

# Media release

Oticon Foundation in New Zealand

Wednesday 1 March 2017

## Report measures economic cost of hearing loss

The Oticon Foundation of New Zealand congratulates the National Foundation for the Deaf (NFD) on the release of its ground-breaking research into the economic impact of hearing loss on New Zealand's economy.

"Listen Hear! New Zealand is sobering reading," says Ms Karen Pullar, secretary to the Oticon Foundation trustees. "It reports that nearly 20% of the population is living with some type of hearing loss, at an estimated deficit of \$254.6 million in tax revenue, and a total cost of \$4.9 billion every year."

Ms Pullar says the World Health Organisation's (WHO) World Hearing Day on 3 March gives all New Zealanders an opportunity to pause and consider the action required to improve these statistics.

"WHO has highlighted the high economic cost of untreated hearing loss globally, and the specific cost for New Zealand is certainly borne out by NFD's report. This year's theme, 'Action for hearing loss: make a sound investment' provides a focus for New Zealand to consider what we should be doing better," Ms Pullar says.

NFD is also using the theme as its focus for New Zealand Hearing Week from February 26 to March 4.

The Listen Hear! New Zealand research was funded by the Oticon Foundation in New Zealand and the Jack and Zena Peat Charitable Trust.

In 2016, grants from the Oticon Foundation also funded research at the University of Canterbury to protect the hearing of patients during delicate ear surgery; research at Auckland University into the health risks of untreated hearing loss of residents of retirement villages; and the professional development of New Zealand hearing care professionals.

The Oticon Foundation in New Zealand was established in October 1976. It is the charitable trust of Oticon New Zealand 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.

## Call for funding applications

The deadline to apply for funding from the Oticon Foundation is fast approaching. Anyone with an interest or project to further the understanding of hearing and hearing loss, or improve the lives of hearing impaired people, is eligible to apply.

[Grant applications](#) close on 31 March 2017. Information on how to apply can be found on the Oticon Foundation's website at <http://www.oticon.org.nz/grantAppli.htm>.

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*Soundscape*, the March e-newsletter of the Oticon Foundation in New Zealand, reports on projects supported in 2016. You can read a copy online at [http://nz.oticon.info/sage\\_nz\\_lz/lz.aspx?p1=T051S51213085&CC=&p=0](http://nz.oticon.info/sage_nz_lz/lz.aspx?p1=T051S51213085&CC=&p=0)

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