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Hear and Say leads the way with school hearing screening

Since March 2015 Hear and Say has led the way with their successful school hearing screening program 'Hear to Learn', with nearly 20,000 children having received school hearing screening across more than 200 schools by the end of the 2017 school year.

Mr Chris McCarthy, Hear and Say CEO said, the program has identified around 23% of Prep and Grade one children had hearing or ear health issues on the day of screening with up to 14% requiring further attention from a GP or an additional hearing test.

"We have taken the 'Hear to Learn' school screening program to where it is today with a combination of individual school and community support, and generous benefactors. We welcome government support on behalf of all children and families across Queensland, as the program has gained significant momentum over the last 2 years," said Mr McCarthy.

Building on its 25-year history Hear and Say continually advocates for early intervention for children with hearing loss. More than 11 years ago Hear and Say played a major role in advocating for Newborn Hearing Screening which, with the Queensland Government's ongoing commitment, has meant that babies born with hearing loss are now identified early.

"Hear and Say will support any initiative that gives babies and children the best start in life from birth and in the critical early years of their education," said Mr McCarthy.

Permanent hearing loss affects between 1 to 3 babies in a 1,000 at birth in Australia, and doubles by school age while middle ear infection affects 75% of children at some point in their childhood.

Early identification of hearing issues leads to better speech, language and learning outcomes for children. There is a well-established link between listening and literacy with the effects of hearing loss ranging from speech and language difficulties, to trouble in social situations, and an increased risk of poor academic performance. Put simply, if children can't hear, they can't learn.

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For more details and to arrange interviews contact Lois Shuttleworth, Marketing, PR and Communications Manager, Hear and Say at lois.shuttleworth@hearandsay.com.au or 0481 212 420

About Hear and Say

Established in 1992 by Dr Dimity Dornan AO, Hear and Say today provides services and programs to children, young adults and families across five centres as well as e-Auditory-Verbal Therapy and e-Audiology reaching out to rural and remote families. Hear and Say also provides the 'Hear to Learn' School Hearing Screening Program and paediatric hearing services - as a child's hearing can change over time.

Our aim is to help all children to hear, listen and speak so they can attend a regular school, have wider career choices and can more fully participate in their community. Hear and Say is committed to using clinical research to measure outcomes and its success lies in the vital role that parents/caregivers play in teaching their children to listen and speak.

As a not-for-profit Hear and Say must raise more than \$10,000 each year, for up to five years, to fill the funding gap so that one child with hearing loss can learn to listen and speak.