



# Sounds Around

Deaf Children New Zealand | Tamariki Turi O Aotearoa



## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Welcome to the March 2018 Deaf Children NZ newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading about the experiences and successes that other families with deaf children have, as well as what we are trying to do for you.

While we have a new name, we are still here to offer you the same help and support as you navigate your way through the worlds of education, health and equipment with your children. We are in a constant process of updating our website - if you haven't been for a while, take a look at [deafchildren.org.nz](http://deafchildren.org.nz) See our [facebook page](#) for regular updates.

We are all parents of deaf kids, very aware of what is going on in our own lives, but it is essential that we hear from you all as well. I encourage you to [come to us](#) for support, something you believe will benefit all families, or a success you would like to celebrate. If we work together, we can move mountains.

For us as parents of deaf kids, we don't have time for things to change slowly. While we as a Committee are trying to make changes we also need to pull in you as individuals, and the regional parent groups to help us - everyone has things they are passionate about, everyone is in a specific part of their journey. So click [here](#) if there's an event we should feature in the newsletter, a problem you've come up against, and any ideas or suggestions.

- Kate Whale

## Need to reach us?

President:

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Newsletter:

[gill@deafchildren.org.nz](mailto:gill@deafchildren.org.nz)

Facebook:

[www.facebook.com/nzfdc/](http://www.facebook.com/nzfdc/)

If you did not receive this newsletter directly from DCNZ, we do not have your email address.

To update your details, please email [info@deafchildren.org.nz](mailto:info@deafchildren.org.nz)

Not a member yet? To join and receive a welcome pack, go to [www.deafchildren.org.nz/about-us/form-2](http://www.deafchildren.org.nz/about-us/form-2)

## What's in Our Name?

*The New Zealand Federation for Deaf Children is now Deaf Children NZ.*

Last year, after a lot of debate and two rounds of voting, we changed from the New Zealand Federation for Deaf Children to Deaf Children NZ (DCNZ for short) and our te reo Māori name is Tamariki Turi O Aotearoa, and in NZSL shown here.



## SOUND BITES: NEWS FROM NEAR & FAR

The changes at Kelston and Van Asch deaf education centres (DECs) are continuing apace.

The Ministry of Education has extended the limited statutory manager governance structure operating at Kelston to include Van Asch.

The education centres, which have a combined board of trustees, are now recruiting a joint chief executive officer.

In a statement, the board says it has given limited statutory manager (LSM) Terri Johnstone responsibility for managing the "change process" across the Auckland and Christchurch centres.

She will be responsible for employment, policy and procedures.

The board will resume powers in relation to curriculum, including teaching and assessment, as well as health and safety.

A second LSM will be recruited to work over Kelston and van Asch, with responsibility for finance and property management.

The board says the changes are "challenging and exciting" but will help to provide a more effective service to children.



The International Committee of Sports for the Deaf, which organises the [Deaflympics](#), has announced that it will hold the first World Deaf Youth Games in the Armenian capital of Yerevan in June 2019.

The number of babies being diagnosed with hearing loss in New Zealand since 2010 has almost quadrupled, according to a new report.

The rise in the number of children whose hearing losses have been identified before the age of one is "almost certainly" due to the introduction of newborn hearing screening, says the author.

The Deafness Notification Report shows 24 new infant cases in 2010 compared to 94 in 2016, with 190 new child notifications in 2016.

Of those 190, 62 per cent were male and female 38 per cent, compared to average annual ratios of 55:45%

The report says children in the database are more likely to live in areas of deprivation than those in the general population.

More than one third of them have unilateral losses and of those one in five are children with single-sided deafness.

# A Year of Change for The Hearing House

2018 is a year of growth and excitement for The Hearing House.



The charity has spent 20 years working with deaf and hearing impaired children who have cochlear implants and hearing aids, and currently works with 291 children from Turangi to the top of the North Island.

On January 8, 2018 the organisation welcomed 523 deaf and hearing impaired adults who have cochlear implants.

To cater for the more than 800 clients The Stichbury Bidwill Centre was built and the doors were opened to clients at the beginning of the year.

The \$8 million centre is home to The Hearing House and features therapy rooms, audiology booths, a community meeting room, a family room and a sensory integration room.

The facility enables The Hearing House to provide life-long services and support to children and adults.

Like-minded organisations SoundsSkills, the Stuttering Therapy and Research Trust and the Hearing Research Foundation are tenants in the building, ensuring that The Stichbury Bidwill Centre is a hub for hearing and spoken language organisations.

