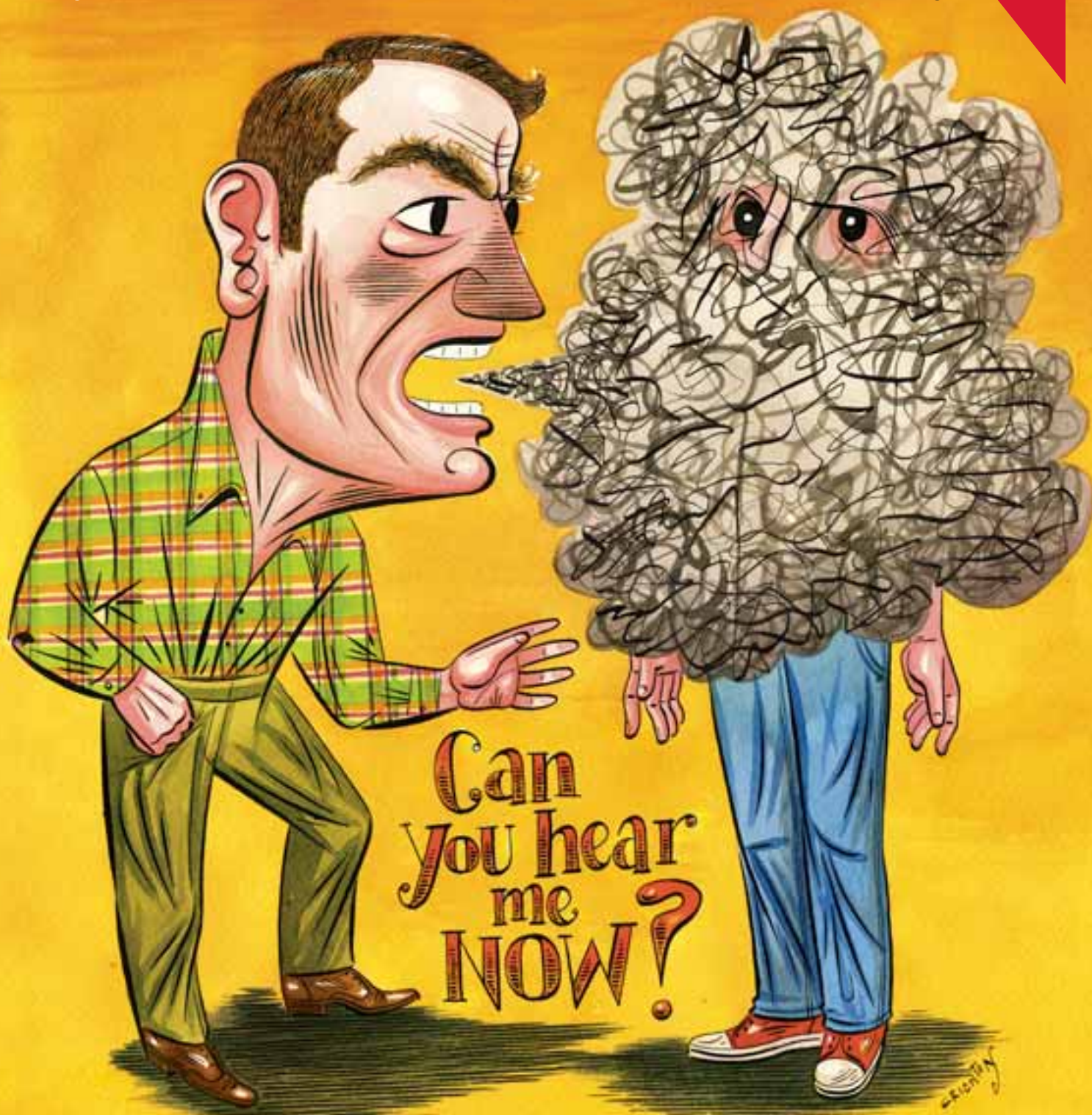


vibrations

The magazine of The National Foundaton for the Deaf

www.nfd.org.nz



**THIS
ISSUE:**

**THE FACE OF
HEARING
IMPAIRMENT**

**HEARING
WEEK
2011**

**AUDITORY
PROCESSING DISORDER
AFFECTING OUR KIDS**

**PETITION TO
HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES**

From Louise Carroll



Greetings All...

Hearing Impairment has many profiles – the face of struggle, the face of triumph, the face of neglect, the face of achievement, and it is these faces we will be presenting in Hearing Week 2011, March 27 to April 2.

We have been working with research writer Dara McNaught, looking at the issue of bullying and Hearing Impairment, which often takes quite subtle forms, from simple refusal to repeat what’s been said through to over-bearing and downright offensive behaviour. During Hearing Week early indications from this research will be discussed as the impact is too severe socially to ignore.

Bullying can also be done by institutions and on March 23 we present to Parliament, the petition we have been circulating nationally seeking support for overturning the six percent threshold for hearing injury claims introduced by ACC on July 1 last year. This threshold is discriminatory as those with hearing injuries are the only New Zealanders who must have attained a set percentage of injury before ACC will provide them with support.

On a more positive note, let’s not forget the rapidly changing face of Hearing Impairment. We see the triumph and achievement as it is brilliantly reflected

by teenagers who successfully go through the process of receiving a Cochlear Implant and learn to communicate verbally. Or, through a child at school who learns to use an FM microphone so they can finally participate in a classroom learning environment. Then again, we see it when the older person who has been slowly losing their hearing over a number of years switches on their hearing aids and hears the voice of their grandchild for the first time. These are life-changing events underscored by years of dedicated research for which I, for one, am very grateful.

Another important event in 2011 is Rugby World Cup and later this year we will see the results of research we have commissioned on the needs of domestic and international travellers who are Hearing Impaired, as they visit New Zealand. Specifically, this research will look at the requirements for people who are Hearing Impaired in regards to accommodation, transport, and the activities tourists undertake.

Closer to home, the NFD has now launched the revised Safe Sound Indicator which is initially targeted at early childhood centres, and shows, through a set of “traffic lights”, when noise is getting to dangerous levels. We hope the lessons youngsters learn from this exercise will stay with them through the rest of their lives. Our congratulations go to Jamie Fenton, who developed the concept of the Safe Sound Indicator, for being named the 2011 Young New Zealander of the Year. Well done Jamie!

