

P R E S S R E L E A S E

The Oticon Foundation New Zealand

Tuesday 5th May 2015

OTICON FOUNDATION GRANTS SUPPORT NEW ZEALAND SIGN LANGUAGE

Oticon Foundation New Zealand has today announced its 2015 grants allocation for community projects, research, key-note speakers for conferences and travel grants, totalling \$500,000.

This year the Foundation's announcement coincides with New Zealand Sign Language week, which runs from 4-10 May says Karen Pullar, secretary to the trustees. Whilst all of our grants are targeted to supporting and improving the lives of hearing impaired people, in 2015 we have two that specifically support the use of New Zealand Sign Language. These grants include: funding the professional development of Sign Language interpreters by bringing international expert Dr Phil Harper to New Zealand to address their annual conference; and funding for Auckland Theatre Company to provide signed and audio-described performance services for selected performances throughout the year.

Ms Pullar says the Foundation has a proud track record of supporting New Zealand Sign Language with significant grants to support the publication of the *New Zealand Sign Language Dictionary*; *New Zealand Sign Language: A Learner's Grammar* and *A Concise Dictionary of New Zealand Sign Language*, and to distribute a copy of the dictionary to every primary school in New Zealand.

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This year's funding round also includes grants for conference travel, bringing keynote speakers to New Zealand conferences, support for the Special Olympics Healthy Hearing initiative, and research projects being undertaken by the University of Canterbury, University of Auckland, and the National Foundation for the Deaf (NFD).

“We're thrilled to be funding the internationally significant research by the University of Canterbury's New Zealand Institute of Language, Brain and Behaviour to investigate the prevention of hearing loss during ear surgery. It is equally pleasing to support NFD's 'Listen Hear NZ' research into the social and economic impact of hearing loss on our community. We are also supporting two University of Auckland PhD projects that aim to improve the long-term ear and hearing health of children in the Pacific, Ms Pullar says.

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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For more information please contact

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