



**4 April 2018**

## **If students can't hear, they can't learn**

It is a little-known fact that on average as many as 15% of primary school children may be affected by slight or mild hearing loss which means that they are not hearing at their optimum.

A child's hearing may change over time, often without the child, parent or teacher noticing and if left unchecked the impact can be devastating. Children with a hearing loss may experience speech and language delays, educational difficulties and behavioural problems, and often require increased support at school.

Hear and say is a Queensland-wide charity supporting children and young adults across five centres since 1992. In 2015 Hear and Say piloted an evidenced-based school hearing screening program, called Hear to Learn which is conducted on-site at school. The program was a great success with strong demand from schools across South East Queensland and in 2016 was officially rolled out as a key part of Hear and Say activities.

Petra Grum, Program Manager for Hear to Learn said, to date the program has identified 23% of students on the day Hear and Say's visit experiencing a hearing or ear health issue.

"This figure includes 14% who have required further investigation from a GP or a hearing test. Thirty-eight students had a conductive hearing loss and 16 were diagnosed with a permanent hearing loss, said Ms Grum.

Hearing screening provides information about a child's ability to hear sounds - it's easy, not painful and usually only takes a few minutes. Following screening, each parent receives a summary of results and with their permission the school is provided with copies of individual and overall class results.

Ms Grum went on to say, after a huge success in 2017, screening 9,000 students across 133 schools and with increased demand from more schools, Hear and Say's school hearing screening team is expanding. We are now able to offer more hearing screening days and help more students hear to learn.

"Our aim to make our hearing screening program as affordable as possible but to meet the growing demand on our screening team, the cost to schools for Hear to Learn will increase from 1 May 2018.

"However, if schools book their school hearing screening visit before 1 May 2018, for any time in 2018, they will save \$100 per 60 students. To book or enquire about this limited offer schools can contact me on 3850 2111 or [petra.grum@hearandsay.com.au](mailto:petra.grum@hearandsay.com.au).

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For more details and to arrange interviews contact Lois Shuttleworth, Public Relations Specialist, Hear and Say at [lois.shuttleworth@hearandsay.com.au](mailto:lois.shuttleworth@hearandsay.com.au) or 0481 212 420

### **About Hear and Say**

Established in 1992 by Dr Dimity Dornan (2018 Queensland Senior Australian of the Year), 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.