On top of that, we continue to expand on the myriad of work being done to raise the profile of hearing disability in all its forms, and improving the services and the environment in which we all live. Do contact us to discuss issues that are affecting you as we may be able to provide in-depth information and referrals to appropriate agencies to assist.

Without the support of all our donors who provide us with our lifeline of funding we would be unable to function. You have our sincere thanks as your support is being used to deliver vital work for the thousands of New Zealanders who have Hearing Impairment.

All the Best

Louise Carroll QSO, JP, GDPPA (Mgmt), MPM (Mgmt)
Chief Executive Officer

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vibrations

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Letters to the Editor

Changes to ACC assistance

After 37 years driving trains my hearing was damaged by the excessive noise of driving diesels through tunnels. We were not allowed ear muffs because of the safety factor. I was five years off receiving superannuation. I just missed out on an allowance from ACC because of the American standard scale they used. I also have the maximum degree of Tinnitus on the scale. I didn't claim for ACC payments as, being independent, we lived on what we had saved up and retired that way.

My career was cut short by five years because of this hearing loss. I have in writing that ACC would cover me for all expenses for hearing aids and for their servicing. Is this just a waste of paper now? Does this cost saving exercise overrule what I was assured and have in writing? With the loss of my career I always consoled myself with the knowledge that I would have hearing aids from ACC and they would look after them for me.

I am very sad to hear that all this is to be changed! My hearing was damaged by excessive noise working for my employer and now I am told "Tough luck! We don't want anything to do with you."

A Reekie

Lower Hutt

ACC acting unfairly

Since 1996 I have been receiving a hearing aid benefit from ACC on account of industrial deafness sustained during my working life. I was most disappointed to learn that as from 1st January this year the cost of service visits and other benefits associated with hearing aids were to be suspended and I would be required to pay.

I am now 84 years old and my hearing has diminished to such a degree that I have to wear one of the most powerful aids available which is expensive and, although excellent, still requires tinkering to keep it in good working order. This along with routine servicing of the units will raise charges which up until now were processed automatically as part of my claim. Same goes for the plastic ear moulds which require replacement every 12 months and taking the mould casts and fitting of them afterwards.

I am also informed that funding of replacement hearing aids will be limited to a maximum of \$1,725 per hearing aid depending on noise induced loss involved, at six yearly intervals. This is another severe limitation as I am aware the cost of my current aids far exceeds this amount.

Recently I was advised by ACC they would not routinely courier replacement hearing aid batteries but would supply "on request" which is reasonable. However these latest changes, restrictions and removing of benefits are an imposition on elderly claimants such as myself who though receiving a fully justifiable ACC claim for many years are without prior advice and being suddenly and unfairly punished at a time in life when hearing is so important. The costs of owning and maintaining hearing aids are so expensive considering a pensioner's income. Under the terms of the Act I wonder what grounds there are for removal of benefits without prior consultation, medical tests and/or diagnoses that would support and allow ACC to take such unilateral action on a valid claim that has for years been fully funded?

John M Griffiths

Lower Hutt

Obituary

David Williamson

Dave Williamson spoke with that beautiful lilt of Scotland's Shetland Islands.

When you phoned him, he greeted you with a welcoming "Hellooo". When he paused to think, it was with a gentle "eh" that made our Kiwi "um" dull by comparison.

When he spoke of his hearing injury claim with ACC, it was more with puzzlement that ACC couldn't see the light, rather than with anger. He was the type of bloke you could happily spend an hour or two with covering tales of the sea and his Shetland home in the cold ocean waters a couple of hundred kilometres north-east of Scotland.

Dave Williamson came to the National Foundation for the Deaf in June last year for help with his claim to ACC for rehabilitation for hearing injury.

He was a seaman who spent the first years of his career on tugs working giant tankers in and out of the Shetlands' oil terminal. But then he fell in love with a Kiwi lass called Lynda, and in 1987 brought her and their two children back to Picton, half a world away.

In the 23 years he plied his trade as a deck officer on ships around our coast and taking our cargos abroad, Dave was exposed to a range of noise far beyond what he experienced back home.

First there was the lighthouse supply ship where Dave, as skipper, worked next to the engine exhaust system during unloading, controlling the equipment that got supplies on to jetties at various points around Cook Strait.

Among the others were

- The grain bulk carrier where he worked near the machines that sucked the grain from the ship's hold like enormous vacuum cleaners;
- The 15,000-tonne coal barge that transported West Coast coal to Newcastle where it was mixed with lower-grade Australian coal for export to Asia, working near the metal hoppers as the coal crashed onto conveyor belts;
- And the roll-on-roll-off freighters where the cargo deck was like working in a huge steel cavern.



Hearing protection wasn't worn or wasn't always effective, and Dave's hearing paid the price.

ACC's medical assessor reported Dave had a total hearing loss of 22%, with 18%-19% caused by a range of factors including workplace noise overseas and just 2%-3% from his 23 years as a deck officer in New Zealand. Dave disputed that.

ACC declined funding for hearing aids and by the time he came to the NFD, his case was about to go to dispute resolution. In August, the resolution hearing was adjourned for further work by the parties.

David Barry Williamson died suddenly on October 7, just as he and the NFD were preparing the next phase of his case. He was 61.

In a letter to the NFD in November, Dave's daughters Connie and Danielle, told us:

"Dad was the one you went to for all the answers. His general knowledge was amazing and inexhaustible, on all subjects – particularly geography and astronomy.

"Dad's quality of life was affected by his hearing loss, often resulting in him being excluded from conversations, and becoming more and more withdrawn from social situations as he often had to ask people to repeat themselves.

"Our family firmly believes that the stress of battling with ACC in order to receive funding for hearing aids contributed to his sudden heart attack. Dad had paid ACC all his working life in New Zealand, and we thought that he would be entitled to compensation in order to improve his quality of life.

"Dad wasn't the type of person to have a misplaced sense of entitlement, and he never asked much of anyone although he gave everything in return and was always the first to offer a favour or a helping hand.

"Our family would like to thank the National Foundation for the Deaf for all the assistance they provided to Dad during his ACC appeal"

The National Foundation for the Deaf has been supporting people contesting ACC decisions because they have nowhere else to turn and has numerous cases on our books. We extend our sympathies to the Williamson family.

