

MEDIA RELEASE

Oticon Foundation in New Zealand
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CHILDREN, TEACHERS, BUSINESSES WILL BENEFIT FROM GRANTS TO HELP IMPROVE LIVES OF HEARING IMPAIRED

Children with speech problems, students and teachers in intermediate schools and people dealing with customers are the latest to get benefit from financial help for projects to improve the lives of the hearing impaired.

The Oticon Foundation in New Zealand has backed these projects with financial grants, and is now opening up applications for 2013.

“Once a year people have the chance to seek grants from the Oticon Foundation that will help people and communities with hearing loss,” says Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Oticon Foundation.

“Researchers, community groups and individuals have the rest of this month to pitch to us their ideas for financial help. **Grant applications** close on 31 March 2013.”

In the past year the Oticon Foundation has provided support for University of Auckland research into speech problems for children with hearing loss lead by Professor Suzanne Purdy, Head of Speech Science. The study’s findings will help inform decisions about speech therapy needs for children with hearing loss and further research.

The Foundation has also backed the roll out of the Concise Dictionary of New Zealand Sign Language to all intermediate schools in the country.

“The aim is to help support the teaching of sign language which is part of the curriculum at intermediate age level,” says Ms Pullar. “The 1100 or so dictionaries in intermediate school libraries will also help increase awareness of New Zealand Sign Language and Deaf culture among young New Zealanders.”

Simple information cards to help businesses and organisations recognise that a customer, client or student has a hearing loss have been developed thanks to the Hearing Association and the Oticon Foundation.

“The Hearing Association estimates that one in six customers will be hearing impaired. The aim of this simple initiative is to encourage and promote the recognition of hearing loss and best communication practice with frontline staff.”

Other projects backed in the last grant round were:

- The Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre at the University of Auckland
- Provision of hearing aids and other hearing technology for volunteers helping communities in Rarotonga
- Research at the University of Canterbury into the impact of ear surgery on hearing loss
- An audiology student award at the University of Auckland.

- Supporting parents from New Zealand Federation of Deaf Children taking part in their national conference
- Providing computer support for a member of the New Zealand Relay Advisory Group
- Supporting the National Foundation for the Deaf to attend for the first time the International Federation of the Hard of Hearing Conference

Applications for 2013 grants can be made [here](#).

The Oticon Foundation in New Zealand was established in October 1976.

It is the 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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