



Acoustic accessibility – addressing the issue of social noise

Anthony Hogan
Research School of Psychology

In partnership with



Overview

- Hearing loss in the Australian community
- The health and social impacts of hearing loss
- Barriers to providing assistance
- A comprehensive treatment model
- Prevention strategies

So what's the issue here



Noticeable affects of hearing loss

a loss of selectivity	people with hearing loss often have problems selecting one sound out from among other sounds e.g. hearing in a noisy restaurant
a loss of discrimination	it is sometimes harder to tell the difference between tones which sound similar to each other
a loss of sensitivity	people with HI commonly experience hearing loss evidenced in the higher frequencies.

Noticeable affects of hearing loss

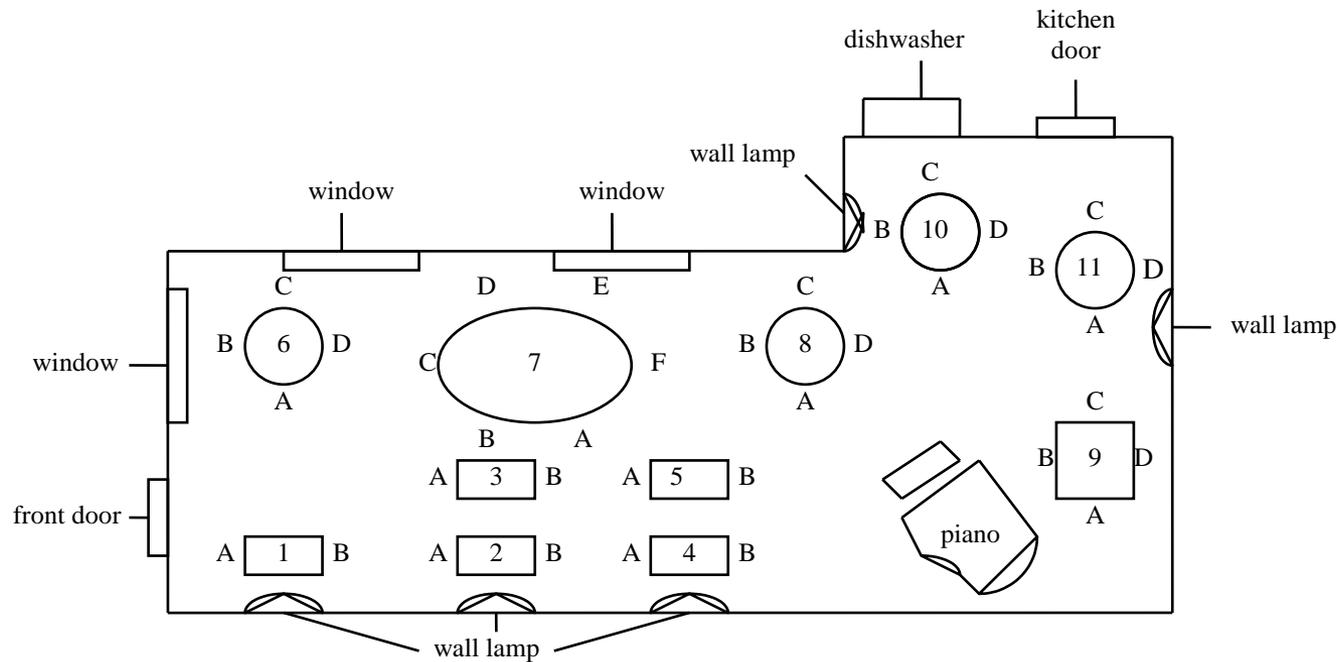
recruitment	Some sounds or pitches are painful to hear
tinnitus	Ringing in the ears 

