

# HEARING *MATTERS*

**MARCH 2019**



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## **MARCH IS HEARING AWARENESS MONTH**

FIND OUT HOW YOU  
CAN GET INVOLVED

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## **LAUNCHING TWO NEW WORKPLACE PROGRAMMES**

SEE PAGE 14 AND 16

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## **OVERCOMING THE STIGMA**

EMBRACING LIFE WITH  
HEARING LOSS

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## **CAPTIONS ON PLEASE!**

HOW YOUR FEEDBACK GOT THE  
MINISTER OF BROADCASTING  
TO MAKE CHANGES



*The National Foundation  
for the Deaf Inc.*

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## MARCH

## Kia ora.

The National Foundation for the Deaf are thrilled to deliver you this bumper edition of Hearing Matters Magazine. This March is also Hearing Awareness Month and we are looking forward to a month packed with hearing awareness campaigns and fundraising activities. We are also launching of two fantastic new programmes: the Hearing Accredited Workplace Programme and the Youth Apprenticeship Programme. Both aim to support New Zealanders with hearing loss reach their full career potential.

We hope you enjoy this edition of Hearing Matters, and look forward to sharing the journey towards better hearing health with you.

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THIS MARCH EDITION OF HEARING MATTERS  
MAGAZINE WAS MADE POSSIBLE THANKS TO  
FUNDING FROM THE LOTTERY GRANTS BOARD.

*THANK YOU!*



# IT'S HEARING AWARENESS MONTH!

GET INVOLVED...



## World Hearing Day

@ Round the Bays

The day Auckland runs! Team NFD and a great number of supporters ran Round the Bays on World Hearing Day, (March 3rd), to raise awareness for New Zealanders living with a hearing loss. See page 6 to find out more about World Hearing Day.



## Captions on Please

Nationwide Petition

The Minister of Broadcasting is investigating the current levels of captioning in New Zealand. This is your chance to demand better captioning services for our nation. Pledge your support. See page 8 on where to sign the petition.



## Silent March

Raising Awareness

Host a Silent March event to help us raise much needed funds to support the one-in-six New Zealanders who live with a hearing loss. Host an afternoon tea, a silent auction or show a silent movie with captions. See page 10 for more ideas.



## Hearing Accredited Workplaces

Working with Employers

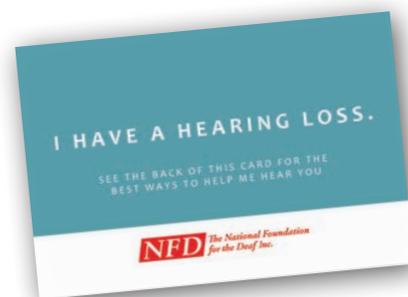
This programme aims to support employees with hearing loss in the workplace. The programme provides workplaces with educational tools and support services. See page 14 for how to join, and the benefits the programme offers.



## Youth Apprenticeship Programme

Youth Employment Pathways

Creating pathways into employment for young New Zealanders with hearing loss; this programme is open to youths under 24. Find out how you can support this programme and read Treescape's story on pages 16 - 17.



## The Buddy Card

Helping You Communicate Better

This wallet sized card is a handy communication tool for people with hearing loss to illustrate their needs and provide advice in situations that can be hard to hear – such as noisy cafes and restaurants. Find out how to order yours on page 22.

# BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

NATASHA GALLARDO CEO

## “I WON'T LET MY HEARING LOSS IMPACT MY QUALITY OF LIFE”

**N**atasha Gallardo is the new Chief Executive of the National Foundation for the Deaf and knows first-hand what it's like to live with a hearing loss.

Six months into her role, she tells her story.

### WHEN WERE YOU DIAGNOSED WITH A HEARING LOSS?

I was 13 when I was diagnosed. I was the only teenager in school that I knew of with hearing loss. I had banana boat hearing aids. They sat behind the ear and stuck out about half an inch. It was not a good look for a teenage girl, so I didn't wear them.

Even when I started working, I didn't want to wear them, in case people treated me differently.

The advances in technology have been amazing since then and I now wear ITC (in the canal) hearing aids. They are very subtle, and usually, unless I tell them, people are not aware of my hearing loss.

### WHAT ATTRACTED YOU TO THIS ROLE?

I initially took a board role at the National Foundation for the Deaf, knowing I was coming back to New Zealand, and then this amazing

opportunity came up. As Chief Executive, I have an opportunity to raise awareness about hearing loss and to help people be more open to talking about it. You can live a great life, particularly when you seek help.

My mother was in her twenties when she started to go progressively deaf, and she became profoundly deaf at the age of 36. It was a challenging period of her life, particularly as she didn't feel she could work anymore. She lost friends and became quite isolated. She was completely deaf for five years before she had her first cochlear implant.

I saw what my mother went through and it made me determined to tackle my hearing loss head-on. What has kept me positive over the years is the fact that the hearing industry is so incredibly innovative.

### WHAT IS YOUR WORK BACKGROUND?

I previously worked in marketing and advertising here before moving to Australia 15 years ago. I have had senior management roles with blue chip companies in Australia since then, as well as running my own business.

When my son was born, I took maternity leave. But the time I was out of the workforce created hurdles to getting back into my career - I almost had to prove myself again.

This experience gave me the impetus to launch 'Working Mothers Connect.' I wanted to help mums return to work and find supportive employers with flexible work opportunities. When I sold the business last year there were 30,000 mums registered.

There are similarities in that feeling of exclusion and a lack of confidence for people with hearing loss when they are applying for jobs. That is why one of the programmes we are launching targets employers and aims to create equal opportunities and better working environments for people with hearing loss.

### WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THE FOUNDATION?

New Zealand is not addressing the needs of a large proportion of the population, with over 880,000 New Zealanders living with hearing loss. I want to change that.

Of the 880,000, one third of those people are of a working age. That is a significant number. We really need to look at how employers and the government can better support us.

For example, open-plan offices are not conducive to staff with a hearing loss. Teleconferencing, such as group Skype sessions are also challenging.

# “YOU CAN LIVE A GREAT LIFE, PARTICULARLY WHEN YOU SEEK HELP”



*Natasha Gallardo, Chief Executive of the National Foundation for the Deaf.*

There are also obstacles for young people with hearing loss when it comes to securing fulfilling full-time work after leaving school. Even the standard interview process can be fraught with difficulty, especially if the employer isn't aware of hearing loss, and this can lead to feelings of anxiety.

There is a lot I can do in my role with the National Foundation for the Deaf to help change this. Currently, we are working with schools and employers to create apprenticeship pathways for young people with hearing loss.

We are also advocating for mandatory captioning services for New Zealand. They are mandatory in Australia, UK, US and other OECD countries, for

television and digital platforms – but not here. We are working with Kris Faafoi, the Minister of Broadcasting, to look at options for making captioning a mandatory requirement.

## HOW CAN YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The National Foundation for the Deaf's major focus is to take a strong position with the Government and advocate for people with a hearing loss to have equal rights – including better access to captions to watch TV, OnDemand platforms and go to the cinema where captions are largely unavailable.

I believe that New Zealand has a lot to gain by better understanding hearing loss. If you haven't personally

experienced hearing loss, most of us have someone in our family, in our circle of friends or in our workplace who is experiencing it. Increasing people's awareness and understanding of this invisible disability can go a long way towards creating a more inclusive society.

I am working to put the spotlight on the challenges people with hearing loss face to ensure their experiences are better understood and recognised in New Zealand. ■

*Story by: Hayley McLarin*

# WORLD HEARING DAY

THINK GLOBAL, ACT LOCAL

“YOUR DAILY SOUND ALLOWANCE WORKS LIKE A MONETARY ALLOWANCE: YOU HAVE A LIMITED AMOUNT TO SPEND EACH DAY”

**T**his World Hearing Day, March 3rd 2019, the World Health Organisation is focusing on the importance of early identification and intervention for hearing loss.