Cochlear gives the gift of hearing

Emma Steven

I had a Cochlear Implant inserted inside my right ear in July 2010. Previously, I had been wearing two hearing aids since the age of four.



I was told in December 2009 that based on my audiogram results at that time, a cochlear implant would be the best solution for me. I began a series of tests and assessments at the beginning of 2010, and was

fortunate enough to receive a fully funded operation.

Two weeks after the operation, I was switched on at the Hearing House. It was vastly different to anything I had heard before. Family and friends had thought that after being switched on I would be able to hear everything perfectly, but that couldn't have been further from the truth. After the initial shock of hearing beeps and chirps had worn off, I could barely make out anything that people were saying. Slowly, however, those beeps and chirps began to correspond with voices and noises. After a week, I could make out what my family was saying, aided with lip-reading, however they sounded like robotic chipmunks! Slowly, my brain became used to the different sounds, until they suddenly clicked. Familiar voices sounded 'normal' and clear, whilst environmental noises sounded louder, reinforcing the fact that I had never heard them clearly before.

I had many mapping sessions after switch-on, during which adjustments were made to the CI. For a month after switch-on, I also went to weekly habilitation sessions, in which I learnt to listen without needing to lip-read.

I started habilitation with just four words to listen to – the names of my immediate family – and then progressed onto lists of sentences and sounds. I then progressed to hearing these lists over the phone, and then, no lists at all. The implant has made a huge difference to my life. Apart from the various sounds that I had never heard before, like the sizzling of sausages and the purr of a cat, I can now understand phone conversations and listen to the radio. When listening to the radio, or talking on the phone to someone, there are no visual clues at all, therefore what the ear hears is all the information you can possibly get.

At university at the beginning of 2010, I relied heavily on an FM system and a note taker to ensure that I did not miss a large amount of the lectures. By the end of the university year, whilst still learning to hear with the CI, I did not need to rely so completely on the hearing aid FM system.

Recently, I had an audiogram in which my natural hearing in my right ear is now officially classed as 'Profound'. However, my 'hearing' is the best it's ever been!

What is a Cochlear Implant?

Instead of a hearing aid, which amplifies sound coming into the ear, a cochlear implant bypasses the traditional way of hearing (through the ear canal and eardrum etc), instead stimulating the auditory nerve directly by using electrical impulses coming from the electrodes that have been surgically inserted into the cochlear.

Your bequest *will secure our future*

Thank you for remembering NFD in your Will.

With your support, we will be able to provide a long-term service to deaf and hearing impaired New Zealanders. We can make provision to use your gift in special ways if you wish. Or simply allow us the freedom to place your gift where it is most needed.



Cover story:

The face of hearing impairment

Hearing Impairment: THE PROFILE

You're two years old, and the world around you is an exciting and fun filled jumble of noise. You were born profoundly deaf and when you received a cochlear implant a few months ago you heard sound for the first time. But what does it mean? Speech-language therapy helps you to learn what it means and is as much for your parents as for you. Your parents help you learn to decipher sound in the race to achieve the same speech and language skills as your peers when you start school.

*That's the face of
Hearing Impairment.*



Hearing Impairment: THE PROFILE

You're eight years of age. In the classroom, you can hear what the teacher and students are saying but you struggle to understand them. By the time you've deciphered the speech the discussion has moved on. Your teachers think you are a little "slow" and your classmates aren't really sure what to make of you. Your auditory processing disorder means it takes your brain longer to make sense of speech but the teacher and your friends don't really understand that.

*That's the face of
Hearing Impairment.*



Hearing Impairment: THE PROFILE

You're in your teens and have just learned you are eligible for a state funded Cochlear Implant (bionic ear). You have an unending list of queries but the excitement at the possibility of hearing far outweighs the fear of the unknown.

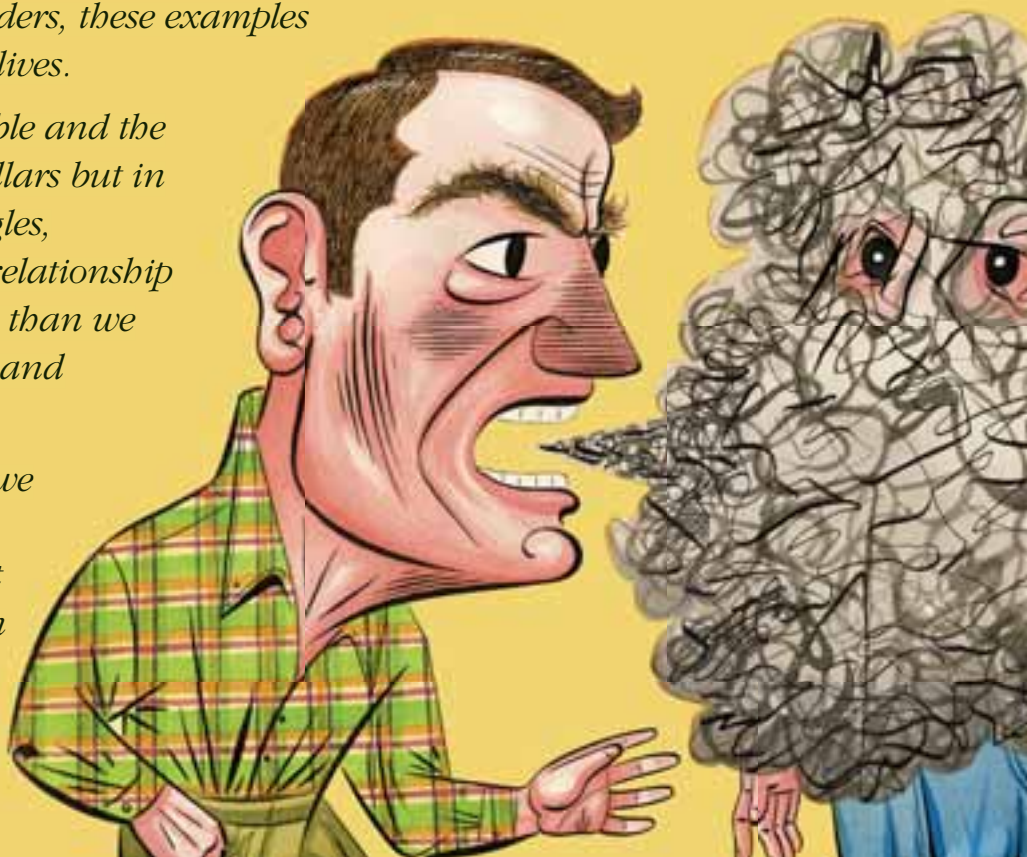
*That's the face of
Hearing Impairment.*



For thousands of New Zealanders, these examples are the realities of their daily lives.

