

# soundscape

NEWSLETTER OF THE OTICON FOUNDATION IN NEW ZEALAND

THE OTICON  
FOUNDATION IN  
NEW ZEALAND WAS  
ESTABLISHED IN  
OCTOBER 1976.

INCOME GENERATED  
FROM THE FOUNDATION'S  
INVESTMENTS IS  
DISTRIBUTED TO GROUPS  
AND ORGANISATIONS  
SEEKING FINANCIAL  
SUPPORT FOR  
PROJECTS THAT  
BENEFIT THE HEARING  
IMPAIRED.

SEPTEMBER 2009



## Care For Your Ears – Supporting Deaf Awareness Week

I know from experience that the majority of people don't think twice about just how tender their ears and hearing can be. The Oticon Foundation supports trying to get the 'caring for your ears' message out to people during this year's Deaf Awareness Week from 21 September.

Caring for your ears is an underlying theme of many Oticon Foundation grants. The Hearing Association's production and national distribution of smart, informative and user friendly information cards include specific sections on caring for your ears.

The Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre at the University of Auckland has just held a major Tinnitus Symposium reaching out to hearing care professionals across Asia and the Pacific looking at innovations and treatment of Tinnitus.

Kind regards

*Karen Pullar, Secretary to Trustees*

## Hear Here – Hearing Loss at a Glance!

Capturing almost everything a person needs to know about hearing loss and hearing care in a kit of ten smart information cards could have been a difficult job. The Hearing Association set the challenge, and with the Oticon Foundation's support met it and more.

The Hearing Association has launched the "Hear Here – hearing loss at a glance" kits to its 32 member organisations across the country.

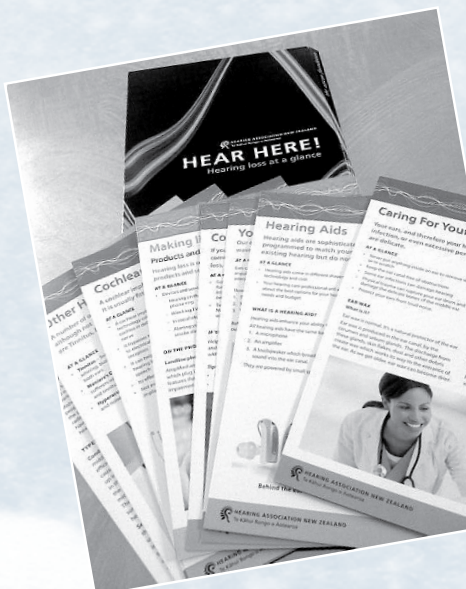
Inside the kits you'll find explanations about everything from how your ears hear, losing your hearing, getting help and caring for ears through to information about cochlear implants and hearing aids, plus more.

"The information has gone down universally well with our members and the public they work with," says Chris Peters, who drove the project for the Hearing Association.

"They're being used when giving talks, for training, as a public resource, by health professionals and in medical centres.

"We are grateful the support of the Oticon Foundation allowed us to deliver such a useful, accessible and easy-to-follow and understand resource, to help make dealing with hearing loss and related issues a little easier," says Chris.

Visit or contact your local Hearing Association for copies of the cards or go to the association's website to view or download them online [www.hearing.org.nz](http://www.hearing.org.nz).



*Gisborne Hearing Advisor Katy Hart explaining funding options to Gisborne Hearing Assn member Lynne Frampton*

the oticon foundation

## Connecting with the Community – The Centre's Hearing Research Seminars at a Glance

### MARCH – COMMUNITY NOISE

**M**arshall Day Acoustics' James Whitlock examined noise in the community. As the population grows, so too does demand on urban infrastructure and that means an increase in community noise. James gave an overview of the regulatory mechanisms to mitigate the effects on people including noise as a nuisance and its effects on communication.

### MAY – ANTIOXIDANTS TO TREAT HEARING LOSS

**D**r Srdjan Vlajkovic from the Department of Physiology at the University of Auckland talked about his research into Antioxidants in the protection of the inner ear and as a treatment for hearing loss.

Therapies for hearing loss from noise exposure based on antioxidants have recently been proposed, but they are limited to prevention rather than treatment of hearing loss.

Dr Vlajkovic talked about the novel research in the Auditory Neuroscience

group at the University which has explored new pharmacological interventions that can ameliorate noise-induced cochlear injury. He showed the results of animal studies which have revealed drugs acting on specific type of adenosine receptors can recover hearing and mitigate cochlear injury after noise exposure. Even though it is still a long way before these drugs can be used in clinical practice it opens the door to development of targeted pharmacological therapies for noise exposure as a viable alternative to hearing aids.