The National Foundation for the Deaf is continuing this theme throughout Hearing Awareness Month, tackling early identification through workplace screenings (see page 14) and by talking about the early signs of hearing loss. The Foundation is also focussing on intervention, warning people of the risks of noise-induced hearing loss.

## EARLY IDENTIFICATION

Many people live with unidentified hearing loss, often failing to realise that they are missing out on certain sounds and words. You should have your hearing tested regularly if you:

- Are over 50
- Work in a noisy environment (this includes cafes and restaurants, factories, or if you regularly use machinery)
- Listen to music at high volumes for sustained periods of time, particularly if you wear earphones
- Experience any ear problems or changes in your hearing

## HOW TO SPOT SOMEONE WHO MAY HAVE HEARING LOSS

- They turn the TV volume up louder than you would
- They miss parts of the conversation, and ask you to repeat it
- They lean forward with an ear towards the sound
- They gradually withdraw and do not like going out to loud places

## DON'T SUFFER IN SILENCE

This March take the online hearing check on our website, [www.nfd.org.nz/helpful-resources](http://www.nfd.org.nz/helpful-resources) or see your local clinic to get your hearing tested.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) warns that the prevalence of hearing loss will rise considerably in coming decades due to changing population demographics, increasing exposure to risk factors such as recreational noise, as well as persistence of untreated ear conditions such as otitis media (glue ear). Recreational noise can also result in noise-induced hearing loss – but it is preventable.

WHO says your daily sound allowance works like a monetary allowance: you have a limited amount to spend each day. For example, the louder or longer you are exposed to high levels of sound, the more you “spend”, the faster you run out of your allowance.

Safe listening levels depend on the intensity (loudness), duration (length of time) and frequency (how often) of the exposure. The highest safe sound level is 85 dB up to a maximum of eight hours. So you could be exposed to the same level of loudness in 15 minutes of music at 100 dB as an industrial worker gets in an eight-hour day at 85 dB.

## HOW TO MINIMISE THE RISK OF HEARING LOSS

- Wear protective head-wear when you are exposed to loud noise
- Reduce your listening volume and listening time to make sure you



# “ALMOST 50% OF ALL PORTABLE MUSIC DEVICE USERS ARE LISTENING TO MUSIC IN AN UNSAFE MANNER”



do not exceed your daily sound allowance. For example, listening at a level of 85 dB for a maximum of 8 hours would be a daily noise allowance

- Use noise-cancelling earphones/headphones, as these can reduce the need to raise the volume when you are in a noisy environment
- When going to nightclubs, bars, sporting events and other noisy places, take short listening breaks to help reduce the overall duration of noise exposure

Some people may be more susceptible to noise-induced hearing loss than others. WHO says genetic predisposition, chronic conditions such as diabetes and exposure to cigarette smoke can increase the risk of noise-induced hearing loss.

As it is not clear who the most susceptible individuals are, prevention is the most effective way to avoid such hearing loss.

## WHO SAYS...

It is estimated that over one billion people aged between 12 and 35 years are at risk of developing hearing loss due to noise exposure in recreational settings such as concerts and sporting events and with personal audio devices such as mobile phones.

WHO found almost 50% of all portable music device users are listening to music in an unsafe manner.

Regular exposure to loud sounds for prolonged periods poses a serious threat of irreversible hearing loss.

## TEAM NFD HITS THE BAYS FOR WORLD HEARING DAY

This year World Hearing Day coincided with Auckland’s Round the Bays event, which attracts approximately 25,000 walkers and runners every year.

The National Foundation for the Deaf and their ever-growing team of supporters were out in force pounding the pavement to raise awareness for the deaf and hard of hearing community.

It was a fantastic day and a great way to kick start Hearing Awareness Month.

On World Hearing Day, the Captions On Please petition, was also relaunched at Round the Bays.

This Captions On Please campaign is a nation-wide petition that calls for mandatory captioning for all New Zealand TV channels and online platforms such as TNVZ, 3Now and Lightbox.

NFD team members gathered signatures for the petition before and after the run and need your support for this vital service.

See over the page for more information about the Captions On Please campaign and pledge your support by signing our petition. ■

Story by: Hayley McLarin



Team NFD in training for World Hearing Day at Round the Bays 2019.



# CAPTIONS ON PLEASE

*TALKING TO KRIS FAAFOI, MINISTER OF BROADCASTING & DIGITAL*

**N**ew Zealand might be good at rugby, netball and sailing, but we're not so good at captioning. Our country is one of the few Western countries that does not require television captioning by law. In the UK, USA, Australia and France, captioning is mandatory.

Thousands of Kiwis with hearing loss are excluded from enjoying television programmes in our country because they cannot hear what is going on. To get entertainment, educational and social value from the programming, they need to read captions and audio descriptions.

To correct this significant problem, the National Foundation for the Deaf is campaigning for mandatory captioning for all New Zealand broadcast channels, including streaming platforms such as TVNZ, 3Now and Lightbox. The campaign is called Captions On Please.



From left to right, Minister of Broadcasting & Digital, Kris Faafoi, CEO of NFD, Natasha Gallardo and Council Deputy Chair for NFD, David Kent.

**“ I ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE CURRENT LEVELS OF CAPTIONING AND AUDIO DESCRIPTION IN NEW ZEALAND ARE NOT SUFFICIENT”**

**Kris Faafoi**

## THE NEED FOR CAPTIONING

Without captions, around 880,000 New Zealanders with hearing loss are unable to access our local television shows.

Major live sporting events, including Super Rugby and the Commonwealth Games, have not been captioned in New Zealand, but they are in Britain and Australia, where there is a legal requirement to do so. Sky TV captions about 17 channels, but not live sports.

New Zealand on Air has about \$2.4 million of public money to provide captioning services, but only somewhere between 24 to 32 per cent of shows are captioned across the board.

## BY THE NUMBERS

There is strong evidence to show that New Zealanders need and want captioning. The National Foundation for the Deaf’s initial survey, involving 550 respondents reveals these statistics:

- 57 percent of respondents had some degree of hearing loss
- Nearly 70 percent had a close relative with hearing loss
- Close to half were aged 65+
- 100 percent of respondents who had a hearing loss used captioning when it was available
- 83 percent of the 550 respondents saw mandatory captioning as very important to extremely important.

## NFD MEETS WITH THE MINISTER OF BROADCASTING AND DIGITAL

Part of our plan has involved getting the Honourable Kris Faafoi, Minister of Broadcasting and Digital, on side with our drive for captioning. At a face-to-face meeting, NFD CEO Natasha Gallardo and Council Deputy Chair David Kent presented the Minister with the petition signed by 550 New Zealanders. The minister followed up this meeting with a written response.

## HERE IS WHAT YOUR INITIAL SUPPORT HAS ACHIEVED

In his letter, Kris Faafoi acknowledged that New Zealand needs to get better at captioning and confirms that the current Government is committed to increasing the level of captioning and audio description.

“I have directed my officials to begin consultation with groups such as yours, as well as broadcasters and on-demand providers, to inform options for improving captioning and audio description outcomes”, Kris Faafoi said.

The Minister then described what will be happening next, from the Government’s point of view.

“The next step in this process is for officials to develop advice on proposed targets and how the Government could intervene to achieve them. Legislation

requiring certain levels of captioning and audio-description is an option we will consider.”

The National Foundation for the Deaf will stay in touch with Kris Faafoi and provide him with informational support and continue our advocacy on behalf of the hard of hearing community.

## WORLD HEARING DAY: OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE CAPTIONS ON PLEASE PETITION

On World Hearing Day, March 3rd 2019, the National Foundation for the Deaf will relaunch the Captions On Please petition at Round the Bays in Auckland.

The Foundation is aiming to gather 5,000 signatures, to convey to the Government how vital this service is for many New Zealanders and will continue to keep the pressure on.

