Introducing HEARsmart to music venues: A pilot project

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1. Introducing HEARsmart
   Who, what, where, why, how

2. HEARsmart music venues pilot project
   Background, funding, aims, methods, venues
Who
led by the HEARing Cooperative Research Centre (CRC)
working with leading organisations in the hearing and hearing loss prevention space

What
bring about behavioural and cultural change to how Australians think about their exposure to loud noise
build greater awareness of risk of acquiring hearing damage, NIHL, tinnitus
provide positive impacts on hearing health and reduce prevalence of NIHL

Where
the general public, especially groups at greatest risk such as teenagers, young adults, musicians
unregulated high-risk industries
government agencies seeking assistance to develop effective public policy in the area of hearing health

Why
hearing loss is a significant health concern
currently affects one in six Australians
is on the rise partly due to our aging population but also due to increased daily noise exposure of young Australians

How
through a series of wide-ranging campaigns and initiatives
backed by research practical and appealing information

creating sound value™
First campaign

Creating sound value™

Venue Pilot

Creating sound value™
**Venue Pilot**

### Background
- Music venues are amongst the loudest leisure activities
- 90% of regular clubbers would prefer lower noise levels
- Only 13% think levels are 'just right'
- 84% would like quieter places within venues

#### Figure 1: Noise Levels

- **Volume Distribution**
  - 0%: Conversation very difficult even when shouting
  - 25%: Conversation difficult, need to shout
  - 50%: Conversation possible but need to raise voice
  - 75%: Can easily hold a conversation without raising voice

#### Figure 2: Preferred vs. Typical Volume

- **Preferred Levels**
  - Not loud enough (1.6%)
  - Just right (12.7%)
  - Loud but tolerable (59.2%)

- **Typical Levels**
  - Not loud enough (2.9%)
  - Just right (11.4%)
  - Loud but tolerable (56.4%)

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### Funding
- Deafness Foundation Victoria Grant
- HEARing CRC
- Meghan Stewart, Project Manager
- Supported by Music Victoria

### Aims
- to collaborate with venues and industry
- reduce noise exposure of patrons & staff
- raise noise awareness
- develop a HEARsmart package of measures
- implement more widely in the future

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**Beach, C.I., Everyone likes it loud, don’t they? ENT & Audiology News, 2013, 22(1) p. 89-90**
Guidelines & literature

- QLD 1999 A guide to noise in the music entertainment industry
- WA 2003 Control of noise in the music entertainment industry
- UK 2008 Sound Advice: Control of noise at work in music and entertainment
- Sweden 2007 Sandell et al. Acoustic intervention in a live music club

Methods

- Baseline measures
  - survey patrons & staff
  - interview management & sound engineers
  - take noise measurements

- Devise and implement HEARsmart package
  - Intensity control: noise monitoring and/or limiting software/equipment
  - Spectral shaping, sound source design: in consultation with sound engineers
  - Sound mitigation: reduce staff noise exposure as per the noise regulations, e.g.,
    - communicating specific identified risks,
    - engineering controls (source and pathway controls),
    - administrative controls (e.g., relocating activities, mapping quieter pathways through noisy areas, provision of personal protection, roster changes/rotation)
  - Venue design changes: reduce proximity to noise for patrons/staff, change placement of speakers, install barriers
  - Reduce reverberation and sound propagation: install low-cost barriers and/or materials
  - Consider quiet chill-out spaces
  - Posters/coasters/promotional material
  - Training & education: for sound engineers, DJs, staff
  - Provision of hearing protection: to staff and/or patrons

- Evaluation measures
  - survey patrons & staff
  - interview management & sound engineers
  - take noise measurements
Venues, we need you!

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