

BENTLEIGH EAST

Internet-connected device to help those with hearing loss

Chad Van Estrop

BENTLEIGH East mum Aneta Gorelik has become one of the first people in the world to be fitted with an internet-connected hearing aid.

The nifty device, doubling as headphones and a blue-tooth earpiece, can also connect directly to doorbells and smoke alarms.

For Ms Gorelik, who was fitted with two internet-connected hearing aids earlier this month, the biggest benefit comes in the form of her two-year-old son's voice.

"Before I was fitted with the hearing aids, all I could hear was muffled sounds," Ms Gorelik said.

"Now I can hear my son's voice clearly, and can help him with pronunciation of words as he learns to speak."

Ms Gorelik said the device, created by Danish company Oticon, connected to her smartphone via an app, and sent alerts to her ear when she received phone calls and her hearing aid needed charging.

"There's a stigma people have about wearing hearing aids, and I want people to know it's not that bad," she said.

She said wearing the aid,

after 10 years of steady hearing decline, would boost her confidence in social settings.

"This product is for everyone. People who are having problems with their hearing should really get tested," she said.

According to the Australian Network on Disability, one in six Australians are affected by hearing loss.

Oticon Australia audiology manager Danielle Tres said the new device was revolutionising the industry.

"We find in our clinic that hearing loss stops people going out into social situations because they feel they are missing out and can't follow conversations," Ms Tres said.

"This can lead to a whole lot of other issues including depression, anxiety and, eventually, cognitive decline."

Internet-connected hearing aids will be launched at the Technology and Gadget Expo at the Melbourne Convention Centre from June 25.

Free hearing tests will be available at the expo.

Have you got a story?
Email chad.vanestrop@news.com.au



Aneta Gorelik's life has been transformed by a world-first internet-connected hearing aid which is set to be launched this weekend.

Picture: PAUL LOUGHNAN