



Pūrongo ā-tau
Annual Report
2024-2025

THE
HEARING
HOUSE

ABOUT THE HEARING HOUSE



The Hearing House is an Auckland-based charity that delivers a range of services and programmes to kiritaki (clients) from Cape Reinga to Taupō.

A key focus of our work is helping people who use cochlear implants to hear. Its dedicated team of audiologists, specialised therapists and support staff works with kiritaki, whānau and partners to establish a community of care that enables people to make choices about their own lives at each stage of their journey.

For a cochlear implant recipient, receiving their implant is just the beginning of their journey to access sound.

The Hearing House helps children as young as five months of age up to adults in their 90s to learn to listen and communicate with the aid of their cochlear implants.

As a charity, The Hearing House relies on government funding, fundraising and donations to provide unique services and programmes to its kiritaki, including outreach clinics and the Cochlear Implant Repair Fund, and to help cover its operating costs.



BEV HICKSON-SNOOK

We are delighted to showcase the remarkable artwork of Bev Hickson-Snook, a Hearing House kiritaki, in this year's Annual Report. Bev is a Deaf artist who uses cochlear implants to access sound. Her work has a strong focus on D/deafness and the use of New Zealand Sign Language.

Featuring bold, eye-catching colours, Bev's art embodies the minute aspects of life that can often be overlooked by others who are not deaf, but hugely important for those who are. Bev, who has had a cochlear implant for the past seven years, has worked most of her life in various roles in Deaf education and health. She took up sketching on a tablet in November 2021 when her ME/CFS (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome) was increasingly interfering with her life and wanted technology that would better assist her in connecting with hearing family members and the hearing community. Since that time, she has produced hundreds of images focusing on being deaf/Deaf in everyday life, and has published a series of art books and art zines.



Bev Hickson-Snook (Self Portrait)



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OUR VISION

People who are hard of hearing are **empowered, connected, and enriched.**

OUR VALUES

Aroha
Love and kindness

Mahitahi
Better together

Mihāro (wonder)
Future focused

Kaitiaki
Guardianship

OUR MISSION

We foster a community of support, **empowering** people who are hard of hearing, and their whānau, to explore potential and make choices on their journey.



STATEMENT OF SERVICE PERFORMANCE

Statement of group service performance for the year ended 30 June 2025

This report has been prepared in accordance with PBE FRS 48 Service Performance Reporting.

At The Hearing House, we foster a nurturing and caring environment - we strive to create a space where people who are hard of hearing are empowered, connected and enriched. We want to see our kiritaki/clients and their whānau explore their potential and make choices on their journey to lead fulfilling lives. We have developed key strategic goals to help steer and focus our mission and mapped our outcomes against these objectives to demonstrate progress.

Our outcomes reflect how we met our objectives in the most meaningful way throughout the year. In assessing our performance, we have identified the key areas and used our judgement to come up with both qualitative and quantitative areas to be measured.

In doing so, we have worked with our team, funders and our community stakeholders to help achieve these outcomes in the following ways.



Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook



NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Fostering a community

Creating a collaborative, safe; and supportive environment for our stakeholders continues to be a key focus. Over the past year, we have built on the foundations already established, expanding initiatives and programmes that promote health and wellbeing, strengthen engagement, and support active participation. These ongoing efforts have reinforced trust and collaboration, ensuring that the progress made in earlier years is sustained and extended.

Objective

Create a nurturing, culturally safe and supportive home for our community, staff, allies, partners and funders.

Progress/Outcomes

- Hosted consumer and community education sessions about hearing health and cochlear implants across the region in partnership with Cochlear Ltd and community audiologists to support better awareness of referral pathways to The Hearing House.
- Ongoing collaboration with key community members, including schools and tertiary institutions, Deaf Aotearoa, Ko Taku Reo, Advisors on Deaf Children (AoDC), Resource Teachers of the Deaf (RTDs), early intervention teachers, GPs, ENTs, ACC and the Ministry of Education.
- Implementation of a range of staged, workshop-based initiatives for our kiritaki of all ages to provide targeted opportunities for growth and empowerment, help develop essential life skills, and ensure our kiritaki can access the right environment to build confidence and strengthen connections. Examples include Bright Futures, where we work alongside kiritaki to understand their aspirations and support them during the crucial transition from childhood to adulthood. Connect and Share is a welcoming and supportive networking initiative, where kiritaki can meet up and make new contacts.
- Continuation of our team wellbeing initiative, including our Wellness Policy, access to Employee Assistance Programme, personal leave option and personal development opportunities. This continues to enhance the general health and wellbeing of our team and creates a sense of value.
- Continued our fortnightly shared lunchtime learnings, where we share kai and create a welcoming environment for team members to connect, fostering collaborative learning, encouraging and amplifying best practice, and celebrating key achievements. Sessions also provide opportunities to invite external speakers to share their knowledge and experiences with the team.
- Further development and refinement of functions within our purpose built client management system to create greater efficiencies and streamlined ease of access for both team members and kiritaki. This dedicated system tracks clinical milestones, allows us to collect and save valuable data for our clinical service, as well as data that could support other projects in the sector.
- Continuation of in-house team newsletter Kapa Kōrero and external Sound Matters newsletter to keep team members and other key stakeholders informed on key highlights, news and information, industry developments, changes which may impact them, and to celebrate team and individual achievements.



People at the heart

People are at the heart of everything we do at The Hearing House. This year, we have continued to build on the progress made previously, further expanding access to our services and strengthening connections with our communities. By enhancing the visibility and reach of what we offer, we have supported greater awareness and understanding, resulting in improved health outcomes and a more inclusive approach to care.

Objective

Co-design our services with kiritaki and whānau to ensure we understand and meet their needs.

Progress/Outcomes

- Launched the Power of Connection event at Parliament in Wellington, reflecting a more inclusive, respectful, and bicultural approach to our services and celebrating connection in all its forms. The event brought together cochlear implant users and the Deaf community, creating a space where unique perspectives and experiences were celebrated and shared.
- An expansion of popular in-house counselling and wellbeing services for clients and whānau to include a social worker contribution, available via our social worker student placement programme. A total of 164 clients engaged with our social work services in nearly 347 sessions this year, helping strengthen our ability to address the community's needs and enhance our integrated approach to care.
- Continued our multi-modal approach to care delivery, combining in-region, mobile, and remote services to reach diverse and underserved communities. Achieved a 34% increase in offsite visits this year, with a total of 1,704 visits. This includes visits with our mobile hearing clinic, aimed to deliver cochlear implant assessments directly within communities and reduce access barriers in high deprivation areas or those with limited local health services. In the past year, the van recorded 307 appointments with 150 clients in 19 different locations.
- Continuation and fostering of our partnership with Deaf Aotearoa/First Signs to provide the best possible mix of NZSL services and supports to meet the needs of our kiritaki and empower them to make their own choices. Collaboration includes: Deaf identity sessions, First Signs playgroups, Teens meet-ups and Deaf Aotearoa staff members based at The Hearing House.
- Encouragement of greater understanding of cochlear implant equipment and how it works through the introduction of tech assessment workshops to assist kiritaki with technical needs.





Equity and inclusion

We strive to achieve parity across all our priority groups and provide services that are open and accessible to all we serve. Remote care options and online services continue to be developed. Outreach is a pivotal part of our service delivery as it enables us to reach further into communities, often in some of the more under-served regions, and meet kiritaki in a space that works for them. Developing trust and understanding will lead to improved health outcomes.

Objective

Create equity of access and better outcomes for all.

Progress/Outcomes

- Waitlist for adult cochlear implants reduced by 71% over the past year, driven by increased funding which has reduced appointment waiting times.
- Public adult referrals held steady at 179 this year, a small reduction from 189. This reflects our strengthened collaboration with community audiologists, who are increasingly confident to manage more clients.
- Total number of adult referrals increased from 196 to 200, a 2% increase.
- Total referrals across all groups (children and adults, public and private) rose to 248 from 237 last year, reflecting growing awareness and demand for our services.
- Maintained high efficiency in processing referrals, completing 217 assessments in total, of which 154 were public adult assessments.
- Total of 124 kiritaki received cochlear implants this year, an increase of 17%, due to availability of increased funding and greater awareness of our services.
- Increased the number of Māori kiritaki supported by the programme by 13% on last year.
- Increased the number of Pasifika clients supported by the programme by 19% on last year.
- Increased the number of Ko Taku Reo students under our care by 29% and provided the services of our on-site mobile hearing clinic for Ko Taku Reo students at Ormiston School in South Auckland.
- Expanded mobile services to reach more remote and underserved areas. Our mobile hearing clinic saw 150 clients over 307 appointments in 19 different locations.
- Our outreach services supported 515 clients through 1,704 appointments across 64 locations. Within this, our mobile hearing clinic alone provided care to 150 clients over 307 appointments in 19 locations, bringing vital services directly to remote and underserved communities.
- Strengthening of partnerships to design culturally safe service pathways, including our ongoing work with the Painga Project where we deliver onsite screening and follow-up care, as well as supervision of audiology students.
- Continued workforce development, including more cultural competency, language learning, and regional capacity.



Te Tiriti

A key part of our strategy of honouring our obligations under Te Tiriti is the provision of more equitable health outcomes for Māori. We employ Te Whare Tapa Whā, a te ao Māori health model, when we work with kiritaki, ensuring that physical, spiritual, whānau and mental wellbeing needs are met.

Objective

Honour our obligations under Te Tiriti and be a good partner with Māori.

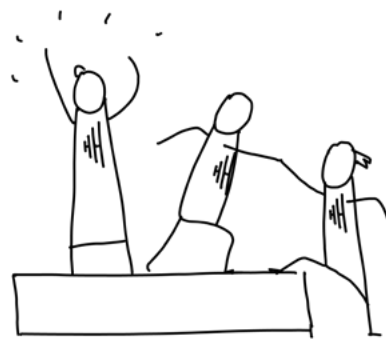
Progress/Outcomes

- Further work to incorporate te ao Māori mātauranga elements into The Hearing House strategy, including kaupapa-based professional development, foundational learning in te reo Māori and tikanga and Insights into whakapapa, whenua, and the history of Tāmaki Makaurau.
- Continued work on our clinical strategy that better serves our priority groups, including Māori, traditionally under-served by the health sector. This has included the use of translators, a more holistic service provision (based on Te Whare Tapa Whā), the introduction of Kaitautoko Kiritaki or support navigation for clients, greater education initiatives and increased networking opportunities for kiritaki and their whānau. This has led to a 13% increase in the number of Māori kiritaki supported by our programme.



Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook

Centre of Excellence



We are recognised and trusted as a leading organisation that connects, supports and empowers people with hearing needs in Aotearoa New Zealand. Through continued advances in research and training, we strengthen the quality and reach of hearing services.

Our ongoing partnership with the Master of Audiology programme at the University of Auckland provides students with valuable real-world learning opportunities, while bringing the benefits of world-class research to people with hearing difficulties — both in New Zealand and internationally.

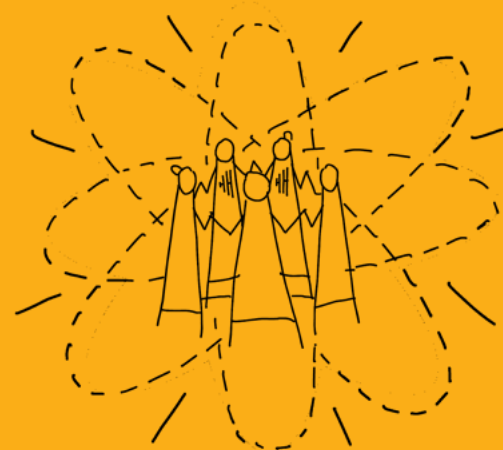
Objective

Establish The Hearing House as a recognised leader in New Zealand and overseas for clinical best practice, innovation, research and training.

Progress/Outcomes

- Deepened relationship with the University of Auckland and Massey University audiology and speech language training programmes by integrating and extending some of our clinical services with student research projects. Hosted 11 Master of Audiology students for practicum placements and supervised two research projects.
- Continued to play a leading role in congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV) on a national and international level, including awareness, education and clinical care.
- Deepened relationship with Unitec's School of Healthcare and Social Practice by hosting social work student on practicum placement.
- Ongoing presence at key industry events reinforcing thought leadership, delivering presentations at 13 local, national and international conferences, and 11 lectures.
- Continued knowledge and best practice sharing with First Voice Group, a coalition of leading cochlear implant and early intervention providers across Australasia.

- Continued engagement with international clinics to understand best practice and developments in cochlear implant service delivery.
- Continued leadership and membership of national and international professional bodies, including NZAS Executive Council.



Be Sustainable



Financial and environmental sustainability is a key part of creating a strong and resilient organisation. Throughout the year, we have implemented various initiatives around regeneration and recycling, aimed at creating greater awareness of environmental sustainability and best practice.

Objective

Create and maintain a strong and resilient organisation that is financially secure, socially and culturally grounded and protects our environment for future generations.

Progress/Outcomes

- Continuation of process for recycling materials and batteries, and repurposing equipment.
- Provided increased access to the costs of unfunded repairs via the Cochlear Implant Repair Fund, funded through donations.
- Continued use of hybrid vehicles in our car fleet.

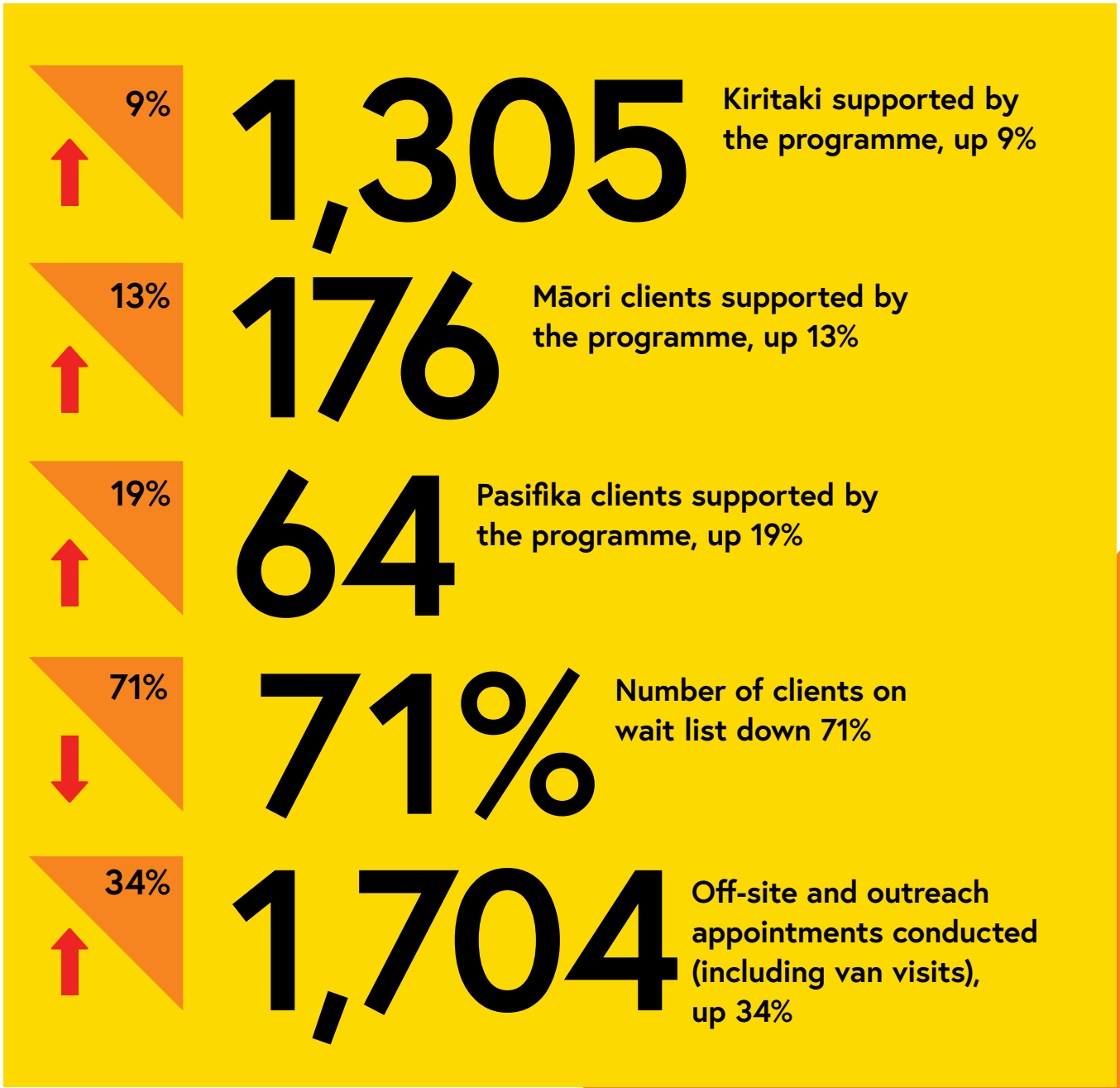
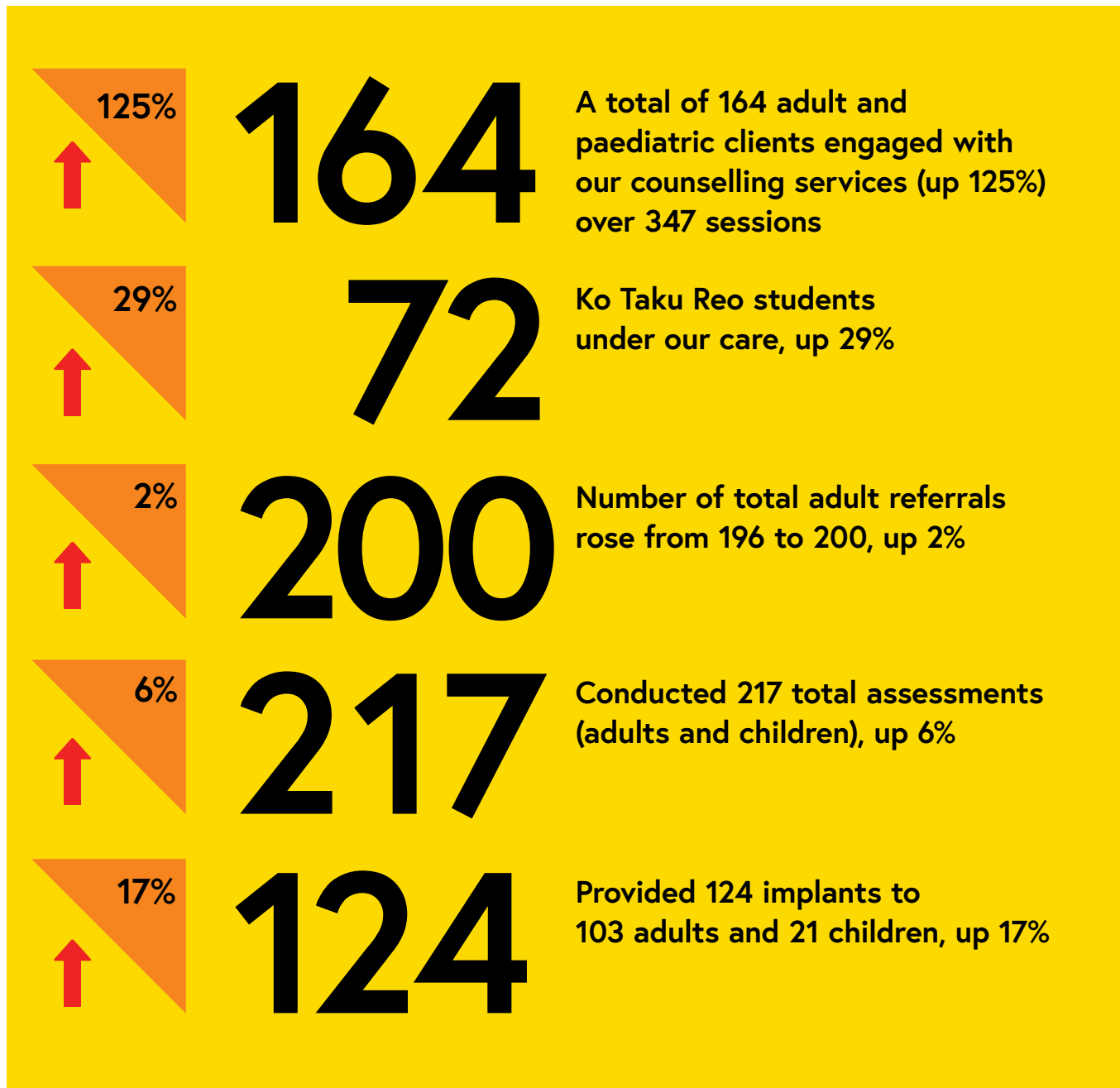
- Solar panels on the roof of The Hearing House and the mobile hearing clinic.
- Increased movement towards a paper-less office environment.



Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook

2024-2025

Our Impact



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



DAVID CAMERON-BROWN

It is a privilege to present my second Chairman's message. Reflecting on the past year, I am proud of the continued dedication of The Hearing House team as we strive to be a Centre of Excellence and uphold person-centred, best-practice cochlear implant services for our region.

Our skilled audiologists, speech-language therapists, rehabilitationists, family counsellor and support staff provide an integrated suite of services that have grown in response to the needs of our kiritaki and their whānau.

The generous support of the Cochlear Implant Foundation of New Zealand (CIFNZ), alongside our many dedicated benefactors, allows us to manage our funding and resources in a financially sustainable manner, while maintaining the level of care our kiritaki deserve.

The Government has begun gathering information ahead of new contracting arrangements for the Cochlear Implant Programme from July 2026. This process will demand considerable time and focus from our team, yet I am confident the Government will recognise the depth of our clinical expertise, the specialist infrastructure and facilities we have developed over decades, the proven systems that underpin our service delivery, the support and trust of our kiritaki and their whānau, and the governance structures that have guided the programme's long-term success.



Board members: David Cameron-Brown, Claire Green, Kirimoana Willoughby, Colin Brown & David Welch

Cochlear implants change lives, but the device alone is not enough. Positive outcomes depend on a dedicated, highly trained workforce delivering coordinated services across assessment, surgery, habilitation and lifelong support. We are fortunate to have strong partnerships with Southern Cross and the highly skilled surgeons who undertake this life-changing work. Our connection with the University of Auckland further strengthens our service through research collaboration, training and professional development, ensuring our practice aligns with emerging evidence and international standards.

We also continue to benefit from valued trans-Tasman relationships. The secondment of The Shepherd Centre's

Natasha Shallita—a certified Auditory-Verbal Therapist and Speech Pathologist with specialist expertise in listening and spoken-language therapy—has brought additional capacity to our team and enriched the support we provide to children and adults using cochlear implants.



Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook

Our commitment to equitable access remains central. Outreach clinics, home visits and our donor-funded mobile hearing clinic enable us to deliver services directly into communities across the Northern region of the motu, and we saw a 34% increase in our outreach appointments over the past year.

This year also saw the highly successful inaugural Power of Connection event at Parliament. Its significance lies not only in the strength of the national and international voices represented, but also in how it fostered greater

connection and understanding across diverse communities, including participation from the Deaf community. Our involvement in the Power of Speech event at the Australian Parliament highlighted the achievements of young people with cochlear implants and reinforced the importance of advocacy, visibility and collaboration across borders.

We are proud of the strong partnerships across our sector, including our ongoing collaboration with the Southern Cochlear Implant Programme, Hearing Therapists, Ko Taku Reo, Deaf Aotearoa and the Painga Project. Working closely with organisations that support Deaf and hard-of-hearing children and adults strengthens the wider ecosystem of care and ensures kiritaki and whānau are supported across multiple communication pathways.

These growing and significant relationships are testament to the strategic leadership of our CEO, Claire Green, who has implemented our organisation's goals and priorities with drive, compassion and deep thinking this year. We would not be where we are without her committed and passionate input.

Finally, I extend my sincere thanks to my fellow Board members for their time, expertise and commitment. Their combined clinical, lived experience, academic and business perspectives strengthen our stewardship of a programme that transforms lives.

David Cameron-Brown
Tumuaki Kaunihera | Chairman

OUR BOARD AND TRUSTEES



CHRIS MOORE
CHAIR

Chris has been chair of The Cochlear Implant Foundation of New Zealand since 2020, continuing the mahi of his late father and founder of The Hearing House, Sir Patrick Eisdell Moore (Sir Pat), an eminent New Zealand surgeon and medical researcher.

Sir Pat was a pioneer in cochlear implants and was the first person in the world to perform an eardrum transplant. Sir Pat served as a medical officer in World War II in the 28th Māori Battalion.

Chris is chair of the Large-Scale Infrastructure Governance Group, overseeing large scale public projects in Tāmaki Makaurau Auckland.



Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook

He is chair of the College of Law New Zealand and was previously president of the NZ Law Society.

Chris's career included ten years as a partner at law firm, Russell McVeagh. In 1999, he joined Meredith Connell to establish and head its commercial/commercial property practice.

He was also chair of the firm's board for a number of years. In 2013 he founded the Auckland office of Greenwood Roche, a specialist projects firm.

In 2021 he established his own consultancy firm specialising in commercial property and legal advice.

THE TRUSTEES ARE:

- Chris Moore (chair)
- Dr Ron Goodey
- Bill Patterson
- Sally Synnott
- Richard Webb
- Robert Gunn
- Dr Diane Winstanley

THE HEARING HOUSE ADVISORY BOARD

DIRECTORS



DAVID CAMERON-BROWN
CHAIR

David runs his own strategic advisory business, Cameron Brown Corporate Advisory Limited, providing independent advice on commercial strategy, capital raising and investor relations, acquisition, and divestment and merger opportunities to a wide range of public and private enterprises.

Prior to establishing Cameron Brown Corporate Advisory, David was a Partner of Goldman Sachs JBWere and Co-head of Investment Banking at Goldman Sachs JBWere New Zealand.

David has over 30 years' experience in investment banking and corporate advisory and has advised some of New Zealand's largest companies and public entities on strategy, capital raisings, NZX listing, investor relations, and asset sales and purchases. David has also held board positions on private and public companies.

David was appointed as Chair of The Hearing House Advisory Board in May 2024.



WILLA HAND

In 2019, Willa's youngest son Emerson lost his hearing as a result of illness and is now profoundly deaf aided by cochlear implants.

Willa is excited to give back to The Hearing House as a board member.

Alongside her work in the Deaf community as President of Auckland Parents of Deaf Children, Willa has extensive experience in culture and engagement, process improvement, strategy and member lifecycle, skills she's hoping to put to good use with the team.

Willa is an advocate for NZSL and Deaf Culture and credits the Cochlear and Deaf communities for embracing the provision of providing support and encouragement as she learnt to navigate both the hearing and deaf worlds and advocate for her son and others in the community.



DR COLIN BROWN

Dr. Colin Brown is a highly regarded Otolaryngologist-Head and Neck Surgeon (Ear Nose and Throat Surgeon) with a specialisation in ear surgery, hearing implants, and hearing disorders.

With over 25 years of experience as a consultant ear surgeon at Starship Children's Hospital, he has treated a diverse range of ear diseases, deformities, and deafness in children.

Additionally, Dr. Brown plays a crucial role as a senior surgeon for the Northern Regional Cochlear Implant Programme.

His expertise and dedication have earned him recognition as a peer reviewer for the International Journal of Pediatric Otolaryngology and ACC, New Zealand, and he previously served as the president of the Australian and New Zealand Society of Paediatric Otorhinolaryngology (ANZSPO).



ELENA KEITH

Since receiving her cochlear implant nearly 20 years ago, Elena Keith (Taranaki) has been an integral part of the Hearing House family. Over that time, she has run our teen support group initiative, led a mentoring programme, and project managed fundraising campaigns.

Today, Elena serves as the ANZ Marketing Lead for a global technology company and sits on the board of a branding agency. She brings a wealth of experience in governance, fundraising, programme delivery, communications, and marketing to our board.



DR DAVID WELCH
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Dr David Welch originally studied psychology and physiology, and has since developed expertise in longitudinal research, epidemiology, health promotion, and population health.

His current research interests in hearing are around the influences of sound, hearing, and hearing loss on people.

He is involved in research and service provision in adults with cochlear implants, has interests in newborn hearing screening, and is involved in research about environmental noise and the soundscape.

He is based in the Audiology Section of the School of Population Health at the University of Auckland, where he is currently involved in teaching the Master of Audiology programme, mainly in areas related to physiology, neurophysiology, psychology of hearing, hearing screening, and community intervention.



KIRIMOANA WILLOUGHBY

Kirimoana Willoughby (Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, Ngapuhi) is assistant village manager at Eastcliffe retirement village.

She joined The Hearing House Advisory Board in 2022.

Kirimoana has worked in both the private and public health sector for several years, including Counties Manukau Hospital and Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei health insurance scheme for nib NZ where she assisted many of her whānau with the scheme before moving to general practice manager at Ōrākei Health in 2020.

She has also served on the Auckland DHB board as part of its Future Directors programme.



PROFESSOR SUZANNE PURDY

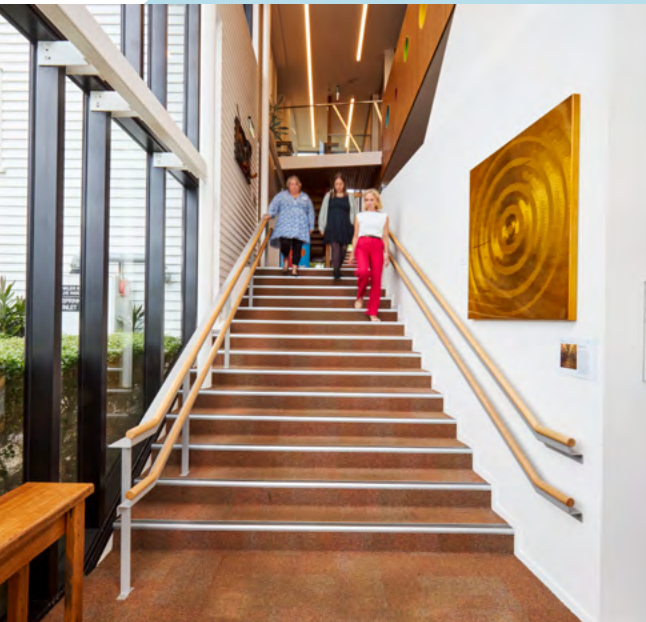
Suzanne Purdy (Te Rarawa, NgāiTakoto) is a Professor in the School of Psychology at the University of Auckland, having previously been Head of School and Head of Discipline of Speech Science within Psychology.