### JULY – HEARING LOSS IN BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

**I**nsights into new diagnostic testing techniques which are enabling parents and families to learn the cause of hearing loss in their children came from Dr Colin Brown a Consultant Otolaryngologist. Much of this centres around developments in genetic testing and may also enable predictions about whether the hearing loss may deteriorate and to predict the severity of a hearing loss before audiological testing. He went

on to argue that soon a paradigm of sequential testing may enable the cause of a hearing loss to be known in more than 60% of babies.

### Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre International Spotlight on Tinnitus

**T**he Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre Spring Symposium has just wrapped up, attracting delegates from across the Asia/Pacific region.

The Symposium covered updates on recent innovations in tinnitus, in-depth discussions about current tinnitus models and guidance on a practical level including discussion about medical interventions, assessment and treatment.

International and local experts shared their findings and insights including America's Professor William Martin on the study of Tinnitus and Managing the Whole Person, Canada's Professor Larry Roberts on the Neural Mechanisms of Tinnitus and Dr Dan Bosnyak on the Objective Evaluation of Tinnitus.

Papers from the symposium will be available from a special supplement of the New Zealand Medical Journal.

### WHAT'S COMING UP

**The Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre Research Seminars**, School of Population Health, The University of Auckland  
Tamaki Campus, 5.00pm to 6.30pm

**Seminar Coming up on 30 September – Raising the bar: Age level expectations for all children with hearing loss**



Professor Christine Yoshinaga Itano is professor and former chair of the department of speech, language and hearing sciences at the University of Colorado, USA. She is well known for her research into the outcomes from newborn hearing screening programmes and the development of language in children with hearing loss. Drawing on her experiences in the Colorado programme, Dr Yoshinaga Itano will talk on the services needed to optimise the outcomes for children identified through newborn hearing screening programmes.





## Reactions to Hearing Loss Diagnosis

Imagine you or your loved one has just been diagnosed with a hearing loss – how do you react and how does your hearing care professional respond?

Being diagnosed with a disability generally has an emotional impact.

University of Canterbury Masters student Katrina Light is looking into those emotional reactions and how an audiologist's counselling can help.

Her research "Reactions and responses to the diagnosis of a progressive hearing loss" is underway and she has

been recruiting patients who are visiting audiologists for the first time.

The study aims to describe common reactions following first-time diagnosis of hearing loss in adults, and to examine how satisfied patients are with the audiological counselling they received.

Information is gathered by questionnaire followed by an interview. This is followed up by a second questionnaire.

The February edition of Soundscapes will update you on progress and findings.



*Katrina Light, Masters student*

## Professional Development Support for Sign Language Interpreters

Behind the scenes work is underway at Victoria University in Wellington to process applications for people to study a Postgraduate Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting from Australia's Macquarie University from next year.

The Oticon Foundation has helped funding for study grants to offset the

overall study, travel and accommodation costs connected with the degree.

"This is a pilot venture between Victoria University and Macquarie University to develop a higher level of academic and practical expertise in the New

Zealand Sign Language interpreting profession," says Dr Rachel McKee, Senior Lecturer, Deaf Studies, Victoria University. "Currently there is only a pre-service undergraduate training course available in New Zealand."



FOUNDATION

## Loan Hearing Aids for Children

An innovative new initiative is being set up by Hearing Advantage in the South Island as part of the Paediatric Hearing Aid Service it offers for the Canterbury District Health Board.

With the Foundation's support it is offering loan hearing aids and a loan FM system for children in the Canterbury/West Coast regions if their own aid is sent away to be repaired.

This scheme recognises the difficulties families and children

often face when their hearing instruments are sent away to get repaired.

For younger children in particular, the service will ensure there is maximum auditory exposure during the critical years of language development.



# *Oticon Foundation grant recipients 2009*

HAMILTON HEARING  
ASSOCIATION, loop system  
for demonstration

HEARING ADVANTAGE,  
for loan hearing aids and  
FM systems for Canterbury  
District Health Board service

NORTHLAND PARENTS OF  
DEAF CHILDREN, for deaf  
youth project

UNIVERSITY OF  
CANTERBURY (Katrina  
Light), study into reactions to  
hearing loss diagnosis

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND  
AUDIOLOGY PRIZE, annual  
prize for academic work

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND,  
ongoing funding for Oticon  
Foundation Hearing Research  
Centre

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF  
WELLINGTON, scholarship  
fund to support Post Graduate  
Diploma in Sign Language  
Interpreting

## 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 6141**  
**Phone: 0800 OTICON**  
**E-mail: [info@oticon.org.nz](mailto:info@oticon.org.nz)**

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