Hearing Impairment is invisible and the price tag comes not just in dollars but in lost opportunities, daily struggles, frustration, anger, isolation, relationship breakdowns, and, more often than we like to acknowledge, bullying and eventually despair.

It is a measure of how much we neglect the Hearing Impaired in New Zealand that we don't even have precise numbers on how many New Zealanders are affected.



Hearing Impairment: THE PROFILE

You're in your mid-40s, married with dependent children. Despite attending dozens of interviews you can't get a job as you are competing against other candidates who have considerably less experience and skills but they are valued more than you because your hearing loss makes it impossible to use the telephone, and you struggle in meetings. You struggle to hear your children, especially when they're all there at once, and you sometimes feel you are losing contact with them. Increasingly, you feel disconnected, lonely and useless.

That's the face of
Hearing Impairment.

mid
40's

Hearing Impairment: THE PROFILE

You're in your 50s and you've struggled for years with deteriorating hearing but have managed to hang on to your job by compensating and going the extra yards. Your employers and your family have struggled through the frustration. They've stood by you. You are one of the lucky ones and have been offered a cochlear implant which has turned your life around. You can use the phone again for the first time in years and you can hear again in meetings.

That's the face of
Hearing Impairment.

50's

Hearing Impairment: THE PROFILE

You're in your 60s and worked all your life in a noisy environment. Hearing protection was not offered and now your hearing and your family are suffering. You struggle to hear at social functions so you avoid them. You have the TV so loud your family can't stay in the same room. ACC declined your application for hearing aid funding and the Ministry of Health funding comes to only \$1000. You have limited savings to cover emergencies so you opt for caution and give the hearing aids a miss.

That's the face of
Hearing Impairment.

60's

Research from 2001 shows one in 10 New Zealanders has a hearing loss which on the current population makes the total 450,000. Of those, 290,000 have a hearing loss that is a disability. But a report to the Australian Senate in May 2010 states one in six people in that country with hearing loss, while in Britain, the ratio is much the same. **One in six** New Zealanders equates to **727,950 people**.

Regardless of the exact numbers, the Hearing Impaired make up the biggest sensory disability group in New Zealand and based on Australian research, it costs the New Zealand economy around \$1.8 billion a year in lost production. But the issue is a human one. It is one of struggle and frustration, but also one of triumph and beating the odds.

Hearing Week this year focuses on the various faces of Hearing Impairment.

The hearing impaired are a huge and diverse group but one that is generally below the radar.

Part of that is because one of the first responses to hearing loss is to deny and try to hide it. If we don't hear something properly the first time we may ask again but sooner or later we give up and make a guess.

Social functions are a struggle with the background noise and the first instinct is not to go there in the first place. Hearing in shops and public transport is a struggle. We struggle in situations where we can't clearly see the face of the person talking. In the end life becomes an exhausting struggle of trying to communicate and integrate.

But ultimately we can't give up, and because we don't, the face of Hearing Impairment also becomes the face of determination.



Hearing Week

22 March-2 April 2011



Hearing Week aims to present all the faces of Hearing Impairment; to make those who live with hearing loss realise they are not alone and there are a number of organisations that can help them. It is also a golden opportunity for all Kiwis to consider how they communicate with each other and to learn how to become hearing aids by gaining our attention and speaking a little slower. Please face us; keep your lips clear and please, do not shout as it is humiliating and makes hearing even more difficult.

The Week is also aimed at decision-makers from government to corporations to make them understand the size of the issue and to encourage them to look at how they can help.

It is easy to dump the issue at the feet of the government and expect some sort of solution, but it is an issue for all of us. For every person with a hearing loss, eight or more people are affected – family, friends and workmates. The issue for all of them – government, corporations and others – is that helping those with Hearing Impairment is an investment and one that ultimately pays significant dividends.

What's happening

NFD

The NFD has a range of activities lined up for Hearing Week 2011, including:

- Presenting a Petition to the House of Representatives repealing the 6% threshold in the ACC Act
- Launching a national bus shelter poster campaign depicting the face of hearing impairment
- Launching NFD's research results on bullying of hearing impaired people
- A full media programme targeting newspapers, magazines, radio and TV
- Posters provided to NFD member organisations nationwide

Member Group Activities:

Auckland Hearing Association – is running a competition on Radio Up FM to win two pairs of ear savers and two free consultations for ear wax removal.

Te Awamutu Hearing Association – Look out for public educational displays around town including the Library, banks and an engineering shop. Schools will be getting the message on hearing protection with educational talks and there will be demonstrations of the Oticon FrontRow Soundfield system.

Hamilton Hearing Association – is holding an open day during Hearing Week at their rooms: 40 Wellington Street, Hamilton East. There will be a demonstration of assistive listening devices and free hearing tests with, hearing specialist, Triton Hearing Clinics. For dates, bookings and enquiries please phone 07 856 2008 / fax 07 856 2097 / email: hamhearing@xtra.co.nz

Wairarapa Hearing Association – is holding a bridge tournament with a luncheon on Monday 28th March to raise the profile of the Hearing Association's services. The tournament starts 11:00am and will be held in the Bridge Rooms, Villa Street, Masterton. Tel: (0800) 80 0447 for further details.

Muffs of 2011



Once you know power tools can damage hearing after 30 seconds, muffs become pretty sexy.



Hastings Hearing Association – is holding a stall in the town centre to promote hearing health and its services.

Wellington Hearing Association – Displays of equipment in their showroom, special offers and newspaper articles will help raise awareness of how to protect and preserve your hearing.

Hutt Valley Hearing Association – A display and information will be available at Queensgate Westfield Shopping Mall in Lower Hutt. You will have the opportunity to talk to staff about hearing loss and the services provided by Hutt Valley Hearing Association.

Nelson Hearing Association – In association with LIFE unlimited, a public talk by Hearing Therapist Kim Howell on hearing loss and how to cope with tinnitus will be held on Wednesday 13th April at 5:15pm, at the Hearing House, 354 Trafalgar Square, Nelson. Hearing phones will be on display. A gold coin donation is appreciated.

