

# soundscape

NEWSLETTER OF THE OTICON FOUNDATION IN NEW ZEALAND



As we mark 2005 Deaf Awareness week from 19 to 25 September 2005, the Oticon Foundation urges as many people as possible to think about the challenges faced, and the successes achieved, by the hearing impaired.

The curtain raiser to Deaf Awareness week was Saturday's General Election. It was interesting to see efforts to remove barriers to voting through sign language interpreters in some polling booths and a sign-language DVD about voting.

It is incredibly encouraging to see and hear of the new projects, research and work that individuals and groups across the

country are taking on in an effort to improve the lives of those people with hearing impairment.

At the Oticon Foundation we get an insight into this work every year, when we review and consider applications for funding.

The trustees have seen a range of fresh ideas and approaches from people seeking support as part of the 2005 grant allocation process. In this edition of Soundscape, we profile some of the successful projects, and keep you up-to-date with other projects that are benefiting from Oticon Foundation funding.

*Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Trustees, Oticon Foundation*

## Rotorua schools hit international headlines

The world spotlight has gone on New Zealand's Michael Heeney and schools in Rotorua as the message is spread about the educational implications of the FrontRow Active Learning systems (previously known as EasyListener soundfield systems).

Supported by funding from the Oticon Foundation, Michael Heeney has presented his research into the impact of the Active Learning systems on the students at the Rotorua schools.

Educators in San Francisco, Copenhagen and Maastricht in The Netherlands were among those who hear Michael's presentations on the Rotorua research.

"My main message to these international audiences has been to reveal the proven 10 percent gains in educational achievement through the use of the Active Learning technology in classrooms," says Michael.

"A number of people I talked to had only been thinking of the technology for deaf children. Their eyes were really opened to the benefits of all children, and teachers," says Michael.

"The result of the research into the Active Learning Technology in classrooms in

Rotorua is accepted as an example of world-wide best practice.

"The technology is a proven simple and effective intervention to enhance listening and literacy outcomes by overcoming the problems associated with noise, distance and reverberation.

"The message from down-under was all the more powerful because it was from down-under. This wasn't research from the United States," says Michael. "This

was research from New Zealand, with a different education system to the USA. Countries like Denmark and neighbours Australia really stood up and took notice."

Michael Heeney's longitudinal doctoral research project was commissioned by the Rotorua Energy Charitable Trust with support from the Oticon Foundation in New Zealand. It involved equipment in 30 classrooms, the teachers, and 626 children and young people in five different Rotorua primary schools.



*Interpreters lining up at the International Conference for education of the deaf in the Netherlands attended by Michael Heeney.*

## 2005 Oticon Foundation grants

The Oticon Foundation in New Zealand believes it has a strong role to help foster and promote projects and work that help improve the lives of the hearing impaired.

The 2005 grant applications produced varied and diverse range of activities and

projects for consideration.

The Foundation is delighted to have been able to support 15 projects in 2005.

In this edition of Soundscape we feature several of these projects and provide a summary of the recipients of the Oticon Foundation grants.

## Hearing impaired and deaf people in New Zealand

### An update on population numbers and characteristics

Two out of every three New Zealanders with a hearing disability don't use a hearing aid, according to a report into hearing impairment and deaf people in New Zealand.

The research, carried out by Dr Anne Greville and funded by the Oticon Foundation, is based on information contained in the 2001 census.

"The prevalence of hearing loss varies from 10.3 percent or just under 400,000 people who report hearing loss, to 0.05 percent or 2,100 people over 15 years who can't hear one person talking," says Anne.

Dr Greville has been analysing a variety of data since 1991 to come up with these estimates.

"The last Census figures give an insight into the number of people with a hearing disability that use hearing aids," she says.

"Just 29% or 66,600 people with a hearing disability use hearing aids.

"On top of that about 34,500 people indicated that they needed hearing aids but that they did not have them. Affordability was the major issue for 23,000, or 67% of these people."