Fundraising efforts for The Stichbury Bidwill Centre saw The Hearing House raise \$6.3 million. A [Give a Little campaign](#) is working towards closing the gap and loans and bank facilities are in place. Donations towards the new centre are welcomed. For more information go to [www.hearinghouse.co.nz](http://www.hearinghouse.co.nz) or call the centre on 09 579 2333. <https://givealittle.co.nz/cause/hearinghousecentre>

## For more information:

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**El RANCHO**  
Waikanae, near Wellington

**DCNZ Family Camp & AGM**  
Friday 27 to Sunday 29 July 2018

Preparations for the 2018 DCNZ Family Camp are underway! To be added to the waiting list for camp, please email [info@deafchildren.org.nz](mailto:info@deafchildren.org.nz).

## Do you have, or know any Bay of Plenty children who are deaf or have hearing difficulties?



The Bay of Plenty Association for Deaf Children Incorporated (BOPADCI) is a local support group for deaf children and their parents and families. If you have any questions, or need help, then the BOPADCI have families and members that can assist. Funding may be available through the group which can help your children with assistive devices, tutoring, training, or awards that could make a big difference to your child's learning and self-confidence.

We meet regularly in a family friendly environment for children, parents, families and friends.

Please contact us if you would like to know more about the group or if you would like to join the BOPADCI: [bopdeafchildren@gmail.com](mailto:bopdeafchildren@gmail.com) Ph 027 737 2442 (Kirstin). Or find the Bay of Plenty Association for Deaf Children on Facebook

### Auckland Parents of Deaf Children

In Auckland, we see a high need among families in being able to access relevant information, at the right time. We delivered two parent information sessions last year, 'Understanding the System', aimed at parents looking for an introduction to services and the roles of professionals, and 'Emotional Wellbeing and Deaf Children', looking at how we can nurture and safeguard wellbeing among our kids and whanau.

We understand that youth often want to have a bit of independent space to do something new, and to develop lasting friendships with their peers. Last year, we were lucky enough to find some eager golf pros who took a group of 10 young people (ages 10 and up), out on the golf course, over six weeks. It was so great to see the kids bonding, working as a team, encouraging one another, and to see some real talents emerging too!



APODC held its biennial camp, this time at Camp Carey Park in Henderson, with Deaf Deaf world, archery, air rifles, flying fox, camp fire, and NZSL story time.

Our membership has grown significantly, with 70 families and whanau signed up as either full or associate members.

Putting some resource into a new coordinator role has freed up a bit of time and space to focus on revising an ailing Constitution! Updating this rules document was a painstaking process, but it has allowed us to review protocol, and put some valuable safeguards in place to make sure that we are as transparent as possible in the way we operate. We also established a Mission Statement to tell people who we are, and what we are about.

# TECH CORNER

## Remote Microphone technology

### Authors:



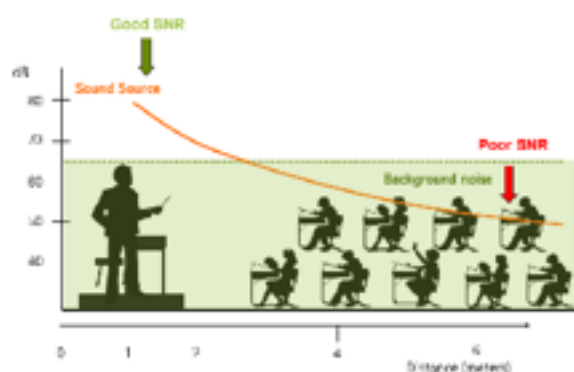
David James Crowhen – Audiology & Brand Manager, Phonak NZ



Dianne Rafter – Manager of Severe-to-profound solutions, Advanced Bionics and Phonak NZ

Remote microphone technology can be really beneficial in classrooms to make sure every child needs to hear not only the teacher, but also classmates and multimedia devices within the classroom.

Modern hearing aids and cochlear implants have sophisticated technology that automatically adjusts to a child's ever changing sound environment. They have technology (directional microphones) that can filter out some of the background noise, allowing them to focus on the speaker they are facing. This is very effective when the child is close, within around 1.5 – 2m from the speaker. But the further away a child is from a teacher, the softer the teacher's voice is when it arrives at their ears. Depending on the distance and classroom noise level, the teachers voice may be quieter than the background noise by the time it reaches the child, making it very challenging to hear. (see Fig 1 showing signal-to-noise ratio (SNR))



### How does remote microphone technology work?

The teacher/speaker of interest wears a microphone/transmitter that picks up their voice very close to source and this signal is wirelessly sent to receivers worn on the hearing aids/cochlear implants, or, in some cases, directly into the devices (see Fig 2). This makes the speakers voice (signal) stand out well above the other background noise. It's basically like

having someone talking right next to you, even though they may be up to 10-15 metres away! Some also have directional microphones, to filter out any noise that may be directly around the speaker, ensuring a clean signal is sent.