She has broad interests in communication and neuroscience, including auditory processing and electrophysiology, communication difficulties in children and adults and ear and hearing health equity.

She is Principal Investigator with the Centre for Brain Research and Co-Deputy Director of the Eisdell Moore Centre for Hearing and Balance Research.

She is a member of the hearing research team for the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study and is co-investigator on HRC-funded research seeking to reduce inequities in Well Child Tāmariki Ora developmental surveillance.

In 2022, Suzanne was made a Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit. She has served on The Hearing House Advisory Board since 2018.



The Hearing House

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Dr Claire Green, CEO of The Hearing House

Through our unique connected care model at The Hearing House, we continue to bring together specialist audiology, speech-language therapy, rehabilitation, whānau support and counselling services to support our kiritaki/clients. This approach empowers communication and connection at every stage of life, helping kiritaki and their whānau to participate confidently and meaningfully in all aspects of their lives.

Over the past year, we've offered workshops, playgroups, networking sessions and professional learning opportunities that build connection and capability within our communities. We've also continued to host student placements across disciplines, nurturing the next generation of professionals dedicated to inclusive hearing and communication care.

As the provider of cochlear implant services under the publicly funded programme from Cape Reinga to Taupō, we are privileged to support a growing number of New Zealanders on their hearing journeys. Our work is not only about technology, but about relationships, participation, and ensuring every person feels supported to communicate in the way that works best for them.

Community and outreach

Outreach is at the heart of who we are. Our mobile hearing clinic - an example of the enduring legacy of our founders, Sir Pat Moore and Phil Ryall - continues to take care right to the heart of where people live, learn, and work. From small towns to rural communities to the suburbs of our cities, our hearing van delivers assessments, advice, and support to kiritaki and their whānau who might otherwise face barriers to care.

Our outreach services have grown significantly over the past year, with more visits across the North Island - from the Far North to South Auckland, Tauranga and Taupō. In every visit, our team embodies whanaungatanga: meeting people where they are, building trust, and making sure no one is overlooked.

Partnerships and collaboration

Our impact is amplified through the partnerships we nurture. This year, we've strengthened our collaboration with Ko Taku Reo, Southern Cross Gillies Hospital, the First Voice Group,

the Southern Cochlear Implant Programme (SCIP), the Painga Project, and other valued sector partners - extending learning and support for tamariki, rangatahi, and their whānau.

A highlight of the year was the inaugural Power of Connection event at Parliament, hosted alongside our sector partners and supporters. It was a powerful celebration of communication in all its forms, showcasing the strength that comes from unity and leaving a lasting impression on policymakers, health leaders, and community stakeholders. It is fitting to acknowledge here the presence and collaboration of the NZSL Board at the event, and the significance of their support in the work that we do. We have a shared commitment to building a more inclusive, connected Aotearoa, particularly given NZSL celebrates its 20th anniversary as an official language of this country next year - a milestone that honours the Deaf community's identity, culture and long-fought advocacy.



Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook

Our ongoing relationship with Deaf Aotearoa reflects our shared vision for an inclusive and connected hearing and Deaf sector. Together, we've built greater understanding across communication pathways - recognising that inclusion means ensuring everyone, whether they use listening and spoken language, New Zealand Sign Language, or both, can participate fully in society.

I was honoured to attend the inaugural raising of the Deaf Flag at Parliament during the year - a deeply moving reminder that Deaf people are a vital part of the rich diversity that strengthens our country.

Research, learning and knowledge building

Our mahi continues to position The Hearing House as a leader in best practice, research and innovation. Collaborations with the University of Auckland, Massey University, Unitec and international partners are helping to grow a shared body of knowledge that benefits our kiritaki and their whānau across Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond.

We've welcomed students and professionals on placement, contributing to teaching and professional development across hearing and communication fields. This year, we were delighted to host Natasha (Tash) Shallita, senior listening and spoken language specialist from The Shepherd Centre in Sydney, on secondment as an early intervention speech-language therapist — strengthening our trans-Tasman collaboration and enriching our practice.

Our clinical director, Holly Teagle, continues to lead research into congenital Cytomegalovirus (cCMV), advancing efforts for earlier screening and intervention in New Zealand. This work has the potential to transform hearing outcomes for future generations and continues to raise awareness of this often-overlooked virus.

Funders, supporters and our people

Our achievements this year have been made possible by the generosity of our funders, donors, and community partners. From the resources that keep our mobile clinics on the road to the investments that drive innovation and growth, their support enables us to make a lasting difference.

I wish to acknowledge, with genuine gratitude, the unwavering support of the trust which supports the Hearing House, the Cochlear Implant Foundation of New Zealand (CIFNZ). Their long-standing commitment has been transformational for our programme and the people we serve. Through sustained fundraising and careful growth of capital, CIFNZ has enabled the development of our purpose-built clinical facility and the purchase of specialist equipment at Greenlane. The value of this support is profound: if the programme were required to meet commercial rental costs, this would add approximately \$800,000 per year, placing the service under significant financial pressure and, without CIFNZ's generosity, operating at a loss.

CIFNZ's dedication has been backed over many years by remarkable individuals, including our former patron the late Phil Ryall and Sir Patrick Esidell Moore — whose quiet, steadfast advocacy has been given without remuneration or fanfare. We are proud to be part of an organisation in which supporters consistently place the programme and its outcomes ahead of personal interests, and we recognise CIFNZ as an essential pillar of the Hearing House's sustainability and success.

I remain deeply proud of our dedicated and passionate team here at The Hearing House. Their expertise, compassion, and commitment ensure deep and lasting connections with our kiritaki and their whānau, and I'm constantly reminded of how their work has helped change people's lives. Their dedication

makes The Hearing House a place where excellence, care, and connection thrive - where whānau feel seen and supported.

Over the course of the year, our advisory board and trustees have offered invaluable support, guidance, and encouragement. I want to particularly acknowledge our board chair, David Cameron-Brown. His understanding of our kaupapa and his strategic thinking continue to guide us with clarity and purpose.

It is a privilege to represent The Hearing House, knowing that I do so on behalf of our remarkable team, our board, our trustees, our kiritaki and their whānau, and in honour of the whakapapa that grounds and guides us. Together, we continue to build something enduring — a community of understanding, inclusion, and shared purpose.



Claire Green with kiritaki at The Hearing House

Looking ahead

The Hearing House has always been about connection — bringing people, families, and communities together through understanding, communication, and care. The past year has shown what's possible when we work alongside others — from government and sector partners to our funders and supporters — to create a more inclusive Aotearoa New Zealand.

As we look ahead, we remain focused on inclusion, education, outreach, and advocacy — strengthening our relationships, expanding our reach, and promoting awareness of hearing health and communication across the country. We also welcome the recent Request for Information and Request for Tender processes as valuable opportunities to reflect, share our expertise and help shape the future of hearing services in this country.

Thank you to all our supporters for your trust, generosity and partnership. We look forward to taking The Hearing House to new levels next year.

Claire Green

Dr Claire Green
Tumuaki | Chief Executive

A NEW APPROACH: THE POWER OF CONNECTION

Drawing on our previous experience with the Power of Speech and the valuable feedback from the Deaf community in Aotearoa, this year we developed a new and uniquely New Zealand event - the Power of Connection, held for the first time in the New Zealand Parliament in June.

Supported by Cochlear Ltd and co-hosted by Greg Fleming, MP for Maungakiekie, the transformative and inclusive event brought together cochlear implant recipients, Deaf leaders, whānau, sector professionals, and policymakers in a space of mutual respect, dialogue, and shared purpose.



Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook

Key features of the event included:

- Deaf leadership was central: Speakers included Catherine Greenwood, Chair of the New Zealand Sign Language Board, and Natasha Cloete, Manager of Children and Youth at Deaf Aotearoa (First Signs).
- Cochlear implant users from First Voice member organisations shared their stories, demonstrating that spoken language and Deaf identity can co-exist and complement one another.
- The event modelled genuine partnership and inclusivity, moving beyond binary narratives of "sign versus speech" to one focused on whānau choice, access, identity, and connection.

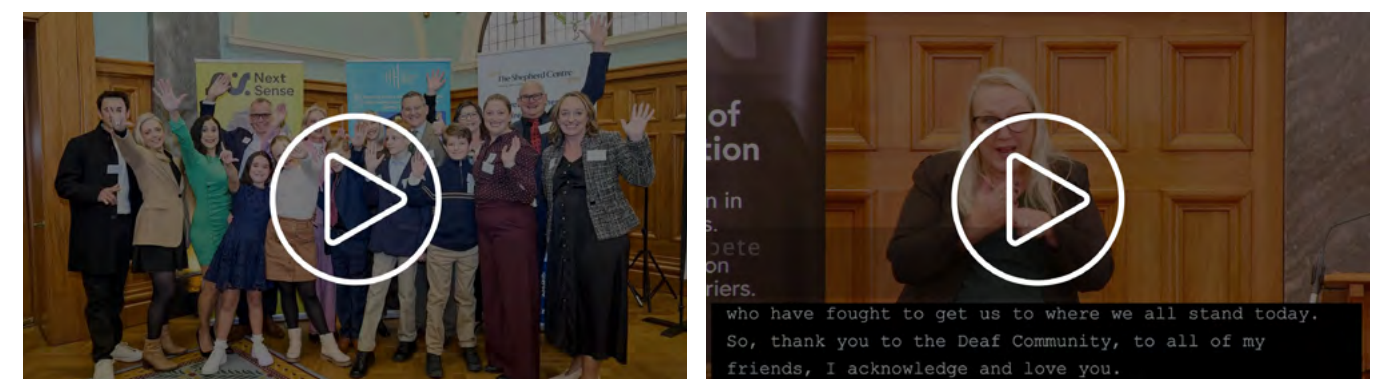
The Power of Connection event was not just a symbolic shift; it reflected our organisational values and the evolving reality of hearing health in Aotearoa. It also signalled our commitment to listening, adapting, and co-designing with the communities we serve.