Pledge your support to the Captions On Please Campaign and sign the National Foundation for the Deaf’s online petition. ■

**If you haven’t answered our survey and signed our petition, you can do both online at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/nfdcaptions](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/nfdcaptions)**

Story by: Jo Joiner

# SILENT MARCH

*SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR PEOPLE LIKE US*

**M**ost of us either have a hearing loss or know someone who does – our parents, siblings, child, friend, colleague or ourselves. But how often do we truly think about what life is like for them when they struggle to hear everything going on around them?

**How does that affect them every day, from workplaces to social groups?**

**What are they missing out on that the rest of the population take for granted?**

This Hearing Awareness Month, you are invited to show your support for people who live with the daily challenges of hearing loss by hosting a Silent March event.

All too often, hearing loss is an invisible disability, by getting behind Silent March; you'll be doing a lot to change this.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

We want to raise awareness of what it is like to live with a hearing loss in a way that helps people understand the impact of missing out on everyday sounds and conversations and we encourage you to join us.

Whether it is a Silent March morning tea, a silent lunchtime or evening walk, silent auction or movie night with captions, creating your own fundraising event is a great way to raise awareness, while helping to raise funds for the National Foundation for the Deaf.

All funds donated through Silent March will go towards the National Foundation for the Deaf's new Youth Apprenticeship Programme for young adults with hearing loss; the Hearing Accredited Workplace Programme, that supports adults in the workplace with hearing loss; and the Aged Care Hearing Champions Programme, that supports the elderly with managing their hearing loss.

## HOW TO HOST A SILENT MARCH EVENT

Choose an activity that you and your friends or family enjoy doing, or something you do regularly, so you know you are likely to be able to attract support.

Consider doing the event without talking, or wearing headphones so you cannot hear the conversation.

**STEP 1.** Decide on your event. Is it a morning tea or an afternoon tea, a silent walk around the block or a silent auction? Where do you plan to host it? Who will you invite? Do something memorable and tangible that helps to raise awareness and encourages people to walk in the shoes of someone living with hearing loss.

**STEP 2.** Register on the National Foundation for the Deaf website, to receive your fundraising pack – this includes a donation box as well as a deposit bag for cash and cheque donations.



# SILENT MARCH BAKE OFF

## SUMMER BERRY SLICE

**STEP 3.** Promote your event – invite friends, colleagues and family, put up posters in the area. Make the most of your social or workplace networks.

**STEP 4.** Not everyone will be able to attend, but they can still help you fundraise. We have partnered with the online fundraising site Everydayhero so you can create an online fundraising page and then share the link with your friends, colleagues and family and ask them for a donation. Go to [www.nfd.org.nz/silent-march-2019](http://www.nfd.org.nz/silent-march-2019) to get started.

**STEP 5.** Host your Silent March event. Tell your guests what you are raising funds for: for example the Youth Apprenticeship Programme or the Aged Care Hearing Champions Programme. Make sure everyone leaves with better awareness of hearing loss; and knows that the National Foundation for the Deaf has tools to help.

**STEP 6.** Donate the funds you have raised to the National Foundation for the Deaf – send a cheque or transfer the funds via direct debit.

**STEP 7.** Feel great knowing you have helped to make a difference in the lives of New Zealanders of all ages living with a hearing loss. ■

*The National Foundation for the Deaf would like to thank Bay Audiology and GN Resound for their generous support.*

Story by: Hayley McLarin

### INGREDIENTS

#### BASE

- 150 g of softened butter
- ½ cup of caster sugar
- ¼ tsp of almond essence
- 1½ cups of flour
- ¼ cup of sliced almonds, toasted

#### FILLING

- 3 eggs
- ¼ cup of caster sugar
- 250 g sour cream
- 3 cups of fresh mixed berries, plus extra for garnish to serve with whipped cream or yoghurt

### DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 180C.
2. Line a 28cm x 18cm tin with baking paper.

#### FOR THE BASE:

3. Place butter, sugar and essence in a bowl.
4. Beat until light and creamy. Fold in the flour and almonds. Press evenly into the tin.
5. Place in the oven for 15 minutes until lightly browned. Remove and allow to cool.

#### FOR THE FILLING:

6. Place the eggs, half a cup of berries, sugar and sour cream in a blender. Whiz until smooth. Pour over the cooked base.
7. Evenly sprinkle the remaining 2 ½ cups of berries over.

Place back in the oven for 35 minutes, until the centre is set. Remove and leave to cool in the tin. Cut into pieces and serve with cream or yoghurt and extra berries.



# BAY AUDIOLOGY IS PROUD TO SUPPORT

## THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE DEAF IN 2019

**B**ay Audiology is New Zealand's largest hearing services provider with 115 clinics across the country.

In 2019, Bay Audiology is collaborating with the National Foundation for the Deaf on a number of initiatives as part of Hearing Awareness Month in March.

Dean Lawrie, Managing Director of Bay Audiology says, "The team at NFD do a fantastic job at helping prevent hearing loss and to support those who are hard of hearing. Their work aligns well with Bay Audiology, where our mission is to help people enjoy the experience of better hearing across New Zealand."

"In 2019 we are thrilled to be running on World Hearing Day alongside Team

NFD at the Round the Bays event to raise awareness for the importance of early detection of hearing loss."

Throughout Hearing Awareness Month, Bay Audiology will also be supporting NFD's Silent March Campaign by offering free hearing check screening days at a number of organisations, including Treescape, NZME, Competenz and Beca.

"These checks will be conducted on-site with a specialist screener and aim to get people thinking about their hearing and how this may affect their work."

Having hearing loss may have unintended impacts to productivity and safety if employees are unable to hear their environment and those they are working with.

It is important to have your hearing checked regularly, especially if you are aged over 50.

Bay Audiology offer everyone aged 18 years and over a free hearing check.

These only take 20 minutes and can help determine if you have hearing loss or not.

If you do have hearing loss, you may be recommended to have a diagnostic hearing consultation that will look at your hearing in more depth and find out what hearing solution might be right for you.

If you wish to book your free hearing check, visit [bayaudiology.co.nz](http://bayaudiology.co.nz) to find out more. ■

“IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE YOUR HEARING CHECKED REGULARLY, ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE AGED OVER 50”



Dean Lawrie, Managing Director of Bay Audiology.

# SAFE SOUND INDICATORS

## STOPPING NOISE-INDUCED HEARING LOSS IN ITS TRACKS

### SAFE SOUND INDICATORS

**A simple tool that helps to prevent hearing loss.**

Did you know that one third of all hearing loss is caused by exposure to noise?

Children with a hearing loss, even a small loss, often have problems at school and in social situations.

The Safe Sound Indicator helps to protect school pupils from noise-induced hearing loss, as well as educating children, teachers and parents about dangerous noise levels.

### WHAT IS IT?

The Safe Sound Indicator, conceived by Jamie Fenton, Young New Zealander of the Year 2011, is a tool that helps children to self-regulate their noise levels. Children and adults

can tell at a glance when the noise level is reaching 'red light' danger levels.

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Using a traffic light system to show dangerous noise levels, it registers the approximate sound levels around it. Green = 80 dB, Amber 85 dB, Red = 90 dB.

### WHERE SHOULD YOU PUT IT?

Sound reduces with distance, so it is those closest to the noise that are at most risk. By putting it in the area that can be the noisiest, you can help protect everyone's ears.

### NOISE HURTS

In 2009 the Foundation surveyed 65 early childhood centres and found that 20 percent of children, and over 30 percent of teachers, experienced

distress after continuous exposure to loud noise. Some children had even reacted by holding their hands over their ears or crying.

Keeping noise levels down also helps children who have a hearing loss, as noisy environments make listening to their teacher or their classmates challenging.

Redoubt North School Principal, Jane Milner relates, "Having worked in a school with a Deaf Satellite attached, and working with children with hearing loss, I know the value of noise control."

Redoubt North School will be using a Safe Sound Indicator in their open plan learning spaces to ensure students are more aware of harmful noise levels.

