

MEDIA RELEASE

The Oticon Foundation New Zealand
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RESEARCH GRANT SUPPORTS DESIGN & TESTING OF PROTOTYPE SOLUTIONS FOR NOISY CLASSROOMS

The School of Architecture at Victoria University is working with schools on a research project to test architecturally designed solutions for noisy New Zealand classrooms.

The Oticon Foundation in New Zealand has awarded Victoria University of Wellington's School of Architecture a research grant to develop and test innovative acoustic solutions in primary schools.

"With the Oticon Foundation backing, we are now looking for primary schools in the Wellington region with classrooms with different acoustic features to take part in the research," says Natasha Perkins, Lecturer, School of Architecture.

"We are prototyping acoustic ceiling forms and an acoustic 'pod' that will create a quiet zone for students to work in."

The research will involve testing the acoustic solutions in a range of classroom spaces including open plan classrooms, those with concrete walls, or concrete piles and with different floor coverings.

Industry support for the programme includes material supplier Autex New Zealand and technical support from Marshall Day Acoustics.

"Research into our classrooms shows most are too noisy and children have difficulty hearing, which affects their ability to learn," says Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Oticon Foundation.

"The Foundation hopes that in the long term the research grant to the School of Architecture will help with the development and production of a cost effective acoustic solutions that can be available to schools across the country."

The School of Architecture's research project aims to develop and test acoustic solutions to create classroom spaces that reduce the medical, social and language issues that affect the ability to learn.

The \$13,000 research grant was launched this week – Deaf Awareness Week at the School of Architecture, Victoria University, Wellington.

The Oticon Foundation in New Zealand was established in October 1976. It is a charitable trust of Oticon New Zealand Limited and aims to improve the lives of the hearing impaired in New Zealand through communication and knowledge. It is committed to finding better solutions to hearing loss and strives to increase public awareness and understanding of hearing impairment.

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