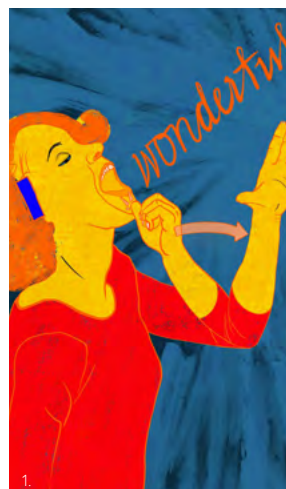
By combining the advocacy strengths of First Voice with the inclusive, bicultural approach we have developed in partnership with Deaf Aotearoa and other stakeholders, we are helping to shape a future where every child, every whānau, and every language journey is respected and supported.

Power of Connection
Connection in all forms. Connection without barriers.

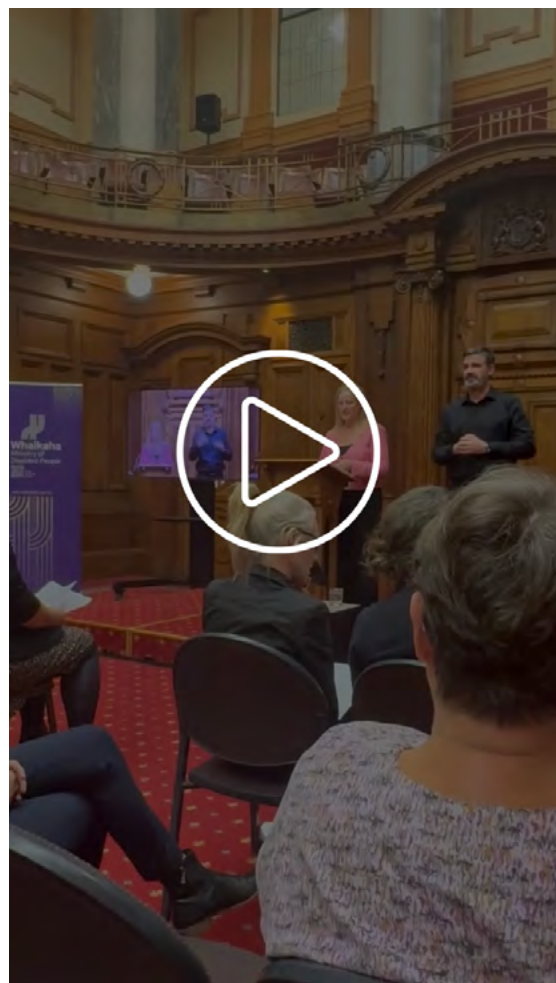
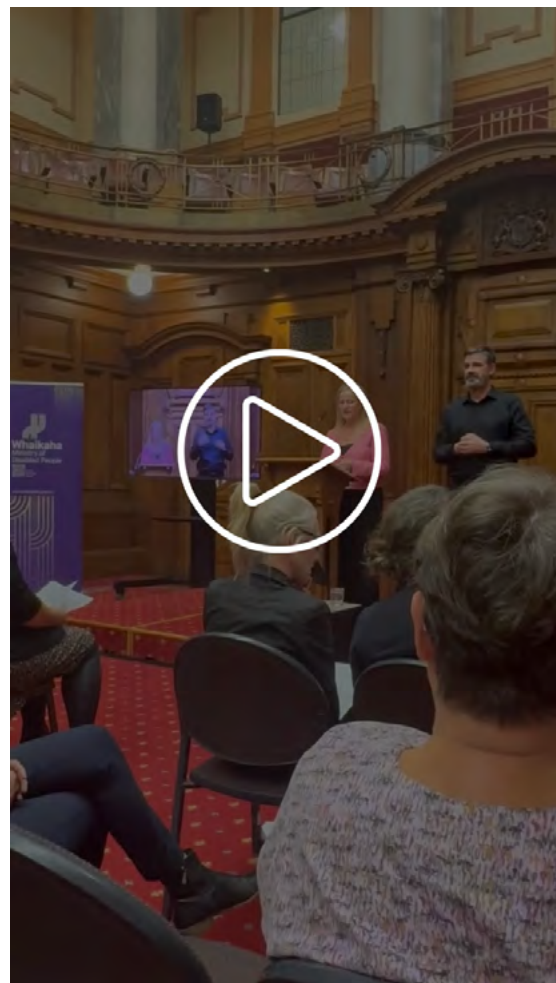


Our Power of Connection event at Parliament





1. Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook
 2. Hon Louise Upston, Minister for Disability Issues, with The Hearing House CEO Claire Green
 3. L to R: NZSL Board member Kim Robinson, Catherine Greenwood (Board Chair), The Hearing House CEO Claire Green, NZSL Board members Joanne Becker, Jaime Brown, and Sarah Mason at the launch of the new NZSL strategy.



"EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE, EVERY DAY"

As the key provider for the Northern Cochlear Implant Programme, The Hearing House is committed to partnering with stakeholders, supporting the strategy, and empowering our kiritaki to make informed choices about their communication pathways – including NZSL, spoken language, or both.

This was reflected in the NZSL Board's 10-year strategy, titled *New Zealand Sign Language – everyone, everywhere, every day*, launched at Parliament by the Minister for Disability Issues, Hon Louise Upston. The strategy aims to increase NZSL's visibility and integration into daily life for all New Zealanders and specifically references people with cochlear implants who may want to develop fluency in NZSL and their Deaf identity. The refreshed strategy highlights 2026 as a pivotal moment for renewed visibility and strengthened partnerships as NZSL celebrates its 20th year as an official language in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Looking ahead to this milestone year, we recognise both the progress made and the mahi still required to realise the vision of a truly inclusive Aotearoa. In 2026 and beyond, we remain committed to ensuring that NZSL, Deaf identity, technology and community aspirations sit alongside each other — supporting every person to flourish in the communication pathway that is right for them.



Team members at The Hearing House

CONNECTIONS WITH OUR COMMUNITIES

At The Hearing House, we take a multi-modal approach to care delivery, combining in-region, mobile, and remote services to reach diverse and underserved communities.

In 2024, we launched our mobile hearing clinic to deliver cochlear implant assessments directly within communities. This initiative is a deliberate response to the reality that some individuals are not engaging with the programme, not due to a lack of need, but due to access barriers.

For many, travelling to The Hearing House for a full-day assessment poses a significant challenge. By bringing services closer to where people live, we are actively working to remove those barriers and ensure more equitable access to cochlear implant care.

The mobile hearing clinic means we can also complete cochlear implant reviews, and follow-up care directly to high-need communities. This service has significantly improved access in areas with high deprivation or limited local health services. It complements our regular outreach to Northland, Waikato, Bay of Plenty, Rotorua, and South and West Auckland, where we provide joint audiology and speech-language therapy appointments, as well as home, school, preschool, and hospital visits.

We also maintain a permanent regional presence, including a Speech-Language Therapist based in the Bay of Plenty and weekly clinics in Hamilton, supporting relationship-building and continuity of care.

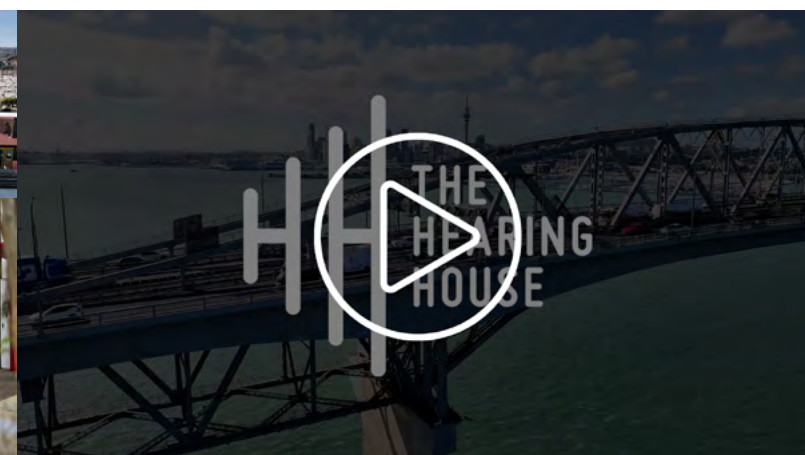
Our remote and online care tools—such as tele-audiology and remote mapping—support kiritaki who cannot or do not have the means to travel, improving the frequency and flexibility of rehabilitation and support.

The Hearing House Van Outreach

Over the past year, our mobile hearing clinic:



*including remote and rural areas such as Kaitia, Kerikeri, Whangārei and Taupō



CONNECTIONS WITH OUR KIRITAKI

FROM THE HEARING HOUSE TO THE COURTROOM: ALISON'S JOURNEY

This year marked a truly special milestone for Alison Winstanley and her family — her admission as a barrister and solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand. This means Alison is now a qualified lawyer, authorised to represent clients and provide legal advice, a remarkable achievement and the culmination of years of dedication, study, and support. Alison also holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) and a Bachelor of Laws (LLB), further showcasing her drive and expertise.

Alison is a cochlear implant user and has had a lifelong connection with The Hearing House, where she received vital services including audiology, and specialist listening and spoken-language support.

One of her treasured photos shows Alison as a toddler at a Hearing House event, where she met Sir Patrick (Pat) Eisdell Moore, the pioneering ENT surgeon who founded The Hearing House. Sir Pat was a medical innovator performing the world's first eardrum transplant, introducing microsurgery in ear operations, and championing cochlear implants in New Zealand. His vision was to create lifelong, holistic support for children and adults who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Alison's mum, Di, remembers that first meeting vividly — Sir Pat gently engaging with her young daughter, a touching encounter where his decades of medical wisdom met the story of a child just beginning hers.

Reflecting on her daughter's journey, Di says, "What she has achieved is due to the skill, passion, diligence, and support she received from The Hearing House. There isn't a day that goes by when I don't think about those early foundations that allowed her to fulfil her potential."

Alison was the MC at our inaugural Power of Connection event held at Parliament earlier this year.