The updated study shows that men are much more likely to suffer from hearing loss than women.

"This difference is similar to other countries, and appears to be attributable to noise-induced hearing loss," says Anne.

Copies of Dr Greville's updated research are available from [www.oticon.org.nz/pdf/HearingimpaireddeafpeopleNZMar05a.pdf](http://www.oticon.org.nz/pdf/HearingimpaireddeafpeopleNZMar05a.pdf)



From left, Anna McMillan, Ara Moorthy (centre), Julie Ma and at the Danish Summer Camp.

## Young Kiwi audiologists rub shoulders with international colleagues

While the rest of us were grinding our way through those long winter nights and short days, two of the country's new audiology graduates were winging their way to the other side of the world, courtesy of the Oticon Foundation.

Ara Moorthy Audiologist of Bay South Auckland, Julie Ma an audiologist at Starship Hospital and Anna McMillan, Audiologist currently working in England took part in the Eriksholm Summer Camp in Denmark for young audiologists in late August.

The camp's about building a learning environment and partnership for new audiologists from across the Globe,

helping them network and provide training on latest techniques and technology.

"My experience at the summercamp was FANTASTIC. It was great meeting fellow audiologists from different countries and learning about the audiological training and services involved elsewhere," says Ara Moorthy of Bay Audiology.

"We had lectures in the morning and afternoon followed by recreational activities in late afternoon and evening. I also had the opportunity to look around Denmark as part of a guided tour."

61 young audiologists from 27 different countries were invited to attend the camp.



# Weird 'dead' sensation

A weird dead sensation is about the closest description Michael Heeney can give to his experience at the Eriksholm Research Centre Anechoic Chamber.

"The Chamber has no reverberation. It has cones on the wall, floor and the ceiling to absorb sound.

"The experience inside this chamber when you talk is almost in describe-able. It was...weird...the sound was 'dead'" says Michael.

Michael visited the Centre as part of his grant from the Oticon Foundation.



## New building, new sound after 52 years in Timaru

Moving out of the building that has been the home of the South Canterbury Branch of the Hearing Association for 52 years will bring other benefits for locals with hearing impairment.

The Association is replacing its long term rented premises with a new building specifically for the Association to provide its professional and social rehabilitation activity for any local with hearing impairment.

The new premises will be wired with a new multi-loop system, thanks to a 2005 grant from the Oticon Foundation.

"Many of our members comment on how clearly they hear guest speakers at our social afternoons and communication classes when they switch to the loop system in our current premises," says the Association's, Margaret Newall.

"This makes for a more pleasant and relaxing time for them without having to strain to hear the speaker above the other noises in the room."

## Vibrating bed shaker trialed by Manawatu Hearing Association and local fire brigade

A vibrating smoke alarm that also runs a vibrating bed shaker could be the difference between life and death for someone with a hearing impairment in the Manawatu.

That's one of the reasons why the Hearing Association in Manawatu and the local Fire Brigade have teamed up to provide locals with the chance to trial the smoke alarm.

"The vibrating smoke alarm operates on a nine volt battery. This runs the vibrating bed shaker which goes under the pillow," says the Hearing Association's Maadi Taylor. "This will waken even the deep-

est sleeper – who hasn't got their hearing aids in – in the event of a fire."

"We had one client living on her own with a very profound hearing loss who had tried the alarm and found it very good.

"Thanks to the Oticon Foundation funding we have been able to get one for future clients to try out before they buy.

The vibrating smoke alarm is another piece of equipment that the Hearing Association in the Manawatu offers to people with hearing impairment to try out.

"We've had the try before you buy scheme



going previously with telephones for the hearing impaired," says Maadi.

"It's brilliant to be able to provide the vibrating fire alarm at no cost to the client or the Fire Service, but allowing the client the chance to verify the benefits from the device."

