

MEDIA RELEASE

The Oticon Foundation New Zealand
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Tens of thousands of dollars of funding awarded for hearing related projects

Tens of thousands of dollars have been awarded to projects as diverse as research at the University of Auckland to an education programme for young people in the Wairarapa, as part of the Oticon Foundation's grants in the past year for projects to help the hearing impaired.

The Oticon Foundation New Zealand has now opened applications for grants for 2012. Applications close on 31 March 2012.

"The Foundation is looking for new initiatives that help contribute to improving the lives of those with hearing impairment," says Karen Pullar, Secretary to the Trustees. "There has been an impressive line up of activity that has been supported over the past 12 months and we want to ensure a high calibre of projects for the next year."

In the past year the Oticon Foundation has awarded grants to:

- Dr Suzanne Purdy at the University of Auckland. The \$100,000 is for specialised hearing research that is expected to benefit people with hearing loss by providing a better understanding of speech processing in noisy situations, which can be used in future studies of infants with hearing loss and helping manufacturers enhance speech processing in hearing aids.
- Victoria University School of Architecture – design and testing of acoustic design solutions. The next step in this project is to test the acoustic solutions in five Wellington schools this term.
- The Wairarapa Hearing Association Dangerous Decibels programme which aims to educate young people about the prevention of noise induced hearing loss and hearing loss prevention.
- Project Hiedi – supporting the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of newborn hearing screening.
- BWB Publishing Trust – for a dictionary of New Zealand Sign Language in intermediate schools.
- Nelson Hearing Association – for education posters.

The Foundation has provided ongoing funding for:

- The University of Auckland Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre
- University of Canterbury for research into methods to monitor hearing and reduce hearing loss during otologic surgery – or ear micro-surgery. The research is continuing despite disruption from the earthquakes and the impact this has had on the people needed to take part in the research.

More information, including a full list of the projects awarded funding in the past 12 months can be found in the Foundation's Soundscape newsletter at http://www.oticon.org.nz/pdf/Soundscape_March_2012.pdf

Information about how to apply for 2012 grants is also available from www.oticon.org.nz.

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. www.oticon.org.nz

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