



Thursday 1 February 2018

Lend us your (2,100) ears: School hearing screening launches for Caloundra kids

As students across the coast settle into classrooms for another year, Queensland children's charity, Hear and Say, is working to ensure kids are getting the best start possible when it comes to their hearing.

Hear and Say will launch its 2018 school hearing program, *Hear to Learn* at schools within the Caloundra area this month, beginning with Currimundi State School on Tuesday 6 February.

With the support of property group Stockland, *Hear to Learn* screeners will visit schools in Caloundra North, Caloundra South and the Glasshouse County areas, assessing up to 1,050 Prep-age students or 2,100 ears.

Almost 19,000 children in over 300 Queensland schools have already had their hearing screened since *Hear to Learn* began in 2015. Screening to date has found 23% of Prep and Year 1 students experiencing a hearing or ear health issue, including 14% who required further investigation from a GP or a hearing test. At end-2017, a staggering 59 students had been found with a previously undiagnosed hearing loss.

Hear and Say's Chief Executive Officer, Chris McCarthy said the *Hear to Learn* program was vital considering children's hearing could change over time, often without the child, parent or teacher noticing.

"We're very fortunate in Queensland to have all babies' hearing screened at birth – however, research suggests that up to 15% of primary school-age children may be affected by some level of hearing loss," Mr McCarthy said.

"Those figures show why it's so important that we're monitoring a child's hearing, so that they can go on to fulfil their potential in all areas of life, and not be limited by an undiagnosed hearing loss or ear health issue.

"It's a simple fact that if students can't hear, they can't learn, and through regular screening checks we're working to ensure that all students can reach their educational potential."

Hear and Say was one of 15 community groups on the Sunshine Coast named as the inaugural recipients of the Stockland Aura Community Grants program, enabling these hearing screening sessions to take place.

Adrian Allen, Aura Project Director at Stockland, commended Hear and Say on launching *Hear to Learn* in the Caloundra region, and said Stockland was proud to support a program which would clearly play an important role in the local community.

"We are delighted to be supporting Hear and Say to deliver this essential program, which will identify local Prep students and where necessary, provide that critical intervention to ensure those kids aren't being limited by a hearing issue," Mr Allen said.

Currimundi State School's Principal, Terry Janz said he strongly believed in the importance of hearing screening for students, and that the school was excited to have the Hear and Say team visit their Prep classes next month.

"For us, having the Hear and Say team in to screen our Prep children was really about wanting to take a proactive approach – why wait, and then discover later that a student's learning issue may have been resolved initially with a hearing test?" Mr Janz said.

To find out more or to book your school in for *Hear to Learn* in 2018, please contact Hear and Say on 07 3850 2111 or hearing@hearandsay.com.au.

– ENDS –



Contact Hear and Say – for further details, interviews and photo opportunities

Lois Shuttleworth – Public Relationships Specialist, Hear and Say

lois.shuttleworth@hearandsay.com.au // 0481 212 420

Contact Stockland

Monique Brown – Media Relations Manager, Stockland

monique.brown@stockland.com.au // 0438 995 791

About Hear and Say

Established in 1992 by Dr Dimity Dornan AO (2017 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.

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 learn to listen and speak. 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.