### TAKING SAFE SOUND INDICATORS TO THE NATION

Over the years, the National Foundation for the Deaf has supplied over 1500 Safe Sound Indicators to schools throughout New Zealand. With Safe Sound Indicators installed, children are increasingly aware of their precious hearing and dangerous noise levels in their classroom and in their wider community.

To find out more about Safe Sound Indicators, go to [www.nfd.org.nz](http://www.nfd.org.nz) ■



# HEARING ACCREDITED WORKPLACES

A NEW ERA OF WORK-LIFE SATISFACTION FOR PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS

“ I LOST MY HEARING AND SOMETIMES WHEN I APPLIED FOR JOBS I WAS TURNED AWAY BECAUSE I’M DEAF IN ONE EAR”

**L**aunching in April this year, the Hearing Accredited Workplace Programme aims to change attitudes to hearing loss in the workplace and make it easier for people with hearing challenges to reach their full career potential.

Created by the National Foundation for the Deaf, the programme will build awareness of hearing loss and provide support for employees who have hearing loss. It includes an accreditation checklist, educational tools, an online employer portal and support services, including counselling and rehabilitation.

The programme will also monitor changes in New Zealand workplaces through a five-year research project targeted at better understanding hearing loss in the workplace and the

economic impact to New Zealand.

Hearing loss is often referred to as an invisible disability and many people with hearing loss hide it from their employer, because they are embarrassed or worried that it might affect their career prospects.

In our recent survey (December 2018), hundreds of respondents shared their workplace experiences. Many people had similar stories to the respondent’s below:

*“I lost my hearing and sometimes when I applied for jobs I was turned away because I’m deaf in one ear. I felt discriminated against. For five months I searched for a company that understands people with hearing loss. I am now working with support of this company, which treats people equally.”*

## RESEARCH POINTS TO THE PROBLEM

The Hearing Accredited Workplace Programme draws on the Foundation’s own research as well as the latest New Zealand Trak report findings (see over page). They reveal a significant need for better support for employees with hearing loss, as well as a need for screening employees for potential hearing loss. Thanks to both of these research projects, the Hearing Accredited Workplace programme was able to be developed.

The New Zealand Trak report will be publicly available on the 5th of March, 2019. It is the first of its kind for New Zealand and includes insights into hearing loss in the workplace. See over page for Trak report insights.

**A survey conducted by the Foundation and Bay Audiology in December 2018, involving 6,068 respondents, found that:**

- More than 81% have informed their employer about their hearing loss
- 76% say their employer does not provide adequate support services

*“At meetings it’s important to request that attendees not speak over the top of each other, that they speak clearly and not hide lips behind hands. That’s all I ever ask for, and I get by when others are helpful. There are others in the team with hearing loss coming on (I can see the signs) and these helpful behaviours help us all to contribute usefully.”*

-Survey respondent



# “76% SAY THEIR EMPLOYER DOES NOT PROVIDE ADEQUATE SUPPORT”

## ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

As a Hearing Accredited Workplace, employers are entitled to:

- Initial assessment and an annual accreditation checks
- On-site hearing screening of up to 50 employees a year
- Annual workplace hearing report, tracking year-on-year changes at their workplace
- An employer online portal, providing access to health and safety guides, training and support materials, staff induction, educational tools and much more

- Ongoing support for employees with a hearing loss
- Twice-yearly meetings with NFD and support partner

## COUNTDOWN TO THE PROGRAMME LAUNCH

During Hearing Awareness Month in March, the National Foundation for the Deaf will be undertaking hearing testing at two workplaces that have signed up as foundation partners for the programme – Treescape and NZME. Our aim is to test up to 50 employees at each of these organisations and to encourage other employers to get on-board.

## HEARING CHECKS AT THE BEEHIVE

On the 5th of March, a number of government officials have been invited to have a hearing screening test to mark the launch of the New Zealand Trak Report. It is also a significant step towards acknowledging the importance of understanding the prevalence of hearing loss in New Zealand and in the workplace.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Hearing Accredited Workplace Programme has been carefully developed to ensure that valued employees with hearing loss can thrive, stay connected and be suitably supported.

If you are an employer, we invite you to join the programme, to find out more email our General Manager, Lorien Doherty: [Lorien.Doherty@nfd.org.nz](mailto:Lorien.Doherty@nfd.org.nz)

As the National Foundation for the Deaf does not receive government funding, we gratefully accept donations from our valued community. You can provide much-needed funds through our website: [www.nfd.org.nz/make-a-donation](http://www.nfd.org.nz/make-a-donation) ■

Story by: Jo Joiner

# KEEPING TRAK OF HEARING LOSS IN NZ

New Zealand Trak 2018 has just been released. The New Zealand Hearing Industry Association (NZHIA) worked with Zurich company Anovum to carry out the Trak research, and the results will be benchmarked against European and Asian countries.

Of the 16,000 people in New Zealand surveyed, 1,316 have a hearing loss, and of those 639 wear hearing aids. It showed that almost 90% of people with hearing loss think it could be linked to feelings of depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues.

“The results provide statistical evidence to back up what we know anecdotally,” says NFD Chief Executive Natasha Gallardo. “It shows the link between depression and anxiety and other mental health issues which people are also experiencing at work.” The research revealed that people put up with hearing loss for an average of two to three years before they buy hearing aids.

## OUT-TAKES FROM NEW ZEALAND TRAK 2018

- 11% of people who are working in New Zealand have a hearing loss
- 90% of people with a hearing loss experience feelings of depression, isolation or hopelessness
- 90% feel physically and mentally exhausted at the end of the day
- Hearing aid wearers have a lower risk of depression compared to non-hearing aid wearers, with comparable hearing loss
- On average three to four years pass between becoming aware of the hearing loss and the purchase of hearing aids
- 64% of all hearing aid wearers think they should have got them sooner, predominantly because of the impact hearing loss had on their social life
- 30% of hearing loss is preventable

# YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

## CREATING EMPLOYMENT PATHWAYS

**G**etting that first job after you leave school is a challenge for any young person. For those with hearing loss, finding employment may be even more challenging.

**Unemployment rates for people with hearing loss are typically around 10 - 19% higher than people who are not hard of hearing.**

For young people with hearing loss, getting through the initial interview process, or even worse, the pre-screening on the phone, can be an anxiety-inducing experience.

Not all employers are hearing loss aware, and this can make it difficult for young people to access adequate accommodations or assistance to be able to showcase their skills and knowledge to potential employers.

The National Foundation for the Deaf's Youth Apprenticeship Programme aims to alleviate these barriers by creating opportunities for young adults under

24 with a hearing loss to have the same career options as their hearing peers. Ultimately, the goal of the programme is to ensure that hearing loss does not limit a young person's career choices.

### HOW WILL IT WORK?

The Foundation will work alongside New Zealand schools and invite students with hearing loss to join the Youth Apprenticeship Programme.

The Foundation is also keen to partner with a wide range of prospective employers to ensure young people will have a broad range of opportunities.

The apprentices will be fully supported by the Foundation, including support workers who will act as mentors and as conduits between the employer and the apprentice to ensure success.

The apprenticeship programme also includes hearing-friendly training materials for both the employer and the apprentice to support better communication in the workplace.

### COLLATING THE DATA

The Youth Apprenticeship Programme includes a five-year research programme that involves regular hearing screenings at selected schools across New Zealand. This will highlight changes in hearing loss for students in Year 9 - 13 who will receive onsite hearing tests each year.

This will enable us to understand the prevalence of hearing loss for students in year 9 - 13 and use this valuable data to refine our Youth Apprenticeship Programme to ensure young people with hearing loss are not falling through the gaps.

### LAUNCHING IN 2019

The Foundation has commenced the first hearing screenings at selected schools. The programme then officially launches in August 2019 in selected areas, starting with: Northland, South Auckland, and Marlborough.