# Oticon Foundation grant recipients 2005

**ACADEMY OF NEW ZEALAND AUDIOMETRISTS INCORPORATED**, for Professor Ruth Bentler, University of Iowa, key note speaker at 2005 ANZAI Conference

**ANNA MCMILLAN**, Audiologist – travel grant to attend Eriksholm Summer Camp for Young Audiologists in Denmark

**ARA MOORTHY**, Audiologist – travel grant to attend Eriksholm Summer Camp for Young Audiologists in Denmark

**ASSOCIATION of TEACHERS of the DEAF** – to send representatives to DEANZ Forum meetings

**AUSTRALIA NEW ZEALAND CONFERENCE FOR EDUCATORS OF THE DEAF** for Professor Mark Marschark, National Institute

for Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology, key note speaker at 2006 Conference

**DEAF ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND INC** – research grant to research employment services designed specifically for deaf people

**HEARING ASSOCIATION – KAPITI BRANCH**, equipment grant for a “Dry and Store” for their rooms

**HEARING ASSOCIATION – MANAWATU BRANCH**, equipment grant for demonstration vibrating smoke alarms and a flashing doorbell

**HEARING ASSOCIATION – NELSON BRANCH**, for Hospital bedside notices for patients with hearing loss

**HEARING ASSOCIATION – TIMARU BRANCH**, equipment grant for loop system for new rooms

**JULIE MA**, Audiologist – travel grant to attend Eriksholm Summer Camp for Young Audiologists in Denmark

**KELSTON DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE** – Dianne Hill, School Counsellor, travel grant to visit Australia to observe counselling work and related teaching in several schools

**KELSTON DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE** – Michael Heeney, Regional Coordinator, travel grant to ICED Conference, Holland.

**OTICON NEW ZEALAND LIMITED** – educational weekend for recent audiology graduates

**UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND** – Sign Language Interpreters for biannual conference for students with disabilities

**VAN ASCH DEAF EDUCATION CENTRE** – Joanne Lake, Specialist Resource Teacher – Speech/Language study grant towards Masters Degree, Renwick College/Newcastle University.

**VICTORIA MANNING and PAUL WOLFFRAM** – to produce a documentary of the Deaf community's celebration of the official recognition of NZSL.

## how to apply for grants

### Applications must include:

1. The name and address of applicant
2. If relevant, the organisation represented and position of applicant within the organisation, plus copies of latest balance sheet and annual report
3. Details of expenditure involved
4. Information about funding you are seeking from any other organisation for this or supplementary projects
5. Overseas travel details where applicable. Please state whether an applicant/s will be returning to New Zealand permanently after the visit is completed
6. How the hearing impaired in New Zealand will benefit from your project/research
7. Information about how you will publicise your project and its results. (We would like you to seek as wide an audience as possible)
8. Details about how you will promote the Oticon Foundation if your application is successful

### Applicants applying for project funding should also include:

1. Title of project
2. Summary of project (not exceeding 150 words)
3. Qualifications of applicant relevant to project
4. Aims and design of project, and expected completion date

### Applications for grants other than project funding should also include:

1. Details of grant requested
2. Reasons for request

### Successful applicants will be required to:

1. Submit a report (five copies) within three months of completion of the project
2. Disseminate results or information from the project to as wide an audience as possible, such as to the bulletins and newsletters of professional groups, hearing impaired and Deaf groups
3. Acknowledge the Oticon Foundation in any reports or publications about your project/research

## deadline

Grants are allocated annually.

Applications (together with five extra copies) should be made no later than 31 March in any year. Applicants will be notified whether their grant application has been accepted by 30 June of the same year. Please address applications to:

**The Secretary**  
**Oticon Foundation in New Zealand**  
**C/- PO Box 9128, Te Aro**  
**WELLINGTON**  
**Phone: 0800 OTICON**  
**E-mail: [info@oticon.org.nz](mailto:info@oticon.org.nz)**

[www.oticon.org.nz](http://www.oticon.org.nz)