The New Zealand Audiological Society – will be joining with the **Deafness Research Foundation** in this year's Hearing Week. Audiologists will be encouraged to host information sessions in their areas for the public. NZAS will also be supporting the presentation of the Petition to revoke the ACC legislation and it is hoped that a lecture at Parliament may be able to be hosted.

The Acoustical Society – plans to hold an open day where the public can visit the University of Auckland's anechoic chamber – the quietest place in New Zealand – to experience pure silence. Please check on the NFD website for dates and times. Check out www.acoustics.ac.nz to hear a range of sounds and try and identify them.

For further information on Hearing Week activities please contact Sara Huszak at the NFD: sara@nfd.org.nz or visit www.nfd.org.nz

Ear muffs have become this season's must have accessory for the DIYers of New Zealand thanks to the creative talents of advertising agency DDB. So much so in fact, that the Muffs of 2011 Calendar has been taking over the space on shed walls across the country traditionally saved for other more risqué pin-ups! The calendar is a fun and novel way to highlight the danger of using power tools without hearing protection, serving as a year round reminder for home handymen and women to muff up.

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL NEW ZEALANDERS

**From
The National Foundation for the Deaf Inc.**

New Zealand's accident compensation scheme currently discriminates against people with industrial noise induced hearing loss by disallowing cover for rehabilitation until they prove they have at least 6% of sound injury hearing loss, irrespective of whether this hearing loss is in the frequency range needed for that person to communicate effectively with others.

People with Hearing Impairment are the only group of New Zealanders required by law to demonstrate a particular percentage of disability before rehabilitation will be offered under the accident compensation scheme.

We, at The National Foundation for the Deaf Inc. are appalled at this discrimination against people with hearing disabilities and what is happening to the ACC funding of hearing support for people with industrial noise induced hearing loss.

A Petition to the House of Representatives is being circulated by NFD, seeking an amendment to the ACC Act, which requires as many signatures as possible.

We've enclosed a signatory page and we would be very grateful if you could please support our efforts by gaining as many signatures as possible and returning the signed page/s back to us by post to NFD, PO Box 37729, Parnell, Auckland 1151 (NB: signatories addresses are not required as this is a petition, not a referendum).

The Petition to The House of Representatives will be presented to the Rt Hon Phil Goff on the Forecourt of Parliament and we also ask: **Can you please support our efforts by joining us in Wellington, on the Forecourt of Parliament, from 11am to 1pm on March 23, 2011?**

For further information please call
NFD on: 0800 332 343

Hidden learning disability affecting Kiwi kids

There is at least one child per classroom in New Zealand struggling with auditory processing difficulties and many teachers and parents are not aware of the serious impact this could have on a child's learning.

Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) is a hearing disorder in which the ears process sound normally but the brain cannot always understand or 'hear'. Children with APD may exhibit signs of hearing loss, especially when there are competing sounds at even moderate levels, yet they pass standard hearing tests conducted in quiet. Despite having normal intelligence they may need instructions repeated and may have difficulty following directions in the classroom. In particular they may not respond appropriately to instructions that are lengthy or that include more than one task.

Audiologist and CEO of APD specialist clinic, SoundSkills, Dr Bill Keith, says a child who has difficulty understanding verbal instructions and who struggles with reading and spelling could have an auditory processing disorder.

"APD affects an estimated 3-15% of children – more boys than girls – and most go undiagnosed. In the past year we've identified close to 100 cases, primarily in Auckland," says Dr Keith.

"APD can present as a learning or behaviour problem and can cause under-achievement because these children are missing out on vital information" says Dr Keith. "The problem lies in the hearing pathways and centres in the brain. Children are unable to extract the message that they need to from all the sound and noise around them. Or they have trouble retaining auditory information unless it is brief."

Causes of APD include birth trauma, early history of otitis media (glue ear) and hereditary factors.

The condition often occurs in conjunction with other areas of difficulty such as Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), language and speech sound problems, and reading disorders. It can be the underlying cause of language, spelling, reading and learning disorders. The underlying auditory problem should be addressed before trying to remedy the language, spelling, reading or learning difficulty.

The condition requires specialised testing and assessment, and individualised treatment. A multi-disciplinary team approach



is necessary. But, says Dr Keith, "the good news is that there is now robust evidence for the effectiveness of a number of interventions including hearing training to improve listening skills, language therapy to improve understanding and wearing a personal "FM" listening device in the classroom to transmit the voice of the teacher clearly, and lessen the impact of background noise.

Professor Suzanne Purdy, Head of Speech Science and senior researcher in the Centre for Brain Research at the University

of Auckland has recently concluded research showing that FM usage delivers a double benefit for children with APD. Firstly it provides immediate assistance with hearing, but over time FM usage also can lead to an improvement in auditory skills so that use of the FM system may not be permanently necessary.

Professor Purdy notes that APD is often overlooked or mistaken for another condition that affects learning and behaviour. Her research with colleagues at the University of Auckland and Macquarie University in Sydney has shown that APD often is associated with literacy and language difficulties.

"It is important that children who appear to have poor classroom listening skills and who are struggling with literacy in particular be assessed by an audiologist to determine whether APD is an underlying factor," says Professor Purdy.

SoundSkills is dedicated to diagnosing and treating APD. SoundSkills' audiologists, speech therapists and education adviser provide specialised testing and individually tailored remediation programmes.

For further information: Tel: (09) 524 7074 or visit www.soundskills.co.nz

What's New on the website

Alexia strides ahead



As a pre-schooler Alexia Grace was quiet, withdrawn and not keen to join in. When she started school, she often missed what children were saying in the playground and forming friendships became difficult. She missed what the teacher was saying in the classroom and soon started to slip behind in her work.

Alexia's mother, Anne-Marie, said there were lots of tears and tantrums of frustration at home and that as a result of all the communication difficulties, at the age of seven, Alexia developed an anxiety disorder.

"We went down a lot of paths looking for a reason for Alexia's lack of focus, inability to understand what was being said to her, her poor performance at school and her slow withdrawal. We thought that when she ignored us, she was being rude. We never realised that this was all part of Auditory Processing Disorder," said Anne-Marie.

