

# MEDIA RELEASE

## The Oticon Foundation in New Zealand

25 March 2011

### **31 March deadline for support for projects to help the lives of the hearing impaired**

Funding is now available for people or organisations with research, educational or other projects that help the lives of the hearing impaired.

The Oticon Foundation in New Zealand aims to improve the lives of the hearing impaired and is calling for applications for funding for new projects now. Grants close on 31 March 2011.

“The Oticon Foundation is looking for projects or research that really make a difference to New Zealanders and our community,” says Karen Pullar, Secretary, The Oticon Foundation.

In the past 12 months Oticon Foundation grants have included support:

- for the work of the Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre at the University of Auckland
- research at the University of Canterbury into inner ear damage from ear surgery
- the Blue Lagoon Charitable Trust and Special Olympics

The Oticon Foundation Hearing Education Centre Symposium revealed new research into Noise Induced Hearing Loss and resulted in a call from the over 110 people there for a national strategy to prevent noise induced hearing loss.

At a glance the Symposium:

- Heard about the high noise levels associated with leisure activities like shooting and nightclubs and how, given the amount of time people participated in these activities, these were likely to contribute significantly to the hearing loss.
- Discussed that despite the significant legislation to require industries to reduce noise at the source and protect workers from the hazards of noise exposure, there was little evidence that companies, especially small ones, complied with the legislation.
- Called for an overall country-wide strategy to prevent Noise Induced Hearing Loss; one that involved industry, community engagement and that was supported by government agencies.

The University of Canterbury research looking into inner ear damage following ear surgery has seen around 60 people who have had middle ear surgery at three hospitals in Christchurch help build baseline data for the research.

More information about 2010 recipients is available at [www.oticon.org.nz](http://www.oticon.org.nz) and in the Oticon Foundation Soundscape newsletter.

Applications are now invited from organisations or individuals for projects that:

- disseminate knowledge about hearing and hearing loss
- help remedy hearing loss
- improve the quality of life for hearing impaired individuals and their families

- break down the stigma of hearing loss.

More information is available from [www.oticon.org.nz](http://www.oticon.org.nz). Applications for new Oticon Foundation grants must be in by 31 March 2011. Successful grant recipients will be notified by 30 June 2011.

*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.*

**Ends**