If you are an employer experiencing a talent shortage and want to know more about the opportunities the Youth Apprenticeship Programme has to offer, please contact: [Lorien.Doherty@nfd.org.nz](mailto:Lorien.Doherty@nfd.org.nz)

If you have a hearing loss and are aged under 24 and are interested in joining this programme, contact us at [enquiries@nfd.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@nfd.org.nz)

You can also make a difference in a young person's life by donating to this programme. Please visit our website: [www.nfd.org.nz/make-a-donation](http://www.nfd.org.nz/make-a-donation) or donate by following the instructions in the enclosed letter. ■

“26,000 NEW ZEALANDERS UNDER THE AGE OF 20 ARE AFFECTED BY HEARING LOSS”



# TREESCAPE GROWS OPPORTUNITIES

FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WITH HEARING LOSS

**F**or school leavers with hearing loss, finding a job can be hard work. Many employers have fears and misconceptions about job seekers who are deaf or hard of hearing.

To help young people with hearing loss that are looking for employment, the National Foundation for the Deaf has developed a Youth Apprenticeship Programme that enlists the help of socially responsible New Zealand employers.

## THE YOUTH APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME

The programme aims to create more career choices for young adults with hearing loss and provide a new pool of candidates for employers struggling with the talent shortage in New Zealand.

The initial intake of students will start their new careers in early 2020.

Research is another important element of the programme. Over the next few months, the programme team at NFD will map out a five-year research study that tracks the changes in hearing loss in our youth demographic.

## WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS

One of the first companies to commit to the new programme is Treescape®, Australasia's leading Green Asset Management specialists.

"Treescape® is very excited to partner with The National Foundation for the Deaf to support the national roll-out of this important programme," James Fletcher, CEO of Treescape says.

“**YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SIGNIFICANT HEARING LOSS CAN OFTEN CHOOSE A CAREER PATH IN THE DEAF COMMUNITY, SIMPLY BECAUSE IT'S LESS OF A STRUGGLE**”



From left to right: James Fletcher - CEO of Treescape with Steve Halfpenny and Keith Barber



*Above and below: Treescape teams at work in various locations across New Zealand.*

“We believe it presents an exceptional opportunity for Treescape® and other like-minded businesses to give back to the community by providing real-life work opportunities and support for young adults affected by hearing loss.”

Around 880,000 New Zealanders have a hearing loss, including around 26,000 people under the age of 20. Compared to people with normal hearing, people in this community face significant challenges in the job market.

This new initiative is specifically aimed at young adults with hearing loss. It will provide the necessary on-site support to ensure apprentices with hearing loss thrive and establish a meaningful and rewarding career.

The programme is being promoted at youth career days and via digital channels beginning in August this year.

“Young people with significant hearing loss can often choose a career path in the deaf community, simply because it’s less of a struggle. We want these young New Zealanders to have a broader choice in front of them that includes apprenticeships in the hearing world,” the National Foundation for the Deaf’s CEO Natasha Gallardo says. “We’re thrilled to have Treescape® as an

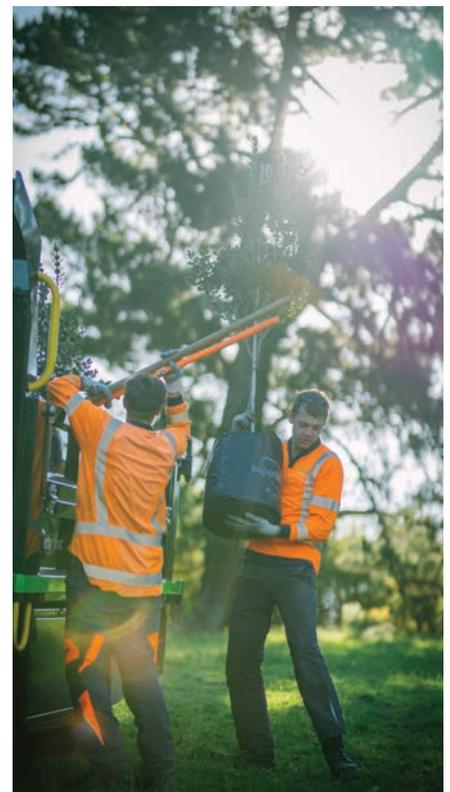
inaugural employer for the programme. Their support is helping us to gain the funding we need from charitable trusts around the country. We also hope it will inspire other employers to get on board.”

### WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

We are seeking employers to join the programme. If your business or employer has trainee or apprentice positions that could be viably filled by young people with hearing loss, please call the National Foundation for the Deaf on 09 307 2922 or 0800 867 446 or email our General Manager, [Lorien.Doherty@nfd.org.nz](mailto:Lorien.Doherty@nfd.org.nz).

We would also welcome donations to help fund the programme.

If you would like to donate, please go to [www.nfd.org.nz/make-a-donation](http://www.nfd.org.nz/make-a-donation) or donate by following the instructions in the enclosed letter. ■





# PAULA TESORIERO

## *SHIFTING HEARTS AND MINDS*

Hearing Matters spent time with Paula Tesoriero MNZM while she was interim Chief Human Rights Commissioner last year. Her work carried a significant weight of commitment and responsibility, but Paula operates at race pace to get things done.

Paula Tesoriero now works as the Disability Rights Commissioner. Her first year in the role was spent focusing on vital data gathering, setting meaningful goals and immersion in the lives of disabled New Zealanders. Work days are demanding but Paula

has enormous life experience and the passion to drive change.

Paula originally trained, then practiced, as a lawyer and has worked as a General Manager at Statistics New Zealand and the Ministry of Justice.

A previous senior public service manager, Paula has also been on several boards, including the Halberg Disability Sport Foundation, the New Zealand Artificial Limb Service, Sport Wellington and Paralympics NZ. She is also a member of the Sports Tribunal

of New Zealand.

A Paralympic gold medallist and former world champion cyclist, Paula won a gold medal in a world-record blitzing time for the women's 500 metre time trial at the 2008 Beijing Summer Paralympics.

She also won two bronzes, and her achievements and services to cycling were recognised when she was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2009 at the age of 34.

# “DISABLED PEOPLE FACE CHALLENGES IN THE PRE-EMPLOYMENT PHASE, AND PART OF THAT IS THE ABSENCE OF ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION IN OUR JOBS”

## A HOME GROWN CHAMPION

**HM: How did the young Paula Tesoriero – of Kiwi-Italian heritage – become New Zealand’s champion for people with disability?**

Paula: I grew up as a disabled young person in New Zealand. I am an amputee and had lots of surgeries on both legs and my hand. At secondary school and university, I didn’t want anything to do with disability, I thought that was the way to succeed.

I was equally as deliberate and focused on becoming an elite cyclist. To be a Paralympic athlete meant also claiming my identity as a disabled person.

Getting to know disabled people around the world helped me embrace diversity and opened my eyes to the many different challenges disabled people face.

When I retired from cycling I wanted to draw on my experience, and link it with my legal training and various management positions to make a difference to the outcomes for disabled people in New Zealand.

**HM: How have your business and sporting careers contributed to your role as Disability Rights Commissioner?**

Paula: As an athlete, you need teamwork and the ability to keep driving yourself.

I want to push for better outcomes for disabled people, and that relentless drive is helpful.

To achieve the level of change we need, across so many policy areas, the ability to work with Government and Ministers and decision-makers, is important.

The boards I have served on have improved my governance skills, and that’s critical because I am also part of the Board of the Commission. Practicing law also gives you a general advocacy skill set, a cornerstone for this role.

**HM: What have you discovered are the common obstacles to living a life of well-being in New Zealand if you live with a disability?**

Paula: A fundamental obstacle for disabled people is not having opportunities to fully participate in decisions that affect us. This leads to obstacles such as inaccessible environments and information, lack of investment, as well as obstacles in areas such as employment; education and housing.

These obstacles lead to a number of poor outcomes for disabled people.

## KEY PRIORITIES

Paula is focusing on the areas of education, employment, changing attitudes, data and supporting a stronger disability sector. She identified these as key priorities after listening to disabled people, considering United Nations observations, including those from the Committee of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) and looking at key stats and complaints to the Human Rights Commission.