After an assessment by an Educational Psychologist and a visit to APD specialist clinic, SoundSkills, Alexia's diagnosis was confirmed.

Alexia was fitted with an FM listening device that would enable her to directly hear the teacher's voice so that distance and background noise were no longer a problem. The FM system looks similar to hearing aids and come in a range of colours.

"When we had the FM system fitted and Alexia had to pick which colour she wanted we all thought that she would pick a skin coloured tone so that it would blend in but she treated it as a fashion accessory and chose the bright red!

"We were concerned that the other children would tease her but in the classroom Alexia enjoyed the positive attention and support from her peers when the FM system was introduced."

Now Alexia follows instructions more accurately and participates in classroom discussions; her vocabulary has expanded due to being able to hear the full sound of every word and her confidence has improved dramatically.

In fact, so much so, that just before Christmas Alexia signed with August Models and Talent and is hoping to do some modelling and commercial work – something she wouldn't have dreamed of a year ago.

Have you visited our web site lately? It's a valuable resource which presents topical, up-to-date information about support for deaf and hearing impaired New Zealanders, as well as information about the NFD's activities.

The home page is regularly updated with the latest current developments and events.

The NFD carried out significant advocacy work last year with regard to ACC's introduction of a claim threshold of a minimum of 6% hearing total loss for people with sound injury deafness. You can read the position papers and submissions on the home page.

The NFD will also be presenting a Petition to the House of Representatives protesting against the scheme – you can support us by downloading and signing the petition on the homepage.

During Deaf Awareness Week 2010 Louise Carroll, CEO of the NFD, gave two radio interviews which you can download from the home page. Find out what life is like when you are hearing impaired and pick up tips for protecting your hearing and communicating with someone who has hearing loss.

We have a comprehensive research updates section, which contains current national and international developments in



the deaf and hearing impaired sectors, accessible in just a couple of mouse clicks!

The research topics are grouped as follows:

- **Hearing aids and cochlear implants**
- **Helping deaf children and their families**
- **Health and age related hearing loss**
- **Noise induced hearing loss**
- **Preventing and finding cures for deafness**
- **Tinnitus**

To access the research updates section, on the home page, click on "News and Events" on the right hand side, and then click on "Research Updates" on the menu bar on the right hand side.

News and research activities are added on a daily basis, so make sure you check back regularly.

Bullies target hearing impaired

By Dara McNaught

BA, Dip Soc St, Dip App Res.

Reports to the NFD office from people with a Hearing Impairment or Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) who are being bullied are a matter of increasing concern. The bullying takes place at home, in workplaces, at school, and by organizations that make no allowances for poor acoustics and communication difficulties.



Bullying of people with APD follows a similar pattern to that of Hearing Impairment, and for similar reasons – while a person with APD may have normal hearing, APD is a listening disorder that makes it difficult to make sense of the words a person hears.

Given that people with a Hearing Impairment in New Zealand number around 450,000, and an estimated 5% of people have APD, and given that it is well established that people with disabilities, including those with communication problems, have a higher likelihood of becoming the targets of bullies, it is possible to identify some issues relevant to those with hearing impairment and APD. (Please note: the term *Hearing Impairment* excludes people who are Deaf and whose first language is signing. It includes people with limited hearing who may or may not use hearing aids, or who have cochlear implants.)

When a person has a Hearing Impairment or APD, he or she is often slower to respond to verbal communication, there are more misunderstandings and confusion, and there is fatigue from the strain of listening. The person is often treated as being slow, stupid or obstructive. Frequently heard phrases include: “She can hear if she wants to,” or “He just doesn’t pay attention.” This makes them vulnerable to bullies.

It has also been noted that the targets of bullies are often people who demonstrate competence, intelligence, and better than average capabilities in their workplaces and educational settings. This applies to many people who have a Hearing Impairment or APD, as they work harder than average in order to make up for their disability. It seems that bullies are threatened by such competence.

There is very little research available on bullying of people with Hearing Impairment or APD, apart from a 2010 UK study which identified that “the incidence of maltreatment, including neglect and physical and sexual abuse, is more than 25% higher among deaf and hard of hearing children than among hearing youths.”

However, there has been significant research on workplace bullying, on bullying of people with disabilities, on bullying of school children, and on bullying at home i.e. domestic violence. It is therefore possible to identify some issues relevant to those with a Hearing Impairment or APD.

Types of bullying

Bullying takes many forms. It can range from repeated irritable behaviour with impatience and aggression directed at a person or target, to making belittling and hurtful remarks; from excluding a person from gaining necessary information, to subtle threats or to outright aggression (as with domestic violence).

What these behaviours have in common is that they are persistently directed at a target over a period of time, and that the target feels threatened and undermined. One definition suggests that “Bullying is persistent unwelcome behaviour, mostly using unwarranted or invalid criticism, nitpicking, fault-finding, also exclusion, isolation, being singled out and treated differently, being shouted at, humiliated... and much more.”

There are generally two types of bullies:

1. Situational bullies – those who are reacting to stressful situations such as in schools (staff) or hospitals, which are places where research shows that bullying in NZ is higher than international rates. This can often be relieved by changes of management and easing of workload along with education, training and accountability for unacceptable behaviour.

2. Serial or chronic bullies – while there are fewer serial bullies, they are more damaging. They are manipulative, clever at hiding their bullying from other people, they have a lifetime pattern of choosing different targets, and they do not accept responsibility for their conduct. Unless a workplace or school has very strong and informed leadership who can control the bully, the target’s only way out is to leave.

What bullies have in common is that they justify their behaviour with comments such as: "I'm under stress," or "You're being over-sensitive," or "I have a tough management style so get used to it."