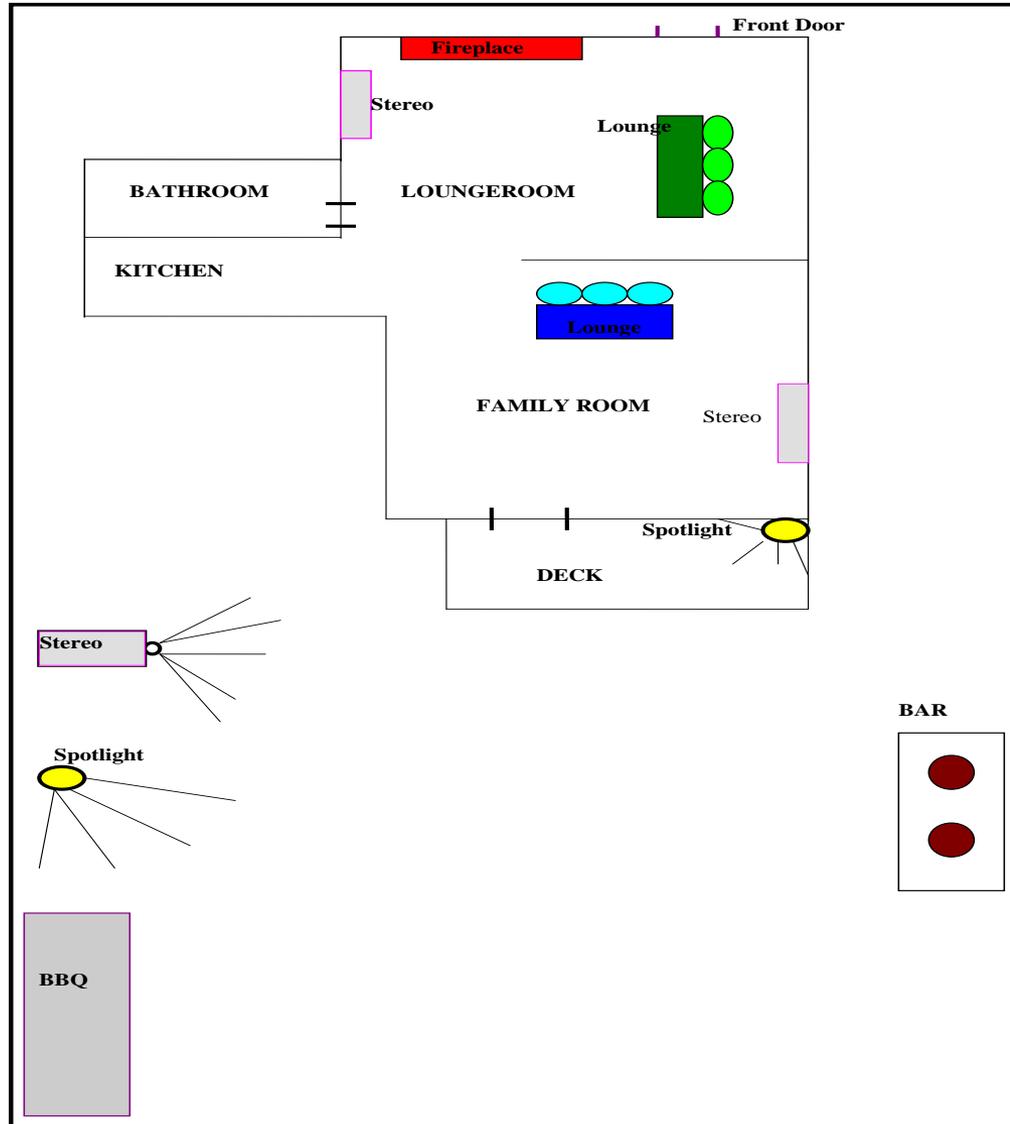
Hearing loss in the Australian community

Age (years)	> 25 dB	All people with hearing loss	ONIHL 16%	ONIHL 37%
15-49	5.2%	782,283	125,165	289,445
50-59	28.3%	776,410	124,226	287,272
60-69	58.7%	1,196,774	191,484	442,807
71+	73.5%	1,505,805	240,929	557,148
			681,804	1,576,671

Being affected

Hearing Tactics - A Restaurant





Social impacts of hearing loss

- Increased effort and fatigue
- Stress and anxiety
- Difficulties in family relations
- Social isolation
- Negative self image

Workplace impacts for HIP people

- Lost of confidence
- Working twice as hard
- Varied frustrations
- Hanging on
- Job hunting
- Innovating
- Skills development
- Looking for accommodations

Health impacts of hearing loss

- elevated unadjusted male six year mortality rate among older males for those with uncorrected loss
- male elevated risk rates for diabetes
- high blood pressure
- a higher incidence of stroke
- increased rates of heart attack
- higher use of prescribed medications.

Personal impacts

..... you were doing everything to hang on to a job. You had a job, and you were damn lucky to have a job and you did everything you could to keep that job. You knew if you lost that job, you would be very lucky to get anything else.

Without your hearing your confidence goes ... Rather than pushing yourself forward and talking to people, you sit back and let them talk to you. If they don't want to talk to you, you say tough bickies.

Key areas of concern

- Hearing in social settings esp. cafes, restaurants etc
- Movies, cinema, entertain venues, churches and meeting rooms
- Hearing public announcements e.g. airports, train stations
- Hearing emergency advice
 - Evacuation
 - Fire etc
- Waiting rooms, paging systems
- Hearing at home and in the car

Acoustic accessibility

Addressing selectivity	Reduce background noise Reduce reverberation
Addressing auditory discrimination	Structure the communication environment so people can see each other Good lighting Capacity for localised light controls
Addressing sensitivity	Provision of aids and devices including hearing loops, infra-red systems, captioning Signs and visual messaging