**HM: Where is New Zealand at with data analysis?**

Paula: Data informs what we do and how we monitor progress. So it is important good data is collected. We are not quite there yet, but work is happening to help address this.

**HM: Do you think our generation has progressed disability issues?**

Paula: We’ve made some progress. New Zealand ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and the Optional Protocol and we have the Independent Monitoring Mechanism (IMM) to help make it real. However, we have a long way to go. We all need to hold ourselves to account for realising what is envisaged in the Convention.

# “THERE IS A LOT OF WORK NEEDED TO CHANGE ATTITUDES AND REDUCE STIGMA”

In 2017, IMM submitted a list of questions the UN CRPD Committee could ask the New Zealand Government in their next examination of New Zealand’s compliance with the UN CRPD. The questions include areas that have not been addressed in a meaningful way since the last examination in 2014.

## CHANGING ATTITUDES

**HM: Another of your key focuses is “changing attitudes.” Can you elaborate?**

Paula: To shift outcomes for disabled people we need to change peoples’ views of disability. Disabled people face barriers in a variety of ways as touched on earlier.

This is for many reasons ranging from lack of awareness or ambivalence, through to misinformation and discrimination.

Unless we change people’s understanding of human rights, as well as the value and contribution disabled people make, we won’t shift outcomes in a meaningful way.

**HM: What can organisations like The National Foundation for the Deaf do to help?**

Paula: The Foundation can help by providing platforms to think about disability and how we communicate.

I can be a far better advocate for disabled New Zealanders if people share information with me so understand the range of challenges.

My role serves disabled New Zealanders and I want to make sure they feel they have a good advocate in me. I hope for a future where we live in an inclusive society.

We have to work smartly and collaboratively with the Government and other decision-makers and organisations if we’re serious about change. ■



# THE BUDDY CARD

LAUNCHING THIS MARCH

**H**ow often have you been in a café or restaurant and found it hard to hear? Do you ever go out and people around you don't look at you when they speak, so you find it hard to understand what they're saying?

The National Foundation for the Deaf wants to provide people with a hearing loss with tools to help make their lives a little easier, so we have launched a "buddy card".

This small card will be a visual cue for people with hearing loss to illustrate their needs and provide advice in situations that can be hard to hear – such as noisy cafes and restaurants.

It will also be helpful when seeking closed-caption devices at the cinema.

It lets the person you are talking to know that you have hearing loss, so they know to be more mindful of your need to speak face-to-face.



It is a small, business card size, so it will fit in your wallet or purse. If you work in an open-plan office, you may find it helpful to enlarge a copy and have it at your workspace.

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Or call our Audiology team on: 0508 746 624

[www.phonak.co.nz](http://www.phonak.co.nz)

# OVERCOMING THE STIGMA

## LIVING WITH HEARING LOSS

“A LOT OF SOCIAL STIGMA COMES FROM PEOPLE FOCUSING ON THE NEGATIVE - WHAT PEOPLE CAN'T DO RATHER WHAT THEY CAN DO”

You finished answering the question and the expression on their face shows you've got it wrong. You ask them to repeat the question but they say it doesn't matter.

You shrug it off as just another small episode in the life for someone with a hearing loss. It wasn't intentional, they didn't mean to exclude you.

But by saying nothing, are you doing yourself a disservice?

The classical definition of stigma, says Professor **Paul Jose** of the School of Psychology at Victoria University of Wellington, is “a characteristic of yourself that you feel shameful about.”

Paul, who grew up in the United States, with hearing loss, says the key for the person with hearing loss is to focus on things you are good at and take the initiative.

“But not everybody is that confident in themselves and there are examples of people who internalise a negative self-image,” he says.

“There's a lot people in society who are ignorant about hearing loss - the reasons for it, the kinds of it, what you can do to make things better. Unfortunately people are thoughtless sometimes.”

**Jessica Lissaman**, an advisor for Life Unlimited Hearing Therapy has nearly 30 years' experience. She recommends someone who has hearing loss should look at ways they can communicate well to address any barriers.

“A lot of the social stigma relating to hearing loss comes from people focusing on the negatives – what people [with hearing loss] can't do, rather than what they can do,” she says.

Therapists focus on the positive aspects of people's communication behaviour. They emphasise these and their communication successes when working with the person to develop assertiveness and effective communication strategies.

Jessica says a person's withdrawal from communication situations may be a reaction to other people's impatience with them. Throwaway comments may also cause unintentional hurt and embarrassment and make the person with hearing loss feel they're not valued.

Wellington audiologist **Dr Richard Bishop** says people generally assume that when they talk, other people will understand them, and when they don't, it makes them uncomfortable.



*Hearing loss can often lead to feelings of isolation, but it doesn't have to.*

“Communication confidence is an important factor - learning how to make it easy for the speaker to identify and repair a miscommunication is a powerful tool to help us function socially and to maintain our chosen level of social interaction.”

“The problem is always going to be greater with casual communication - where we are multitasking. That's where communication is most likely to fail and the frustration is greatest.”

# “DISCUSSIONS NEED TO BE INCLUSIVE WHERE NOBODY IS STEPPING AROUND ON TIPTOES”



## HOW DO INDIVIDUALS COPE WITH THEIR HEARING LOSS AND ITS IMPACT ON THEIR LIVES?

The National Foundation for the Deaf's Chief Executive, **Natasha Gallardo**, was diagnosed with a hearing loss as a teenager.

“I'm not sure anyone made me feel ashamed of my hearing loss per se, it was more that there was a lack of understanding of what hearing loss actually is and what I could or couldn't hear,” she says.

“It's about awareness - there's no conversation around it. It's who I am and I embrace it,” she says. “I think full acceptance has been later in life, I'm totally fine with it now.”

For Aucklander **Kevin Mulqueen**, hearing loss became noticeable in his 20s. He had hearing aids, but seldom wore them because they weren't comfortable and didn't seem to help, so he relied on lip-reading.

“My staff were understanding. They were supportive and used to working

with me, speaking face-to-face etc. Customers were mainly face-to-face, but I also had devices fitted to my phone to make that aspect easier.

“I didn't lay down ground rules, but I would tell them [staff] that I was struggling to hear and ask them if they could face me so I could lip-read.”

His mother's hearing loss forced her to give up a teaching career in her 30s. This meant he knew he was not responsible for the loss, however it did impact his family.

“The people who have been affected significantly by my hearing loss were my wife and daughter, and that became more obvious to me after I got my cochlear implant,” he says.

Wellington accountant **Lisa Bailey** has learned to put her hearing loss in perspective.

“I don't think anyone intentionally made me feel ashamed,” she says.

Lisa, whose father also has a hearing loss, was about eight years old when her loss was detected.

“I used to get upset about it but I've always just got on with it anyway. I've become more comfortable with it in recent years.”

Lisa says a turning point in her hearing journey was having a cochlear implant while she was working in Melbourne, which boosted her confidence.

“I know it's not a big deal and probably don't care what people think anymore - most people wouldn't even care anyway. Everyone is different and I'm more comfortable in my own skin.”

For a long while, **Nikki Martin** was oblivious to her hearing loss. At school, at work and with friends she would often mishear things, feel foolish and wonder what was wrong with her.

At home, in Rotorua, while her father communicated one-on-one with Nikki, her busy mother found she had to stop what she was doing to talk face-to-face to Nikki.

“I remember being at primary school and continually getting instructions wrong - I was adamant I had heard correctly. A teacher threw my exercise book at me, as she was obviously frustrated with my lack of following instructions. I could not understand what it was I had done wrong and feeling like a nuisance because I was causing my teacher to be angry.”

But when a teacher decided Nikki needed to sit at the front of the class so she could concentrate on what was being said, her learning improved dramatically.

Nikki says she struggled in every job and lost a position at a South Island tavern because of her hearing. “I was getting food orders wrong, drink orders wrong. I was walking away from my working day feeling drained and incompetent,” she says. “It was very hard for me to accept as I am a generally outgoing and vivacious person.”

