

THE JOURNAL OF SHHH AUSTRALIA INC.
Self Help for Hard of Hearing People

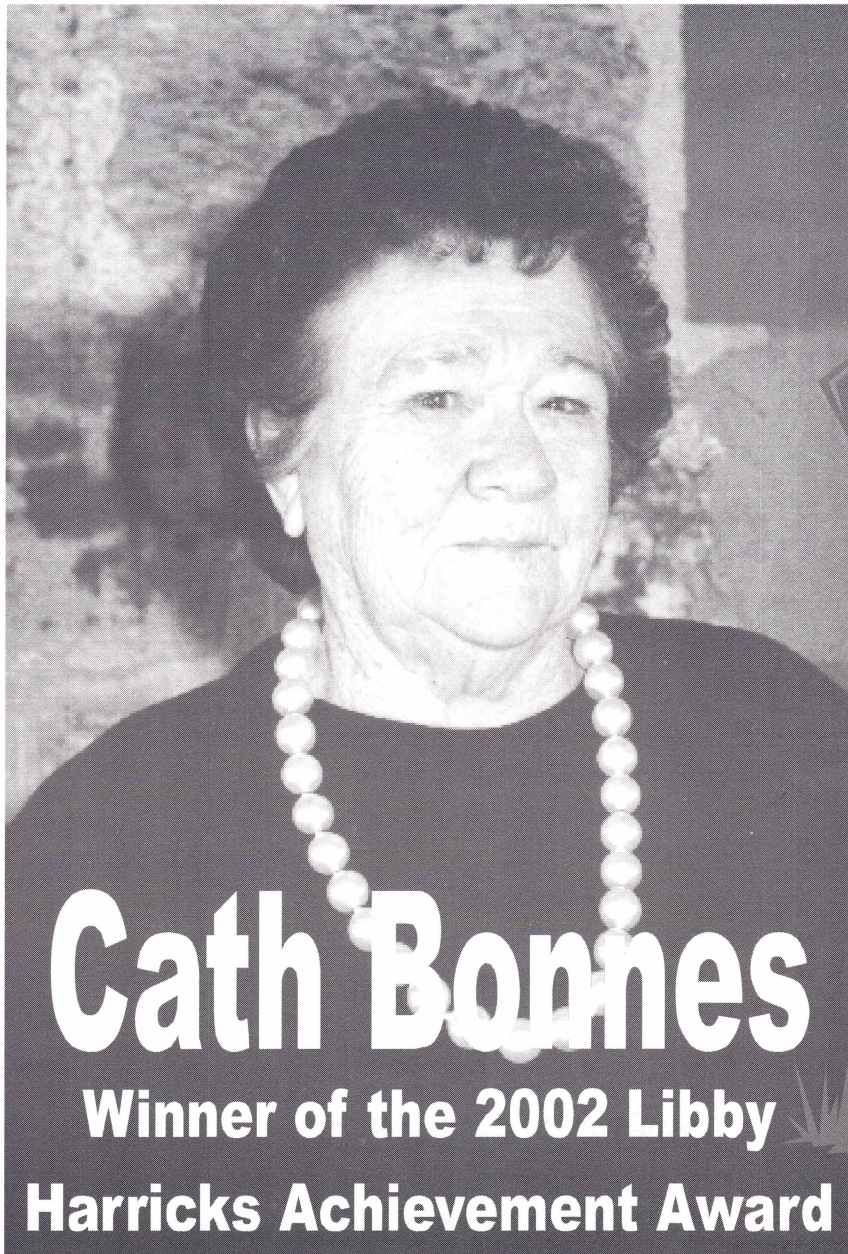
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hearing matters

