



**22 March 2018**

## Hear and Say and QCoal Foundation working together to deliver speech and language to children with hearing loss in North Queensland

Hear and Say, the leading Queensland charity supporting children with hearing loss by teaching them to listen and speak, is proud to announce a new collaboration with QCoal Foundation,

The two organisations have joined forces so that Hear and Say can continue to deliver its specialised Listening and Spoken Language Therapy services via Telepractice to North Queensland families.

Hear and Say offers its Telepractice services to families in rural and remote Queensland, and this program will be delivered from the Townsville Centre to locations from Mackay north, including in and around Innisfail, Mount Isa and parts of the Whitsundays.

QCoal Foundation Chair Christopher Wallin said this program would make a real difference to those families living in areas where specialised services were not readily available.

"Children with hearing loss in remote and rural areas experience barriers to accessing the support they need to develop their listening and spoken language to the same level as their hearing peers, and must often travel to larger cities to access these services. This may impact on education and family life and increase financial strain," Mr Wallin said.

"The Telepractice Program alleviates service delivery gaps for these families by providing Listening and Spoken Language Therapy via PC-based video-conferencing sessions to children in their own homes."

Hear and Say secured the funding for the Telepractice Program through the QCoal Foundation Community Grants program, which provides assistance to organisations across rural and remote Queensland with a focus in the areas of health, liveability and education.

"The QCoal Foundation Community Grants program aims to foster productive partnerships between QCoal Foundation and local communities and organisations that facilitate long-term, sustainable solutions to community identified needs," said Mr Wallin.

"We look forward to working in partnership with Hear and Say to make life a little easier for rural and remote families currently dealing with access issues for speech and language support."

Ten-month-old Jock Lord is one of the children supported via Hear and Say's Telepractice services from the Townsville Centre. Jock lives with his parents, Jade and Nikko Lord, on a station located almost eight hours outside of Townsville and wears hearing aids in both ears. Jock was four months old when he commenced Listening and Spoken Language Therapy lessons with Hear and Say, and his parents said they hadn't looked back since.

"Knowing that Jock – and us as parents – can receive support and guidance from Hear and Say from our remote station has given us so much relief," said Jock's mum, Jade.

"The Telepractice lessons continually educate us, and ensure that Jock will not be left behind with his speech and language development. And not only have they been so beneficial for his speech and language, but also supporting Nikko and I with how best to communicate with Jock."

Hear and Say Chief Executive Officer, Chris McCarthy said the partnership with QCoal Foundation was particularly exciting as it ensured equitable access to services for families from rural and remote Queensland like Jock's, which would go on to optimise outcomes for children's listening and speaking outcomes.



"This support means that these children will be given the best possible start when it comes to reaching their goals, and can go on to live life unlimited by their hearing loss – regardless of where in Queensland they live," Mr McCarthy said.

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### **Contact Hear and Say**

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

### **Contact QCoal Foundation**

Nicole Ireland, 0409207672

### **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 transitioned 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.

### **About QCoal Foundation**

QCoal Foundation is committed to building resilient rural and remote communities by supporting programs in the areas of health, education and liveability. QCoal Foundation develops programs in conjunction with communities across Queensland to deliver sustainable improvements over the long term.

In developing programs, the QCoal Foundation applies a social venture approach based on identifying community needs, supporting the development and trial of innovative solutions and capturing data during the trial phase to measure the effectiveness of the solution and track real community improvements over time. The trial results are then used as the basis to achieve a sustainable operating model to ensure the solution continues to deliver improvements over the long term.

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