### Not all remote microphones are created equally.



You may be familiar with the term **FM systems**. FM systems use set radio frequencies to transmit the signal and have a "fixed-gain system". This means that the speaker's voice is set at the same level, regardless of how noisy the environment is. This works well in quiet or lower levels of background noise, but when it gets noisy, as it often does in classrooms, it's significantly harder to hear.

Phonak has developed **Roger**, the gold standard in remote microphone systems.

Roger technology from Phonak is different. It constantly monitors the background noise levels and, when these increase above a certain point, it adjusts its behaviour to ensure the speaker's voice level is kept above the background noise level. The Roger Touchscreen microphone will zoom in on the teachers voice when being worn around their neck, but when placed on the table during small group work, it tracks and focus on the speaker's voice, regardless of their direction.

### Other options

**Bluetooth remote microphones** are also available from most hearing aid manufacturers. For example, Phonak RemoteMic, works with a wireless streaming device (ComPilot or ComPilot Air), and provides benefits similar to fixed gain systems as mentioned above.

**Soundfield systems** can also be useful, these work to improve overall sound noise environment in the classroom and not specifically for individual children. This can help all children in the classroom.

*Do you have any tech questions we could help to answer? Or any experiences/challenges with obtaining equipment for your children? Deaf Children New Zealand is here to help. [Click here](#)*

## NZ High School Summer Camp



My son Reid Johnson was lucky enough to attend the NZ High School Summer Camp in Kapiti Coast in January this year.

The focus of this camp is to bring Deaf and HH students from around New Zealand together, for many reasons, but most importantly to engage with their peers. They will have the opportunity here to develop independence, confidence and recognition of their own identity which will contribute to their lifelong success.

He was a bit apprehensive to start with, but the closer it got to him going, he got more and more excited. And once he arrived at Tauranga airport and met the other students, he was super excited and couldn't wait to get on the plane.

The Communication we received from "Camp Dad" letting us know when he arrived, and about how he is getting on was amazing, and the positive feedback about Reid made us, his parents feel very proud.

He had an absolute blast - he did things he probably wouldn't have done six months ago, for example high ropes, water slides, getting up in front of all the other students to perform in a group. He came home still buzzing and so much more confident! He has made some amazing friends, and it didn't take them long to realise he was the group "clown"!

Reid's comments about the camp:

Memorable, learnt some NZSL, great friends, cool activities, friendly people, leaders awesome, yummy food!

Thank you so much for the opportunity for Reid to go along to the camp this year!

-Mum (Kirstin Johnson-Coombs)

For information about the 2019 camp, visit <http://nzdeafcamp.co.nz/>.

Stretch Productions is pleased to announce the launch of NZSL & Us, a series of 3 short documentaries about families who use NZSL. Check out .... to learn more about Zenos, Diamond-Eve and Jorja! These videos were made possible with the support of the NZSL Fund. The videos can be viewed on the Deaf Children NZ youtube channel or through this link: <https://youtu.be/bT4jj1sTheI>



**Ka whangaia ka tupu, ka puawai**  
**That which is nurtured blossoms and grows**

**Together, we can grow confident deaf kids  
for tomorrow's world**

CHALLENGE FOR GROWTH IN NZSL

## Would a Deaf Mentor benefit your family?

Deaf mentors can become part of your child's network of people who:

- \* Guide and inspire
- \* Know their hopes and dreams
- \* Know their quirks and talents
- \* Can talk honestly about what is going on in their lives
- \* Can offer wisdom when life is confusing
- \* Care and want the best for them

Challenge for Growth in NZSL offers this opportunity for young people to be nurtured through a NZSL mentoring programme, while respecting and supporting the rest of their whānau. It's free for a limited number of families. Get in touch by contacting [rachel@bgi.org.nz](mailto:rachel@bgi.org.nz) or [debra@bgi.org.nz](mailto:debra@bgi.org.nz) or texting 021 410 300.

## How can we help?

### Tutor Fees Assistance

DCNZ can provide assistance with private tutoring primarily for students studying towards NCEA.

### Assistive devices

Often technology makes life for deaf and hearing impaired children a little easier. DCNZ can assist with a small grant towards a device, such as cochlear implant accessories (e.g. mini-mics), vibrating alarm clocks, flashing fire alarms, cell phones, etc.

### Scholarships

The John and Betty Rose Scholarship is for post-secondary students looking to study at a Tertiary centre in New Zealand. DCNZ grants two scholarships per year of \$1,000 towards Tertiary fees.

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