



March 2019

Bowen Basin school kids 'Hear to Learn' for third year

It's a little-known fact that on average, as many as 15% of primary school children may be affected by slight or mild hearing loss – and if kids can't hear, they're not learning at their optimum. That's why Queensland-wide charity, Hear and Say is taking its Hear to Learn – School Hearing Screening program into Central Queensland schools for the third year, in partnership with the program's founding regional partner, Thiess.

Four screening trips between March and June will see primary-age students' hearing screened across 22 schools in areas including Bowen, Collinsville, Banana, Moranbah and Dysart. Six of the schools will be new to the Hear to Learn program in 2019.

Since first bringing Hear to Learn to the Bowen Basin in 2017, Hear and Say have screened the hearing of over 1,000 children across 16 schools – and most significantly, discovered 23.1% of students were found to be experiencing a hearing or ear health issue requiring follow-up from a GP, a hearing test or further monitoring by a parent.

CEO of Hear and Say, Chris McCarthy said the team were thrilled to have the continued support of its longstanding partner, Thiess to reach even more students in the Bowen Basin area for another year.

“We are incredibly proud of our 24-year partnership with Thiess, and working together on this initiative means that children with hearing issues living outside of the major cities can be identified and steps put in place to address any concerns,” said Mr. McCarthy.

Thiess supports the early screening, diagnosis and treatment of hearing issues in young school children, to improve academic performance and social interactions. Supporting Hear to Learn is one example of how Thiess' organisation-wide CARE Program delivers social benefits to its local communities.

Mr McCarthy noted that the school-based screening program was particularly vital as hearing loss can occur at any time, and children who are not hearing as well as they could in the classroom can face an enormous impact on their ability to learn.

“We often get teachers or parents saying their children are naughty or won't listen, when the truth is they can't hear. If we can pick up the hearing loss, we can work with families and use early intervention to make a difference, not matter where they live,” said Mr McCarthy.

Hearing screening provides information about a child's ability to hear sounds – it's easy, not painful and usually only takes a few minutes.

To find out more about Hear and Say visiting your area, or the other work they do to assist children with hearing loss, ear health or speech and language issues, contact a member of the team on 07 3850 2111 or visit www.hearandsay.com.au.

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About Hear and Say

Established in 1992 by Dr Dimity Dornan, Hear and Say is a Queensland-wide charity supporting children and young adults across five centres, as well as via a Telepractice program for rural and remote families. Our current programs and services include audiology, listening and spoken language therapy, school hearing screening, social skills programs, and physiotherapy and occupational therapy support. Hear and Say is also committed to clinical research and professional development.

Our aim is to support all children to hear, listen and speak so they can attend mainstream school, and fulfil their potential across all areas of life. Hear and Say combines state-of-the-art hearing technology (such as digital hearing aids and cochlear implants) with specialised listening and spoken language therapy.

Almost 100% of children who have graduated from our early intervention program in the past five years have entered mainstream schools, and are speaking at a level equivalent to their typically-hearing peers.

As a not-for-profit organisation, Hear and Say must raise over \$10,000 each year, for up to six years, to fill the funding gap for one child with hearing loss to listen and speak.