The turn-around came when Nikki, at the age of 32, moved with her husband

# “AS SOON AS YOU BECOME AWARE YOU HAVE A HEARING LOSS START GETTING HELP. THE EARLIER YOU GET HELP, THE BETTER”

and daughters to Dannevirke and met Life Unlimited hearing therapist Anne Greatbatch.

“I would have been lost if it had not been for Anne spending the time with me to educate me in communication, and deliver a plan where I understand others and [know] how I can educate them to help me hear,” she says.

“Anne has empowered me to make a difference to my day-to-day living. Without a therapist in your corner it can be a very lonely road.”

## IN THE WORKPLACE

While the workplace can be a tough environment for people with hearing loss, former long-time senior executive and news industry editor, **John Crowley** says it doesn't have to be. John has managed several employees with a hearing loss and believes it just takes communication.

“In today's environment there's an absolute requirement for the needs of people who have a hearing loss to be accommodated and included as a regular member of the team, and to achieve that is not really that difficult,” he says.

“Another requirement of management is to try to instil in the person who has a hearing problem a level of confidence that they are accepted as a member of the team and frankly are expected to operate as a member of the team in an effective way. All of that is achievable.”

John says managers may not have worked with people with a hearing loss so it's important both parties discuss what's required of management, co-workers, and the person with the hearing loss.

“One danger is for any manager or

leader to assume that they have all the answers and to impose some perceived solution, where in fact there has not been enough dialogue both with the employee who has the hearing problem, and more particularly the wider team,” he says.

“And I think if there is an openness, progress will be more immediate and certainly more effective.”

He says adjustment may take time and discussions need to be inclusive “where nobody is stepping around on tiptoes. There is an absolute need for managers to acknowledge that this is merely a part of accommodating a variety of staff in a variety of roles in a busy workplace.” ■

Story by: Chris Peters

## INSIGHTS



### PROFESSOR PAUL JOSE

- Take the initiative - plan ahead, try to orchestrate a situation so you can hear, but accept that sometimes it's beyond your control

### DR RICHARD BISHOP

- Be clear and assertive with the talker about what you did not hear or understand
- Make it easy for them to know how to repair the miscommunication



### LISA BAILEY

- You have to accept it, realise the majority of people won't judge you - everyone has their issues
- Don't avoid getting hearing aids because it makes such a difference

### KEVIN MULQUEEN

- As soon as you become aware you have a hearing loss start getting help. The earlier you get help, the better



### NIKKI MARTIN

- Get help, particularly from a hearing therapist
- Learn how to help others help you to hear
- Accept that at times there is a breakdown in our communication
- More than anything you need to believe in yourself

### JESSICA LISSAMAN

- Be assertive, especially with main communication partners - ask people not to look away or shout, and sit where you can see their face



# FOUR TYPES OF HEARING SENSITIVITY

*WE TALK TO EXPERT GRANT SEARCHFIELD*

**Sound sensitivities are hearing problems that are different to deafness. Three of them can happen to anybody at almost any age and one is related to hearing loss. All of them can make life uncomfortable**

**Is there a particular sound that annoys you to distraction? Maybe you have misophonia.**

**Are you so terrified of a particular sound that you'll go out of your way to avoid it? That's called phonophobia.**

**Do you have an over-the-top startle reflex when a loud noise happens? Could be that you have hyperacusis.**

**Or are you a hearing aid wearer who often feels like people are shouting at you? Possibly you're feeling the effects of a sound sensitivity called recruitment.**

To understand these four sound sensitivity conditions, we consulted Grant Searchfield, Associate Professor at the University of Auckland's Audiology department. Here's what he had to say:

## MISOPHONIA AND PHONOPHOBIA

**Misophonia definition:** A strong dislike of specific sounds; so strong, you want to leave the room.

**Phonophobia definition:** A fear of sound; so strong, you won't go into a room if you think that sound will occur.

There's a very strong psychological component to misophonia and phonophobia. It's induced by sound, but the reaction is one of extreme dislike.

When talking about this sensitivity, I always think of what Jane Austen wrote in *Pride and Prejudice*: "Everybody has their taste in noises as well as in other matters; and sounds are quite innocuous, or most distressing, by their sort rather than their quantity".

Breathing, chewing, yawning, lip smacking and throat clearing are noises that are often the targets of misophonia. For someone with misophonia related to eating sounds, sitting around a dinner table with lots of people chewing would cause extreme distress or irritation, making it necessary leave the room.

Misophonia can have a more global sensory response, so some people react strongly even if they just see people chewing.

Sometimes it can be helped by mimicking the action itself and this brings in this connection with other sensory information so visual and tactile response of people mimic chewing, sometimes they don't get quite the same effect.

Phonophobia is an actual fear of a specific sound and it can be very debilitating, causing people to cocoon themselves from the world.

**Treatment:** The management of

misophonia and phonophobia is similar and involves introducing people to the sounds they hate or fear in a comfortable, controlled environment. Little by little they become used to the noise; it's called systematic desensitisation.

## HYPERACUSIS

**Definition:** Loudness, discomfort to everyday sounds. Also described as a collapsed tolerance to usual environmental sound.

With hyperacusis, loud sounds are uncomfortable or even painful. Unlike misophonia, hyperacusis is less about the type of sound, it's about the level of sound. It can happen to people who have a history of ear infections – when the infections clear up, they find themselves sensitive to loud sounds.

It can also happen to people who become addicted to wearing hearing protection all the time. Hyperacusis is also common in children with autism spectrum disorder.

Some people with hyperacusis physically flinch when they hear a moderate-to-loud sound. I've even heard sufferers say it's like a hot knife being shoved into their head. And some people are physically ill when exposed to a loud sound, such as a very noisy vehicle going past in the street.

**Treatment:** People with loudness discomfort may always be a little bit more sensitive to sound, however



# AN EARLIER SWITCH TO HEARING AIDS MEANS YOU'RE LESS LIKELY TO DEVELOP COGNITIVE PROBLEMS AS YOU GET OLDER. GOOD HEARING IS IMPORTANT FOR BRAIN HEALTH”



treatment can make everyday life easier.

It's like the brain's volume control is stuck on high, so the trick with treatment is to help that volume control to become more flexible. It needs to be able to automatically adjust to every environment.

Sound therapy can be used to retrain the auditory processing part of the brain; this usually involves the use of a noise-generating device worn on the ears. A gradual increase in sounds played from soft to louder enables adaptation to loudness.

## RECRUITMENT

**Definition:** The rapid growth of perceived loudness for sounds located in the pitch region of a hearing loss.

Here's an example of recruitment: You ask someone who is hard of hearing (with or without hearing aids) a question; they don't respond. You ask a bit louder; still no response. So you ask even louder; they respond by saying

“Stop shouting at me, I can hear you fine!”.

This is what recruitment is about. There's a reduced range from soft to loud sound, because the soft sounds aren't being heard. What's more, loud sounds are exaggerated.

The theory of recruitment is that as the hair cells in the Cochlea become ineffective, they recruit their still-working neighbouring hair cells to take over the frequency they can no longer hear. These recruited hair cells have to do double duty and the brain is notified of all the frequencies they're hearing at the same time, so the sound seems twice as loud.

Recruitment can be an issue for people who have hearing loss, particularly when hearing aids are fitted. With severe recruitment, when a sound becomes loud enough to hear, it is almost too loud to be tolerated.

**Treatment:** Modern hearing aids are usually able to be adjusted to account for recruitment, although many people with very severe recruitment cannot successfully wear hearing aids.

## GRANT'S TIPS FOR GOOD HEARING

- While it's important to protect your ears from dangerous sounds, you also need to understand that exposure to sound, music and voices is something we all need for ongoing good hearing. Our brains are designed to detect and react to sound. If hearing loss goes unassisted, our ears get out of practice and lazy.
- Some people are concerned that if they start wearing hearing aids, they will become reliant on them and their brain will somehow be less-abled. The opposite is true. An earlier switch to hearing aids means you're less likely to develop cognitive problems as you get older. Good hearing is important for brain health.

