



For immediate release



Help deaf kids hear the sounds of bells this Christmas

This Christmas, Hear and Say is encouraging Queenslanders to 'give the gift of sound' to help support deaf kids this Christmas.

Mr Chris McCarthy, Hear and Say CEO, said there are many ways the community can get involved, from donating to our Christmas Appeal, purchasing a bell for the home or office Christmas tree, to volunteering at one of our pop up stalls in the lead up to Christmas.

[This year Hear and Say's Christmas Appeal](#) shares the story of six year old [Grace](#) who lives in North Queensland with her mum and dad. Through Grace's parents, Dan and Lucy words, this heart-warming story shares just how important even the most limited communication can make to a child and a family.

Dad, Dan Lukan said, when Grace was born, she was like any other child; her cerebral palsy came later.

"Grace lost her hearing, her sight and her teeth and she's got no head or body control. Her type of cerebral palsy means she can't communicate with the outside world. She wants to, and she can understand, but up to now she hasn't been able to communicate back," said Mr Lukan.

For parents Dan and Lucy Lukan, it was a dream come true when Grace learnt to communicate through eye gaze software and her cochlear implant. Grace is now able to interact, express herself, and over time will learn to advocate for herself.

Hear and Say has also launched a new book '[Sounds of Hope](#)', the Hear and Say Story, just in time for Christmas. Written by Madonna King, with a foreword by the 'King' and Hear and Say Vice Patron, Wally Lewis, it recounts personal recollections from the last 25 years.

From little things big things grow, and even the simple purchase of a [Christmas Bell](#) will make a difference this year. Following the success of our silver balls in 2016, this year we are selling blue and gold bells. The community is encouraged to get behind sales of bells by purchasing a 'bell kit' and to sell bells on behalf of Hear and Say in their business, social or community groups.

Hear and Say volunteers play a central role over the year but never more so than at Christmas time. Hear and Say is looking for families and friends to sign up to volunteer for the many [pop up stalls planned in the lead up to Christmas](#).

"This time of the year is also an opportunity for us to say thank you to our supporters and donors and the many people who have joined our 'Hear and Say Family' in our 25 years. for your support, and Merry Christmas from the whole team at Hear and Say," said Mr McCarthy.

Go to the Hear and Say website www.hearandsay.com.au to find out how you can help deaf kids hear the sounds of bells this Christmas.

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For more details contact Lois Shuttleworth, 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 a Telepractice programs 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 interfaces state-of-the-art hearing technology (digital hearing aids and implantable technology such as cochlear implants) with the Auditory-Verbal Therapy approach.

As a not-for-profit organisation 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. 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.