Bullying also typically includes:

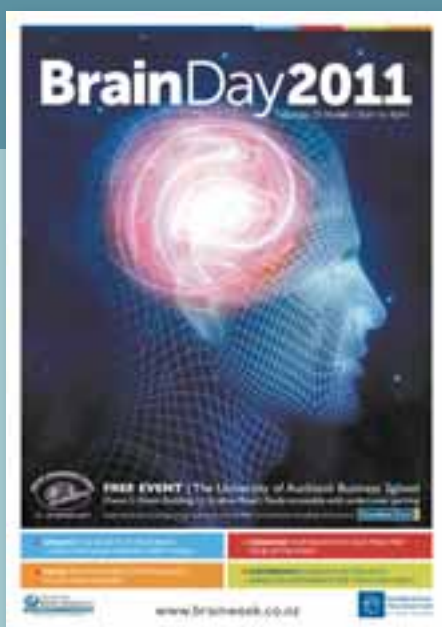
1. an imbalance of power (as with domestic violence, or a disability)
2. may be imposed equally by men or women on men or (mostly) women
3. involves a desire to hurt as well as hurtful action
4. is a continuous and relentless attack on other people's self-confidence and self esteem
5. involves a sense of being oppressed on the part of the victim/target
6. is present behind all forms of harassment, discrimination, prejudice, abuse, persecution, conflict and violence
7. may include withholding information that would undermine the target's ability to function effectively in his or her life or workplace
8. results in the target being undermined in terms of their confidence, self-esteem, health, relationships and work performances. This includes critical gossip or hurtful remarks made behind a person's back which have the effect of undermining confidence in the target
9. targets of bullies tend to be normal people who believe that respect, negotiation and compromise are the basis of healthy relationships in any setting. This makes them vulnerable to bullies.

10. Bullying is always a behaviour of choice – the bully is always in control of their own behaviour.
11. Bullying is not a matter of being assertive, which is a reasonable behaviour based on respect for the other person, a willingness to negotiate outcomes, and does not apply negative consequences if the other person says no to a request. Bullies are aggressive, do not negotiate, and will use charm, intimidation, and negative consequences, and induce fear if they do not get their way.
12. The targets of severe bullying are recognized as suffering from long term psychological damage (PTSD) as well as increased stress levels such as raised cortisol levels, high blood pressure and clinical depression, and relationship damage.

What to do if you are being bullied

1. The first step is to recognise that you are being bullied – i.e. that there is nothing wrong with you, but the other person has a problem. If in doubt, go to Tim Field's excellent website at www.bullyingonline.org.
2. Seek help to deal with it. Women's Refuges have considerable expertise at dealing with bullies. At work, your Human Resource Manager or union rep may be able to help. If not, please report it to the NFD office.

The NFD is currently developing a resource package to assist people who have a Hearing Impairment or APD and who are being bullied. Later this year we will be training specialist support people around the country. If you would like to assist with this, please contact louise.carroll@nfd.org.nz or phone her on (09) 307 0922.



Brain Day

19 MARCH 2011
9AM TO 4PM
FREE EVENT

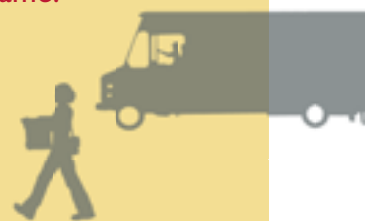
*The University of Auckland
Business School
Owen G Glenn Building
12 Grafton Road*

www.brainweek.co.nz

The NFD has moved

On 7th March,
the NFD office relocated to
**11 York Street,
Parnell.**

Contact numbers
remain the same.



Invention delivers a lifelong message

The NFD congratulates Jamie Fenton on being named 2011 Young New Zealander of the Year which in part is due to her invention of the Safe Sound Indicator.



Seventeen year old Jamie came up with the idea for the Safe Sound Indicator when she was only 10 years old and after several years of refinement, the concept was commercially produced by the NFD for pre-schools around the country to assist with educating children, their parents and teachers on hearing preservation.

The NFD's Louise Carroll said Jamie's concept is a good simple way of getting the message across to children and hopefully it is a message that will change the way future generations deal with noise.

The indicator displays noise levels in the form of traffic lights with calibrations to various decibel levels – 80dBs (green), 85dBs (amber) and 90dBs (red). Continued exposure to sounds over 85dB leads to permanent hearing loss and brief exposure at this level may cause temporary hearing loss.

Research has shown noise levels can be a risk to both staff and children.

The first 500 Safe Sound Indicators are now being distributed to pre-schools, in some instances, with the help of donations and grants from funding agencies.

Safe Sound Indicators are available from the NFD at \$292.50 which includes an educational information pack, packaging and postage.

Congratulations: Winners

CONGRATULATIONS to

Larry McBride of New Plymouth who won a Red Seal Natural Health gift basket full of delicious Red Seal specialty and herbal teas and natural herbal non-fluoride toothpastes.

CONGRATULATIONS to

A J Wilson of Wanaka who is the lucky winner of the \$1000 petrol voucher.

As part of the NFD's fundraising efforts, everyone who donates \$25, \$30 or \$50 through our 0900 number goes into the draw to win \$1000 of petrol or food vouchers.

If you would like to support us with the chance of winning this fabulous prize please email your name and telephone number to enquiries@nfd.org.nz

Donor Dollars at work

How your donation makes a difference

NFD works for the 450,000 New Zealand babies, children, young adults and older people who are deaf or hearing impaired. This means that NFD probably works for you or others that you know.

Your donations help NFD fund a variety of programmes

- NFD was one of the driving forces behind the introduction of national hearing screening of newborn babies
- NFD has developed a Safe Sound Indicator for pre-school centres as part of its work to raise awareness of the potential for noise to damage vulnerable young hearing
- NFD runs a free 0800 information service
- NFD promotes Hearing Week and Deaf Awareness Week as part of its work to raise the profile of hearing disabilities
- NFD works to make decision-makers aware of the impact of law and regulation changes on the vast community of people with hearing disabilities

Your donation makes a difference to the lives of hearing impaired people whatever their stage of life. Thank you for supporting our essential work.

MAJOR DONORS

The NFD would like to acknowledge with grateful thanks the following major donors:

**Auckland City Council
Community Group
Accommodation Support Fund**

**Mana Community Grants
Foundation**

Middleton Charitable Trust

New Zealand Community Post

NZ Law Foundation

The Trusts Charitable Foundation

Trust Waikato

WEL Energy Trust

Card Marketing International Ltd

Board Profile

Jemini Patel

NFD Board

Jemini Patel joined the NFD Board in August 2008 upon recommendation from another member that her 14 years of sector experience as an audiologist would be invaluable to the team. Having worked across a variety of fields including paediatric and adult audiology, cochlear implants and hearing aids, Jemini welcomed the new and interesting challenge.



Jemini's first connection with the NFD came about when still a student completing her Masters in Audiology. Throughout her career as a clinician she would often provide clients with materials developed by the Foundation.