Her story is a powerful reminder of how the specialist care and lifelong support from The Hearing House can empower people and transform lives. Her success shows the enduring impact of early intervention, expert care, and unwavering belief — from those first sounds to a confident voice in the courtroom.



Alison Winstanley - now officially a barrister and solicitor of the High Court of New Zealand

LIAM LEPPARD'S JOURNEY TO REPRESENT NEW ZEALAND IN DEAF BASKETBALL

At just 18 years old, Te Awamutu College student Liam Leppard stands tall at 6'3" — both in stature and determination. His recent selection to play for the New Zealand Black Thunders and represent his country at the Deaf Basketball Championships marks a significant milestone in his sporting journey, one that blends perseverance, family support and the empowering impact of accessibility in sport.

Liam's path to the national stage hasn't been charted. Like many young athletes, his love for basketball began in primary school, playing Miniball in Years 5 and 6. However, he took a break from the sport before rediscovering his passion later in high school.

"I picked basketball back up again in Year 11 and played throughout the rest of my high school years," Liam says. "I got interested through my dad — he used to tell me stories about how he played basketball when he was at school. That really inspired me to give it another go."

What started as a family connection soon grew into something much bigger. Liam's dedication and talent eventually caught the attention of national selectors, earning him a place on the Black Thunders — New Zealand's national Deaf basketball team.

Born profoundly deaf, Liam received his cochlear implant at just two years old, giving him access to sound from a very young age. He has been supported by The Hearing House since that time, either travelling to Auckland with his mother for appointments, or receiving specialised care through The Hearing House's outreach service.

"My transition to having a cochlear implant was a smooth one," he recalls. "I went through a couple of speech therapy sessions to get my speech back, and they've helped me in sports and life in general. It made me feel like I was one of the team — in basketball, football, and even lacrosse."



Liam Leppard in action for New Zealand.
Photo credit to Deaf International Basketball Federation 2024

That sense of belonging has been a cornerstone of Liam's success. Over the years, he has excelled across multiple sports, demonstrating versatility and commitment. In 2019, he travelled to Sweden to compete in the Gothia Cup — one of the world's largest youth football tournaments. He also found success in lacrosse, playing for the first four years of high school, where he won two Waikato competitions and a national title in 2022.

But basketball holds a special place in his heart.

"The thing I love most about basketball is that I can treat it like therapy," he says. "Whether it's in competitions or casual scrimmages, it helps me focus, stay grounded, and enjoy the moment."

CONNECTIONS THROUGH OUR CARE

In December last year, Liam travelled to Washington, D.C., to play his first few games with the Black Thunders at the 3x3 Deaf World Cup — his first taste of international competition.

"It was an incredible experience," Liam reflects. "Playing against other Deaf athletes from around the world showed me how much talent and teamwork there is in the global Deaf sporting community."

The next major challenge lies ahead: the World Deaf Basketball 3x3 Cup, which will be hosted in Auckland next September. It's a rare opportunity for New Zealand's Deaf athletes to compete in front of a home crowd.

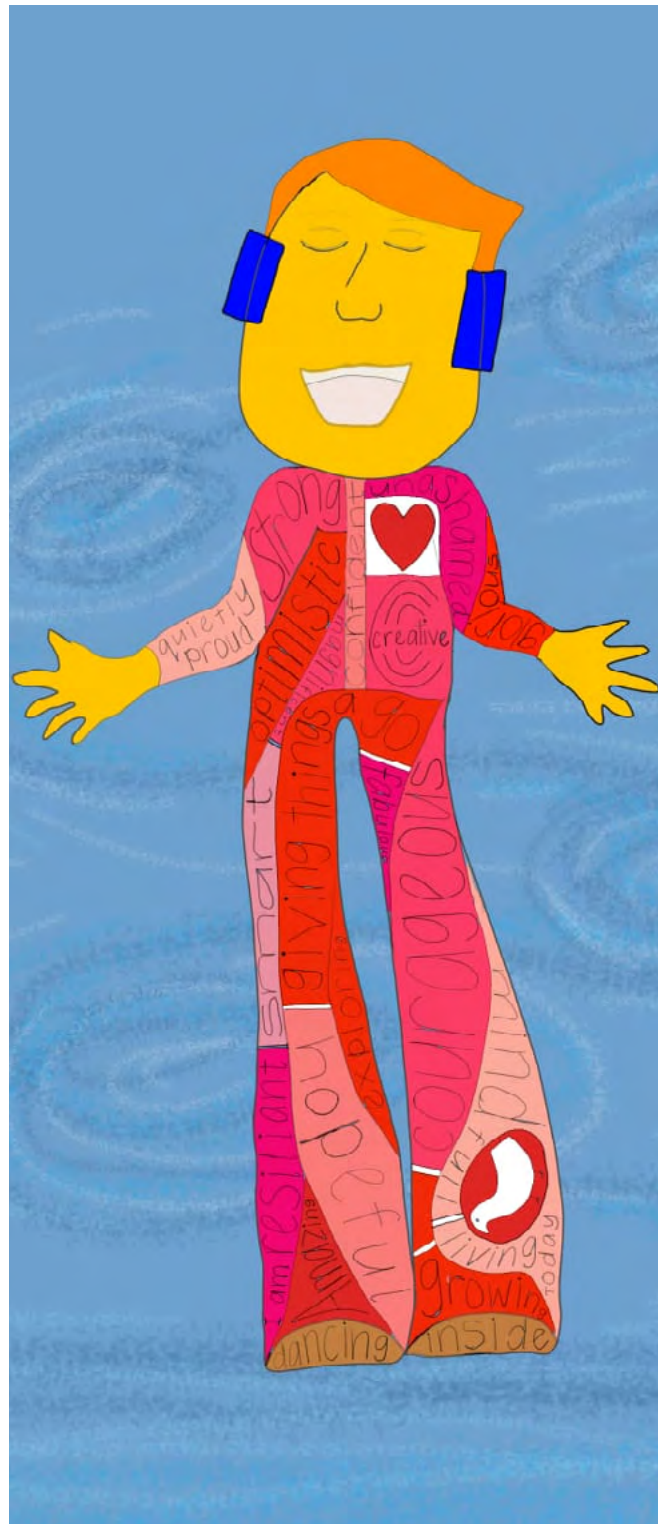
BUILDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN WORLDS

For Chris Sinclair, President of Deaf Sports New Zealand, Liam's success represents much more than an individual achievement — it's part of a broader movement to make Deaf sport more inclusive and visible.

"Deaf Sports New Zealand has been working hard to shift the long-held perception of Deaf sport," says Chris. "Historically, people have assumed that to participate, you must be Deaf and a fluent signer — but that isn't the case. Eligibility is based solely on hearing loss."

Chris explains that Deaf sport is about creating opportunities — not barriers. "If someone is passionate about sport and has bilateral cochlear implants, there's a strong chance they already meet the criteria," he says. "Deaf sport is about opening doors — giving Deaf and hard-of-hearing athletes opportunities to compete locally, nationally, and internationally."

Liam, Chris adds, embodies that mission. "He's a fantastic example of what Deaf sport can be — inclusive, empowering, and full of potential. He helps shine a spotlight on accessibility and shows that Deaf sport isn't just for NZSL users, but for anyone who is Deaf or hard of hearing."



Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook

FAMILY CENTRED CARE AT THE HEARING HOUSE

At The Hearing House, our commitment to early intervention and support is at the core of our philosophy, ensuring we provide comprehensive, family-centred care for tamariki and their whānau. Our connected care model integrates key services, including specialist audiology, speech-language therapy, and rehabilitation, all of which are vital in helping our clients live their best lives.

Our Connect & Share sessions, aimed at bringing our

adult clients together to share experiences, meet new people and make lasting connections, have proved very popular this year.

Many of the parents of our younger clients feel lost when their child first receives their hearing diagnosis. Our regular playgroups and whānau meet-ups provide a lifeline to many, offering support, shared experiences, practical help and a safe environment.



Kiritaki at The Hearing House

CONNECT & SHARE SESSIONS

A WELCOME LIFELINE FOR MAIVA

Seventy-eight-year-old Maiva Keatley, who lives in Huntly with her husband Dennis and Holly, their poodle/bichon cross, first noticed a change in her hearing following chemotherapy in her 30's.

She says it started gradually, and she found herself asking people to repeat things more often, especially in noisy places. In her role as a healthcare assistant, she says she was no longer able to hear blood pressure monitors and eventually had to retire from her job.

"I used to think others were just mumbling," she says, "but over time I realised it was my hearing that was changing.

"Initially, I managed with lip reading as much as possible and then hearing aids, but as my hearing continued to change over time, conversations - even with family - became increasingly difficult.

"I love being around people and staying active, so losing that ability to communicate easily was really hard, and I felt very isolated a lot of the time," she says.

"It was easier to withdraw than to misunderstand the conversations around me."

The great-grandmother is a self-confessed active relaxer, enjoying gardening, scrapbooking, reading and spending time with family.

She attended a recent Connect and Share session at The Hearing House, which provides regular opportunities for cochlear implant users and their whānau to come together, share experiences, learn from one another, and meet others in the community. The sessions are hosted by The Hearing House's dedicated whānau support counsellor Hazel Benson-Dawe and audiologists Nick Jones and Nathan Lowe.

Maiva had her cochlear implant surgery in June 2025, and she says it's been a life-changing experience.

"While the journey hasn't been without its ups and downs, I'm pleased to say my hearing has improved significantly over time," she says. "Adjusting to the new sounds and sensations has taken patience, but the progress has been incredibly rewarding."

"One of the highlights of this journey has been the opportunity to connect with others who are going through similar experiences.

"The Connect and Share session hosted by The Hearing House was a fantastic way to share both the challenges and the successes - it made me feel supported and inspired.

"Hearing other people's stories reminded me that I'm not alone, and gave me hope during the tougher moments.

"I'm still a bit nervous about having conversations on my mobile phone, but I'm working on building my confidence. My goal is to have a proper phone chat with my sister in New Plymouth - we haven't spoken in over three years, and I'm really looking forward to reconnecting with her in that way.

"I can also now hear my little dog Holly barking when she's patrolling the property! Despite her size, she's a great guard dog.

