

Deafness Awareness Week 2000

MEDIA RELEASE

Oticon Foundation of New Zealand

20 – 26 November 2000

Sponsorship for better community hearing

Parishioners in Helensville, Whangarei schools, a community house in Dunedin and the National Audiology Centre will all experience better hearing due to sponsorship of assistive listening systems.

These involve low-cost, simple transmission, amplification and receiver systems. The FM radio system amplifies sounds from a microphone to either a room or a personal receiver. An infrared system emits a signal that is detected by a receiver worn by a hearing impaired person, and a loop system emits a low frequency signal that can be picked up by a telecoil in a standard hearing aid.

Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Trustees of The Oticon Foundation in NZ, says that funding is provided every year to support the purchase of Phonic Ear assistive listening systems. "Many thousands of New Zealanders are benefiting from access to buildings that have effective listening technology installed," she says.

"We are delighted to support the National Foundation for the Deaf in this year's Deaf Awareness Week's theme of 'acoustic accessibility'. It must not be under-estimated how many New Zealanders are missing out on effective participation in group activities, simply for want of a soundfield system," says Ms Pullar.

This year's grant recipients include St Joseph's Presbytery in Helensville to assist the congregations of two churches, Toys for Special Children at St Johns Church Centre to introduce the system into Whangarei schools, the National Audiology Centre in Auckland to use in their training programme, and the Dunedin Community House Trust to ensure it is accessible to a wide range of community members.

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The Oticon Foundation in New Zealand is a charitable trust funded by Oticon NZ Ltd, a socially-responsible business. Each year the Oticon Foundation provides \$100,000 in grants to projects that increase awareness and knowledge about hearing loss, improve the quality of life for those with it, break down the stigma attached, or help remedy hearing loss among adults and children.

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