AUGUST 2002

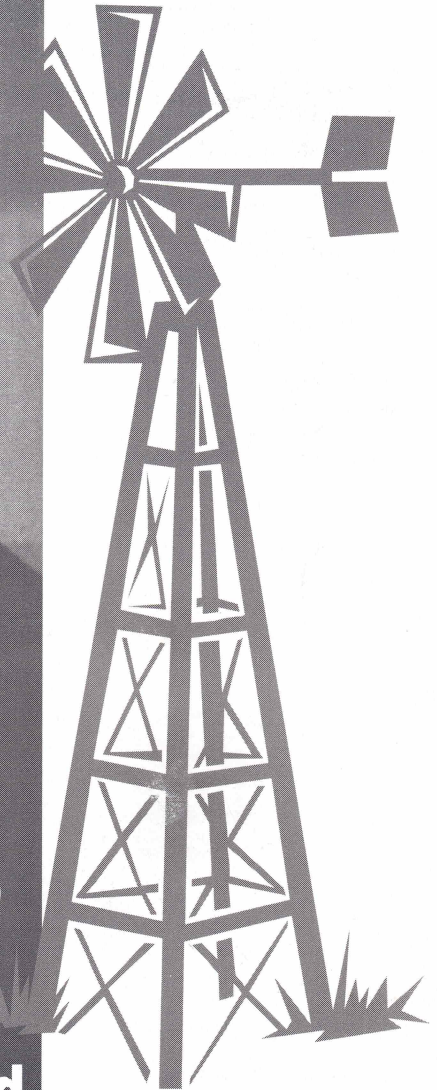
SHHH Australia Inc
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Year of the outback

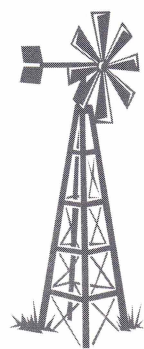


Cath Bonnes

Winner of the 2002 Libby
Harricks Achievement Award



How fitting in this National Year of the Outback that the Libby Harricks' Achievement Award should go to Cath Bonnes AM. Cath is a woman of the Outback and lives and works in Broken Hill.



Dedicated and Determined Outback Achiever



A shearer's cook, hearing aid mender, lipreading teacher, adviser, people mover and tireless worker, Cath has filled all these roles and many more.

When an illness left her severely hearing impaired in 1973, Cath found herself unemployed and with no community support. In true style, she organised a committee and in January 1986, a support group was formed under Better Hearing Australia South Australia which became the *Broken Hill and District Hearing Resource Centre Inc.* in the 1990s.

Many mine workers were left with hearing loss and tinnitus and to this day, Cath and her volunteers provide valuable support from this busy *Resource Centre*. Back in 1993, however, Cath felt the need to reach out further into the community and to enlist the support of others around the country.

Cath and Libby Harricks knew each other via phone and fax for many years before meeting. They developed a deep respect and affection for one another. They first met at a "Bridging the Gap" conference.

The "Rally Round the Hill" in the October weekend of 1993, gathered eighty people to Broken Hill, including Libby.

In May 1996, Cath followed Libby as Chairperson of the Deafness

Forum and worked tirelessly in that role until November 1998. Many of us received notes from Cath during that time thanking us for our feedback.

Cath was appointed to the National Disability Advisory Council in 1997 and was also a member of the Hearing Services Review Committee from early 1996. Cath provided much valuable input as a member of the steering committee. Cath is still a consumer representative on the Office of Hearing Services Advisory Committee.

In early 1999, we were shocked to learn that Cath was undergoing neurosurgery for a brain tumour which fortunately proved to be benign. Down but not out, as Anne Stewart, who at the time was the Chairperson of the Deafness Forum, wrote in the Forum's Newsletter No 21 May 1999, "*She has shown enormous strength of character*



Judy Parr presents the Libby Harricks Achievement Award to Cath

and (has) been an inspiration to all."

The Australian Government honoured Cath with appointment to the Order of Australia in 2000.

In October 2001, SHHH friends and many others journeyed to Broken Hill, to take part in the "Hearing in Isolation" Seminar organised by Cath and her staff. At the barbecue, Professor Bill Gibson AM of the SHHH Professional Advisory Board and Peter DeGraaff, former National Manager of the Office of Hearing Services, presided over the cooking.

The South Australians present gave Cath, a fellow South Australian, a mock "Gold" medal, as a token of their appreciation. The Seminar was a huge success and the Office of Hearing Services collated all the speakers' notes into a book which Cath is busy distributing.

Cath was unable to attend the SHHH Annual General Meeting to receive her Award and a special luncheon was organised in Broken Hill. The City Council's Manager of Community Services, Judy Parr, presented the Libby Harricks' Achievement Award for 2002 to Cath. The local newspaper recorded the event, under the heading "Latest award the dearest of all." Cath has said, "*Possibly out of all the awards I have received...this is the dearest of all to me. Libby and I were great friends.*"

SHHH salutes Cath Bonnes AM!