Since joining the board Jemini has been an active member on projects such as the 2011 Hearing Awareness Week and the Quest for Excellence Scholarship Award selection.

Her personal plight to enrich the lives of those suffering from hearing impairment stems from her mother's own battle with hearing loss. Having herself battled to convince a loved one to get help and wear hearing aids, Jemini knows only too well the difficulty some people face in seeking help and the effect that this positive change can have on the lives of those that do.

Jemini's day-job at Oticon NZ in the sales, training and audiological support is about creating and maintaining relationships – involving listening, analysing and providing creative input to individuals and groups. All of these, she says, are skills that have proved very useful in working with the board.

A love of travelling has given Jemini the opportunity to meet many people around the world and experience a diverse array of cultures, many of which have given her a different perspective on life and the way other nations treat audiological care. When Jemini is not wheeling her suitcase through airport terminals she enjoys playing a good game of social hockey.

In Memorium

Thank you for donating in Memory of a Loved One.

In times of great sadness when a loved one passes, you can also be comforted that people who are deaf or hearing impaired can receive the help they need.



Member Group Profile

The Hearing Association

Posed with the question 'what does the Hearing Association do and what do they strive to achieve?' the organisation's president, **John Harwood**, proudly discusses the Hearing Association's aim to provide comprehensive assistance to all hearing aid wearers.

"Our aim is to enhance the well-being and independence of all those affected by hearing loss," he says.

With 32 affiliate associations across New Zealand encompassing over 5,000 members and over 450,000 people affected by hearing loss there is certainly a lot of work to do. All those who wear hearing aids have access to assistive listening devices, help with their hearing aids and education on maintenance and care. "We even get batteries at a competitive rate!" adds John.

The association delivers a number of programmes such as the current presentations to residents across the country in Ryman Health rest homes. To show their appreciation, the residents are fund raising for the association with the funds being channelled into a campaign targeted at breaking down the stigma that exists around hearing disabilities.

John highlighted a particular piece of work that is currently taking place in Christchurch following the tragic series of earthquakes.

With the assistance of the NFD, **Pauline Marshall** of the Christchurch Hearing Association is currently interviewing residents who have hearing loss or are Deaf.

The aim is to ascertain how the individuals coped during and after the earthquake with access to information. The study comes out of a greater investigation into the current issue of how to alert the hearing impaired and Deaf community of an impending disaster such as an earthquake, tsunami or flash flood, where evacuation may be necessary.



"We are hoping that the data collected will help us devise strategies to ensure that those who have a hearing loss or are Deaf are not disadvantaged in any future natural disaster," says Pauline.

The association not only offers assistance to those affected with hearing loss but, equally as important, it focuses on reaching and educating others. Currently in development is a programme to be delivered to children on the dangers of noise and the potential damage to their hearing.

For more information on the Hearing Association visit www.hearing.org.nz

Snippets

TV captioners step up to the plate

Television captioners again stepped up to the plate, providing extended live captioning during the devastating earthquake to hit Christchurch last month.

Working in teams of four, the TVNZ captioners worked long hours to provide live news and press conference captioning, while other captioners kept up with their normal workload for both TVNZ and TV3. This follows a similar effort during the September earthquake.

The NFD congratulates the team and their manager Wendy Youens.

Remember, to access captions, either go to the Teletext feature on your remote control and dial 801, or simply press the "Subtitle" button on the remote if you are using Freeview.

Coping in crisis

The recent tragic events in Christchurch are a further reminder how important it is that we are well prepared if disaster strikes.

Last year, Civil Defence produced a DVD called "Get Ready, Get Thru" which gives instructions on how to get through disasters such as earthquakes, floods, storms, and tsunamis. While the format is basic, it is captioned and provides important information.

The DVD is available from the NFD if you would like to distribute to your members, clients, and supporters. Please email us with the number you require and your delivery address. There is no charge for the DVD or delivery.

Name this newsletter and WIN!

Last year we relaunched Vibrations, bringing you more in-depth coverage of issues and achievements within the deaf and hearing impaired sector. The NFD's magazine now needs a new name and we are asking our readers for suggestions. If we select your idea you will win a \$250 supermarket voucher redeemable at your local store.

Please send your suggestion(s) on the back of an envelope with your name, address and contact number to : Vibrations Name, C/- The NFD, PO Box 37729, Parnell, Auckland by 30 May 2011.

Pindrop Foundation joins NFD

The NFD welcomes Pindrop Foundation as a new member. The Pindrop Foundation is the public face and fundraising arm of the Northern Cochlear Implant Trust and was set up

to raise awareness and funds for cochlear implants (bionic ears) and to draw attention to issues relating to hearing loss. Louise Carroll said the NFD was looking forward to working closely with Pindrop to benefit the deaf and hearing impaired community.

Congratulations Prof Purdy

Professor Suzanne Purdy, a member of the Council of the National Foundation for the Deaf has recently been made a Professor at the University of Auckland. This is a mark of great academic distinction within the University and reflects her outstanding national and international reputation as a researcher, teacher and clinician in hearing and speech sciences.



Prof Suzanne Purdy (Department of Psychology) is Head of Speech Science which she established as a discipline at the University in 2003. Speech Science's Master of Speech Language Therapy Practice, a first for New Zealand, was accredited in 2005. Her research on hearing loss,

cochlear implants, auditory electrophysiology, treatment of auditory processing disorder, language disorders in children, brain injury, stuttering and noise in the workplace spans many aspects of speech science and communication disorders and has appeared in leading journals. Her research on identification and management of hearing and auditory processing in children has had considerable international and national impact on clinical practice.

Our congratulations to Professor Purdy.

Hear for you

NFD Quest For Excellence scholarship winner Natasha Barnes is one of nine hearing-impaired adults chosen to be a mentor for a new programme run by The Hearing House. Hear For You is a mentoring programme for hearing-impaired teenagers whose primary mode of communication is oral. It aims to help teens develop their leadership and team-building skills as well as provide a forum for them to discuss issues such as when to disclose a hearing loss to potential employers, relationships and career planning. Developed by magazine designer Olivia Andersen in Australia in 2007, Hear For You will be run as a pilot programme in Auckland in 2011 with the aim of expanding it to other centres next year. For details, contact The Hearing House on 579 2333 or email maryjane@hearinghouse.co.nz