

Deafness Awareness Week 2007

MEDIA RELEASE

Oticon Foundation of New Zealand

24 September 2007

Turn It Down! Walk Away! Protect Your Ears!

The Oticon Foundation is bringing overseas expertise to New Zealand to back a plea to younger Kiwis to look after their hearing.

The Oticon Foundation is turning to the Director of the United States Dangerous Decibels® programme, Dr Billy Martin, to help spread awareness about how to prevent noise induced hearing loss in children.

“The Dangerous Decibels® campaign is based on three simple steps: Turn it down, walk away and protect your ears,” says Karen Pullar, Secretary, The Oticon Foundation. “The Foundation wants to help ensure these sorts of message get to young New Zealanders before it’s too late

“This year’s Deaf Awareness Week tells us a clear story that the inevitable mix of loud music and young people is starting to see a price being paid with hearing levels,” says Ms Pullar.

In addition ACC data shows 11 new successful compensation claims for noise induced hearing loss are made every day. It is also estimated that currently around a quarter of the New Zealand workforce of 1.47 million workers is affected to some degree by harmful noise at work (McBride, 2005).

“If we can learn from overseas campaigns such as Dangerous Decibels® where students and teachers examine the sources of dangerous sounds, the effects of listening to dangerous sounds and how to protect from these sounds then that’s progress,” says Ms Pullar.

the oticon foundation

The Oticon Foundation is holding three public lectures with Dr Martin in early October.
Tuesday 9 October 12.30pm The University of Auckland, Tamaki Campus, Thursday 11
October 5.30pm Holiday Inn, Featherston Street, Wellington, Friday 12 October 4.00pm
Commerce Building, University of Canterbury. Dr Martin will also meet officials from ACC
and the Department of Labour and take part in a one day seminar at the Oticon
Foundation Hearing Education Centre, the University of Auckland on 8 October which
will examine noise-induced hearing loss, prevention and the New Zealand situation.

Dr Billy Martin is Professor of [Otolaryngology/Head and Neck Surgery](#) and Professor of
[Public Health and Preventive Medicine](#) at the [Oregon Health and Science University](#) in
Portland.

*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.*

Ends

For more information please contact Karen Pullar ph 04 473 3330 or 021 647 330.