If you think you have a sound sensitivity, make an appointment to see an audiologist. It's possible your problem is treatable. ■

Story by: Jo Joiner



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# THIS BABY BOOMER

## GETS A HEARING TEST

**I** started listening to Led Zeppelin when I was 12. My big brother came home on leave from the Air Force with his latest albums, all of which fell into the heavy rock category.

Overnight, I was converted from learning Beethoven on the piano to listening to the Immigrant Song at maximum volume, much to my mother's disgust.

Now that I'm pushing 60, I feel like my past listening habits are stalking me.

My first job was working at a radio station, where I was surrounded by loud music and louder people. I used to judge the quality of a live concert by how deaf I was afterwards.

And for years I literally couldn't drive without a fortissimo accompaniment of something noisy like the Joy Division, Nirvana or U2.

So it was with trepidation that I volunteered my ears for a hearing test at the University of Auckland's Hearing and Tinnitus Clinic.

Like many of my generation, I refuse to make any concessions for age. I'd like to think I'm as agile and able as ever. But when I'm at a party or in a crowded café, I can't always hear the conversation I'm involved in. I just nod and smile, like a politician at a fundraiser.

How much damage have I done to my ears over the years? Would I need hearing aids? These were the questions burning in my mind.

### WHAT HAPPENS AT A FULL HEARING TEST?

My hearing test was conducted by senior audiologist Tania Linford and audiology student Min Shin.

After answering a few questions about my hearing and general health, I'm directed to a soundproof booth, fitted with a headset and given a clicker. Simple task: click the clicker whenever I hear a tone. It's not unlike a visual field test at the optician, except with sounds. This is called the pure tone air conduction test.

Next step is a bone conduction test, that involves having a small bone conductor behind my ear. The aim of is to determine if any loss of hearing is due to the outer/middle ear or the inner ear (at the hearing organ).

Then it's time for the speech test, that means listening to a series of words one ear at a time and repeating them out loud. With each round, the words become fainter and harder to hear. This part of the regime investigates how well words are recognised.

Fourth step is the immittance test, involving tympanometry to check the mobility of my eardrums and the condition of the middle ear.

The final step is acoustic reflex testing, the only slightly uncomfortable part of the test because the tones can be quite loud.

### A PLEASING RESULT

My hearing was pronounced 'normal'. I was thrilled, however, I've never



*Hearing Matters* writer Jo Joiner

had a hearing test before, so I didn't have a baseline to put my results in perspective. It's quite possible my hearing is not as good as it used to be; hence the struggle to hear at parties and noisy restaurants.

Going forward, I'll continue to have regular checks and these can be compared to this 'virgin' test to establish how my ears are doing.

### WHY EVERYONE NEEDS A HEARING TEST

A hearing test is relevant at any age, because it establishes the all-important 'baseline' for your hearing, making it possible to monitor changes in the future.

Anybody can book a hearing test at the University of Auckland's Hearing and Tinnitus Clinic, which has a global reputation for expertise.

Charges range from free for infants and young children to \$70 for adults. Go to [www.clinics.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.clinics.auckland.ac.nz) for more information or call 09 923 9909. ■

Story by: Jo Joiner

# VALUING GOOD HEARING

## ISOBEL'S BEQUEST

**I**sobel's bequest reflects how much she values good hearing. For long-time National Foundation for the Deaf supporter Isobel Hollick, making a bequest to our organisation in her will was, in her words, "such an easy thing to do".

Rather than an exact amount, she's chosen to leave us an undisclosed percentage of her estate. Isobel is a generous person; she's mentioned other charities in her will as well.

Isobel admits she took good hearing for granted for much of her life. As a child in her home city of Glasgow, she enjoyed many wonderful holidays in the Perthshire countryside.

"I loved being able to hear the birds singing, cows mooing and sheep bleating. While I needed glasses at the age of seven, my hearing was just fine."

After training to become a nurse, Isobel

spent 11 years working in Scottish hospitals before embarking on her big OE – to Lincoln, Canterbury, in New Zealand, where her brother was living. An intended short stay turned into a longer sojourn when she accepted a job in Kaikoura as a Plunket public health nurse.

After two years Isobel returned to Scotland, but she was back a year later. I became a public health nurse in Christchurch, eventually progressing to supervision level. Without acknowledging it at the time, having good hearing was essential for my chosen career".

In her late 50s, while receiving counselling for some personal issues, Isobel was diagnosed with hearing loss. She was struggling to hear in noisy environments and group situations.

"I adjusted quite quickly to hearing aids, because I was still relatively young. My

mother had become hard-of-hearing in her elderly years and it took her a long time to get used to hearing aids."

"I knew that it was better to get aids sooner, rather than later. Even so, things were noisy at first – running water, loo flushes and cutlery I remember as being particularly loud."

As a hearing aid wearer, Isobel became aware of the work done by the National Foundation for the Deaf.

"I discovered that the Foundation doesn't receive any government funding. I found the support of the Foundation invaluable while transitioning to wearing hearing aids, so I started sending small donations. When it came time to review my will, I decided to leave the Foundation a bequest."

Isobel's life hinges on being able to hear, so she visits her audiologist regularly for check-ups and hearing aid adjustments.

"I have no children of my own, but I'm blessed to have two delightful surrogate granddaughters through my niece. My hearing aids enable me to hear these two busy little girls chattering so fast.

I'm also glad of hearing technology in the noisy time after church. I'm deeply involved in church leadership roles, so being able to hear in a group situation is important to me." ■

To find out more about leaving a bequest to the National Foundation for the Deaf, visit [www.nfd.org.nz/leave-a-bequest](http://www.nfd.org.nz/leave-a-bequest) or contact Lisa Talbot via email on: [Lisa.Talbot@nfd.org.nz](mailto:Lisa.Talbot@nfd.org.nz)



Isobel Hollick

# GIVING A LEGACY OF HOPE

## MAKING A BEQUEST TO NFD

### WHY MAKE A BEQUEST?

Making a bequest is one of the most valuable contributions that can be made to our work because it helps provide financial assurance for the future.

A gift in a Will lives beyond the donor's own lifetime, and helps ensure that all New Zealanders with hearing loss or other hearing conditions such as tinnitus or Auditory Processing Disorder (APD) will be able to enjoy a full life, long into the future.

### WHY IS THERE A NEED FOR THE NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR THE DEAF?

The Foundation was established in 1978 with the specific purpose of working towards a society in which the importance of hearing and the consequences of hearing loss are understood and acknowledged – a society that respects the rights of all people who are hard of hearing or deaf and where barriers are removed to enable full access and participation in life.

### HOW DOES THE FOUNDATION MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Today the Foundation's work focuses on three key areas:

**Advocacy:** Promoting the rights, interests and welfare of the one in six New Zealanders with hearing loss.

**Prevention:** Addressing noise-induced hearing loss, whether industrial or social, and promoting prevention of



hearing loss.

**Support:** Helping those with hearing loss to communicate effectively, to live positively and achieve to their potential.

### HOW DOES THE FOUNDATION USE BEQUEST DONATIONS?

The Foundation regards bequests as very special gifts and uses them wisely, according to bequestors wishes.

Bequests that have a specific request associated with them will be used according to the terms and wishes of the donor.

If your gift is for general purposes, it will be invested prudently to enable the Foundation to continue its work into the future.

### HOW CAN I UPDATE MY WILL TO LEAVE A GIFT TO THE FOUNDATION?

**We've made it easy to update your Will, simply request a Codicil Form from our Donor Relations Manager, Lisa Talbot. Email: [Lisa.Talbot@nfd.org.nz](mailto:Lisa.Talbot@nfd.org.nz)**

**Leaving a legacy is your decision and yours alone. We will always respect your privacy. ■**



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