levels:** The study compared "typical" loud classes (averaging **91.4 dBA**) against quieter sessions (averaging **88.5 dBA**).
- **Hearing Risks:** Despite the high decibel levels, only **2.1%** of participants reported consistent use of hearing protection, even though nearly **15%** had experienced tinnitus (ringing in the ears) after a class.
- **Feasibility:** Lead researchers Dr. Janet Choi and Dr. John Parsons concluded that lowering sound levels is a practical way to prevent noise-induced hearing loss without compromising the exercise experience.

<https://hearingpractitionernews.com.au/hearing-industry-insights/hearing-protection/>

Did you know?

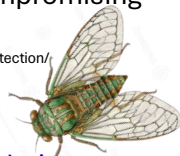
Cicadas have their hearing organs in their stomachs.

Crickets have their hearing organs in their knees.

Male mosquitoes hear with thousands of tiny hairs growing on their antennae.

Fish do not have ears but they can hear. They hear pressure changes through ridges on their bodies.

Snakes do not have ears, but their tongues are sensitive to sound vibrations.



Accent Hearing's Quality of Service



Being clinically certified by Audiology Australia to become an Audiology Australia Accredited Audiologist® means our Audiologist has been tested against, and continues to abide by a suite of policies aimed at ensuring audiologists provide services lawfully, safely and effectively and in the clients' best interests.

This includes meeting Audiology Australia's rigorous: **Education and training requirements**, which include completion of at least an Audiology Australia accredited Australian Masters-level degree and our full-time one-year internship program; **Code of Conduct** which is in line with the National Code of Conduct for Health Care Workers; **Continuing Professional Development** program; and **Recency of Practice** requirements.

As a current Audiology Australia Accredited Audiologist Greg is listed on the Audiology Australia Accredited Audiologists Register which is available to the public through the Audiology Australia website.



Accent Hearing Clinics - 1300 859 828

GRAFTON | 23 Queen Street, Grafton NSW.

GLEN INNES | Glen Innes Chiropractic Centre,
113 Meade Street, Glen Innes NSW

Accent Hearing is independent and is locally owned. Our clinician Dr Greg Butcher is a University trained Doctor of Audiology; a fully Accredited Member of Audiology Australia and Independent Audiologists Australia; and a qualified Medicare Hearing Services Provider.