"It's been a real joy being able to hear my family's voices again - for a long time I hadn't been able to have a proper conversation, either in person or by phone, with my children or grandchildren. That was what I found most upsetting.

"We celebrated my birthday at a restaurant recently and I was able to follow most of the conversation - even when they were all talking over each other - as they do, often!"



Our kiritaki at Connect & Share events

"THE BIGGEST PROBLEM IS ATTITUDE - AND I HAD A BAD ONE."

Seventy-eight-year-old Lyn Thomson received his cochlear implant last November, but he wasn't happy at first.

"I got my cochlear implant, but at first I didn't want it," says Tirau-based Lyn. "I didn't want it and I wanted to take it out until I came to The Hearing House and met the whānau support counsellor, Hazel.

"She was amazing – she helped me hugely. That was a real turning point for me."

Lyn, who's a keen dancer, says his hearing first started to deteriorate around 20 years ago. He relied on hearing aids and lip reading to communicate, but he says there was still a steady change over time in his ability to hear.

"When I was out dancing and I could no longer hear the music, I had to feel the beat through the floor," he says.

"I got my cochlear implant because hearing aids no longer helped me with my hearing. I didn't resist as I would have tried anything to be able to hear what was happening around me."

But Lyn says it wasn't an easy transition. He says he initially couldn't access any sound and it wasn't until nine months later that he had any significant hearing.

"If I'd understood was going to take so long to reach this point, I wouldn't have been so frustrated," he says.

"The biggest problem is with attitude," says Lyn, "and I had a bad attitude. Once I'd got over that, and accepted that I was going to have to learn a whole new way of hearing, I was much better."

Lyn says that The Hearing House's Connect and Share events, run by whānau support counsellor Hazel Benson-Dawe, have been a lifeline.

"It's good to hear other people's problems and to know we share something," he says.



Lyn Thomson at a Connect & Share event

"But initially I found it hard to cope with too many people together. It was also the first time that I was able to speak about my deafness to somebody else who was in the same boat.

"The best thing about meeting people in a similar situation is that it made me feel not so alone – I'd never met anyone else who was deaf when I was out dancing, and I always felt I had to do this whole thing on my own.

"Now it's good to be able to share and know that other people are going through what I am."

Lyn is now semi-retired and works part-time for an agricultural contracting business in Tirau mowing lawns, gardening and painting. Along with his wife Val, he enjoys family time with their two sons and two grandchildren.

"My advice for anyone considering a cochlear implant would be to go for it.

"It makes a big difference to the way you live your life. Today, I couldn't be happier."

BABY LOUIS' HEARING JOURNEY: FINDING CONNECTION AND HOPE AT THE HEARING HOUSE

When Louis Smith was born four months ago, his parents, Nicole and Josh, were filled with all the joy and wonder that comes with meeting your first child.

What they didn't expect, however, was that their first experience of parenthood would also become their first encounter with hearing differences.

Louis' hearing journey began early. In his first week, the Newborn Hearing Screening Programme at Auckland Hospital suggested he might not be hearing typical sound levels. Further testing at six weeks, through an Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR) assessment, confirmed that he was born with very limited hearing in both ears.

A follow-up appointment the next day confirmed the diagnosis and set in motion a series of referrals — to Starship ORL specialists, the Advisor on Deaf Children (AODC) service through the Ministry of Education, First Signs, and The Hearing House's cochlear implant programme.



Nicole, Louis and Josh

The weeks that followed were filled with appointments, scans, and discussions. At around eight weeks, Louis had an MRI and genetic testing, while at ten weeks a repeat ABR test confirmed the diagnosis.

"Dr Colin Brown, our specialist, was incredibly supportive," says Nicole. "He guided us through what to expect and what the next steps could look like. His reassurance meant the world to us."

In the middle of all this medical activity, a warm and welcoming email arrived from The Hearing House. The family was invited to a welcome meeting when Louis was just eleven weeks old.

At The Hearing House, they met an audiologist, a speech language therapist (SLT), and a whānau support counsellor.

"That meeting was such a turning point for us," recalls Nicole. "It was the first time we felt truly seen - not just as parents of a baby with hearing loss, but as a family learning to navigate something completely new."

The Hearing House provided a safe, compassionate space to ask questions, express emotions, and learn about the cochlear implant programme.

"We left feeling empowered and reassured," says Nicole. "We knew we weren't alone."

Soon after, the family joined the Learn and Connect Baby Group, led by Tash, The Hearing House's SLT early intervention lead. For Nicole and Josh, it was an incredibly valuable and moving experience - a place where families like theirs could meet, share, and celebrate their babies.

CONNECTIONS WITH OUR PARTNERS

"Even though Louis was the youngest in the group, it was amazing to connect with others on similar pathways," says Nicole. "The songs, use of NZSL, and the sense of community made us feel part of something hopeful and positive."

As healthcare professionals themselves — Josh is a GP, and Nicole works for the Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) for people with disabilities - the couple were familiar with the medical system. Yet, being on the receiving end of care was a humbling experience. "We've learned to let go, trust, and allow Louis and his incredible team to guide us," says Nicole.

Their advice to other parents is heartfelt:

"Give yourself time. It's okay to grieve and to feel overwhelmed — but know that you're not alone," says Nicole. "When you're ready, there is a whole community ready and waiting to help!"

One idea they learned from The Hearing House has stayed with them: "Deaf Gain." Instead of seeing deafness as a loss, it reframes it as a unique identity and gateway to an exciting new culture, language, and connection.

"Louis' journey is just beginning," says Nicole. "We're excited to see him grow, connect, and find his place in the deaf community."

"He has such a bright future — and we're deeply thankful to The Hearing House for walking beside us every step of the way."



Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook

We collaborate with a wide range of partners across the health, disability, education, research, and community sectors to deliver effective, equitable, empowered and holistic cochlear implant and hearing services. These relationships are essential to ensuring family-centred, culturally responsive, and community-informed care. More detail on each of these partnerships is provided below.

THE DEAF COMMUNITY

We are committed to building respectful, inclusive, and collaborative relationships with the Deaf community. Our work is informed by the understanding that Deaf identity and cochlear implants are not mutually exclusive, and we actively promote a model of care that embraces the richness of both spoken and signed communication.

DEAF AOTEAROA

We have developed a strong and evolving partnership with Deaf Aotearoa, the national representative organisation for Deaf people. This relationship is underpinned by a shared commitment to inclusion, respect, and the belief that families should not have to choose between NZSL and cochlear implant technology - they can, and should, access both.

Our partnership includes:

- Co-hosting playgroups and whānau events for Deaf and hard-of-hearing tamariki.
- Teen support and activity groups, including weekends and school holiday programmes.
- Introduction of families to Deaf role models, ensuring that parents see Deaf identity reflected in real people, not just theoretical ideas.
- Support for families navigating identity and communication choices, with the benefit of multiple perspectives and lived experience available in one place. This model of partnership represents a significant shift from historical divisions in the sector. It enables families to access both cochlear implant support and NZSL in an integrated, respectful, and informed way.

FIRST VOICE

The Hearing House is a founding member of First Voice, an international consortium committed to advancing best practice in listening and spoken language therapy for children with hearing loss. We have actively contributed to First Voice's long-standing Power of Speech event, which is hosted at the Australian Parliament to highlight the transformative impact of early intervention and cochlear implant services. This year, The Hearing House led the development and delivery of the inaugural Power of Connection - a new initiative that extends this advocacy platform to more inclusively represent diverse communication journeys, cultural perspectives, and lived experiences across the hearing sector. Our Chief Executive serves as a director on the First Voice Board, and members of our clinical team participate in specialist working groups focused on audiology and early intervention, contributing to trans-Tasman knowledge exchange and innovation. The consortium also provides valuable opportunities for professional development, such as a current six-month secondment from a specialist in listening and spoken language from The Shepherd Centre, supporting capability-building within our team.



Thirteen-year-old Nate Lifting - The Hearing House's 2025 Power of Speech representative - with his family and The Hearing House CEO Dr Claire Green outside the Australian Parliament.

KO TAKU REO

Ko Taku Reo Deaf Education New Zealand is New Zealand's provider of education for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. The Hearing House works closely with Ko Taku Reo on training and support programmes for students and joint initiatives focused on improving outcomes for students and whānau.

The Hearing House is a trusted and collaborative partner, and whenever possible our team embraces new ideas and innovative approaches to our work. We have proudly supported Ko Taku Reo, with our audiologists regularly visiting kaimahi at the Ko Taku Reo provision at Ormiston School in South Auckland in our mobile hearing clinic.

NGĀTI WHĀTUA ŌRĀKEI

We recognise that achieving equity in hearing health care requires authentic and enduring partnerships with Māori. A cornerstone of this commitment is our relationship with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, our local iwi, who play a vital role in guiding and supporting our efforts to strengthen cultural responsiveness across all levels of our organisation. This partnership is embedded not only in our operational work but also at a governance level. We are proud to have Kirimoana Willoughby, a respected representative of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, on our Board. Her leadership ensures that te ao Māori perspectives and the aspirations of our local iwi are woven into our strategic direction and decision-making.

A key element of our relationship has been kaupapa-based professional development for our team.

Staff have participated in blocks of term-long learning sessions led by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, which have included:

- Foundational learning in te reo Māori and tikanga
- Insights into whakapapa, whenua, and the history of Tāmaki Makaurau
- Practical applications of Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Ways to integrate cultural safety into our clinical and support services.

These sessions have had a profound impact on our organisation, shaping how we engage with whānau, how we design our services and physical spaces, and how we reflect mātauranga Māori in our everyday practice.



Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook

PAINGA PROJECT

While not directly linked to cochlear implantation, our involvement in the Painga Project reflects our values-led commitment to hearing health equity and holistic, community-based care. Their programme addresses multiple barriers to participation and learning by providing free hearing and vision screening, glasses, nutritious school lunches, movement and gardening programmes, and transport to cultural and sporting events. The Hearing House has provided training to support the hearing health component of the programme, delivering onsite screening and follow-up care. We also supervise University of Auckland audiology students, providing practical, community-based training. This model strengthens service capacity while fostering an equity-informed future workforce, ensuring students gain meaningful clinical experience in settings where hearing health needs are often greatest.



Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook

SOUTHERN COCHLEAR IMPLANT PROGRAMME (SCIP)

We work in close partnership with SCIP to share knowledge, conduct research, host collaborative education sessions, and promote national consistency in cochlear implant services. We also work together on the annual Loud Shirt Day fundraising campaign in conjunction with First Voice members.

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

In addition to providing University of Auckland Audiology and Speech Therapy training programmes with the opportunities for their students to participate in clinical practice, The Hearing House has deepened relationships over the past year by integrating and extending some of our clinical services with student research projects. You can read more about these in the following section on connections made through our research.



Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook

CONNECTIONS THROUGH OUR RESEARCH

ACADEMIC AND RESEARCH COLLABORATIONS

We have strong ties to the University of Auckland, Massey University and Unitec through the support of student placements in audiology, speech-language therapy and social work.

Our Clinical Director, Associate Professor Holly Teagle, leads the support and supervision of a range of research projects that directly inform and improve our services, covering topics from vestibular testing and speech perception in noise, to parental feedback on outcomes for children with unilateral deafness.

RESEARCH COLLABORATION WILL HELP SHAPE FUTURE COCHLEAR IMPLANT CARE

Collaboration between The Hearing House and the University of Auckland Audiology Department has resulted in an exciting finding that will help shape future cochlear implant care in New Zealand.

Recent Master of Audiology graduate Nina Boesch didn't anticipate her thesis topic findings would have such a meaningful impact on clinical decision making for The Hearing House team.

After completing a three-year biomedical science degree at the University of Auckland, Nina found herself drawn to a more hands-on, client-focused career. A lecture by Professor Grant Searchfield on audiology sparked her interest, and she soon embarked on the university's two-year master's programme.

In February 2025, she completed her thesis under the supervision of The Hearing House's clinical director Associate Professor Holly Teagle and Dr Rachael Taylor, a senior research fellow at the University of Auckland, before returning home to her native Hawkes Bay to begin work as a provisional audiologist at Triton Hearing in Napier.

Her current clinical role includes hearing assessments, fitting and managing hearing aid technologies, and counselling and referring her local clients for vestibular physiotherapy, or medical referrals where required.



Audiologist Nina Boesch with a client

It's a field she feels personally connected to—her grandfather lives with hearing differences, and staying connected with him is difficult, especially since he only uses a landline.

Nina's thesis, titled *Preoperative Vestibular Assessment Outcomes of Cochlear Implant Candidates*, explored the incidence of balance issues that have an organic cause in adults preparing to receive a cochlear implant (CI). While vestibular dysfunction is significantly more common in this group than in the general population, New Zealand had no formal data or standardised approach to preoperative vestibular screening - until now.

Associate Professor Holly Teagle adds, "While vestibular testing has become a standard part of many international cochlear implant programmes, it took assessing our own New Zealand population to show the impact of this important diagnostic tool."

"From Nina's thesis, we learned that the vestibular assessment could easily be included in the candidacy evaluation process and that the findings could afford meaningful contributions to patient care".

Nina's study included 28 adult CI candidates who had histories of dizziness, vertigo, imbalance, or falls. Strikingly, 75% of the participants were found to have clinical vestibular dysfunction prior to implantation. These findings highlight the critical role of preoperative vestibular testing in surgical planning, patient counselling, and rehabilitation.

Vestibular testing assesses the balance organs of the inner ear using tools like eye-movement tracking goggles and balance platforms. In New Zealand, such testing is carried out by audiologists and specially trained physiotherapists. The goal is to determine the cause of dizziness or imbalance and ensure the safest and most effective treatment plan.

To support her findings, Nina also interviewed cochlear implant surgeons. They confirmed that vestibular assessments were clinically valuable, aiding in decisions such as which ear to implant when asymmetrical vestibular function is present. The testing also allows for better patient education about potential risks and referrals to vestibular physiotherapy when needed.

The thesis offers several recommendations: that vestibular screening be extended to all adult CI candidates, not just those showing symptoms of imbalance or dizziness, and that services be developed for paediatric CI candidates, despite current challenges in testing young children. Nina also sees value in expanding vestibular rehabilitation services, potentially through University of Auckland's growing physiotherapy programme.

Looking ahead, Nina hopes to work with children in the public health system. For now, she's proud of the real-world impact her research is already making, and grateful for the support she's received from her supervisors and wider team.

"I had really amazing support from my thesis supervisors Holly Teagle and Dr Rachael Taylor, and from Caroline Selvaratham and the team at The Hearing House," she says. "They helped facilitate the data collection and getting consent from the participants. I couldn't have done it without them."

Dr Teagle adds, "Nina's thesis is a great example of how combining the resources of The Hearing House's partners results in valuable learning opportunities for students, as well as our clinical and surgical teams."



The Hearing House

COMMITMENT TO CMV AWARENESS AND CLINICAL LEADERSHIP

We continue to actively contribute to national efforts in awareness, education and clinical care relating to congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV). Approximately 20% of our tamariki who use cochlear implants do so because of CMV-related hearing loss.

In response to this need, we have led the development of specialist CMV clinics, family-focused workshops and sector-wide professional forums. These initiatives are designed to support early diagnosis, promote holistic intervention, and improve cross-sector understanding of CMV.

Our clinics offer wraparound, multidisciplinary care—spanning paediatric, developmental, and educational assessments—within familiar, supportive environments for tamariki and their whānau.

We collaborate closely with the CMV Aotearoa Interest Group, the University of Auckland, and a range of sector professionals to progress both awareness and clinical best practice. All of our CMV-related activities and services are made possible through strategic fundraising efforts, including valued support from partners such as the Freemasons Foundation.

SUPPORTING FAMILIES AFFECTED BY CMV

To mark CMV Awareness Month earlier this year, we hosted a dedicated clinic for our kiritaki/clients and their whānau affected by CMV.

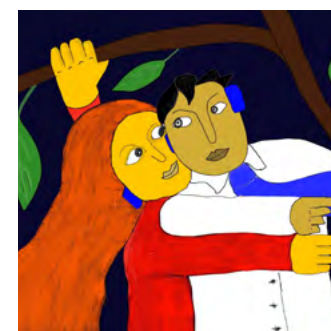
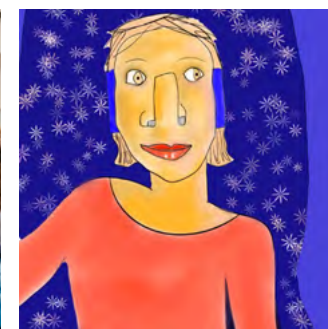
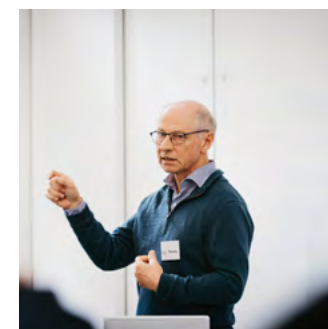
CMV is often passed during pregnancy, typically without any symptoms. Increasing awareness and understanding of CMV helps families make informed choices during pregnancy and early childhood, supporting the best possible outcomes for tamariki.

To strengthen this support, we brought together a multidisciplinary team including a paediatrician, occupational and physical therapists, an educational psychologist, and our own audiologists and speech-language therapists. Together, they provided individual consultations to help families navigate their child's developmental journey and access the right care and resources early on.

The feedback from families and professionals was overwhelmingly positive. Families appreciated the opportunity to hear more about CMV and cCMV, ask questions, and connect with others.

One attendee, mum Sarah, shared her feedback about the day. She highlighted how warmly the team looked after her young daughter, Camden, making everyone feel comfortable and supported:

"The team were incredibly generous with their time and gave great feedback on Camden's progress. We really found it useful, informative and supportive."



The CMV clinic held at The Hearing House

OUR TEAM



Dr Claire Green
Chief Executive



**Associate Professor
Holly Teagle**
Clinical Director



Briana Williams
Audiologist



Bronwyn Bailey
Speech Language
Therapist/Rehabilitationist



Lisa Notley
Receptionist



Lydia Wilksch
Communications



Megan Levi
Paediatric Clinical
Coordinator



Michele Verrall
Finance



Caroline Selvaratham
Audiologist
Adult Team Leader



Cathy Nottingham
Clinical Administrator



Chris Lawson
Speech Language
Therapist/Rehabilitationist



Derek Hadfield
Audiologist



Natasha (Tash) Shallita
Speech Language
Therapist Lead



Nathan Lowe
Audiologist



Nick Jones
Audiologist



Nicole Zhao
Audiologist



Eilidh Gill
Audiologist



Gracie Adams
Speech Language
Therapist



Hazel Benson-Dawe
Whānau/Family Support



Janine Smith
Speech Language
Therapist



Rachel Maloy
Speech Language
Therapist



Renee Orams
Audiologist Paediatric
Team Lead



Renique Williams
Speech Language
Therapist



Sara Finnegan
Clinical Administrator



Jo Weaver
Speech Language
Therapist



Joe Chandler
Speech Language
Therapist



Kate Dobbin
Communications



Latasi Koro
Audiologist



Silvia Rosioru
Information and
Systems Lead



Simona Amza
Inventory
Administrator



Tara Barr
Clinical Administration
Team Lead



Warren Smith
Finance

TRUSTS, FOUNDATIONS & DONORS

Generosity from the following trusts, foundations and donors enabled us to continue to deliver our life-changing programmes and services, and to meet our general operating costs:

- Anne Simmons
- ANZ Staff Foundation
- Bollard Charitable Trust
- Chris Moore
- Christine and Neil Duncan
- David Niven
- Dragon Community Trust
- D V Bryant Trust Board
- Ernest Hyam Davis and Ted and Mollie Carr Legacies
- Fay Jewell
- Four Winds Foundation
- Franklin Law – Sexton Estate
- Grace McKean
- JC & PR Ross
- JM Thompson Trust
- Lottery National Community Fund
- Maurice Paykel Charitable Trust
- Milestone Foundation
- N R and J H Thomson Charitable Trust
- New Zealand Lotteries
- Pye Family
- Quota Papakura
- Rotorua Trust
- The Lion Foundation
- The Trusts Community Foundation
- Trillian Trust
- Trust Waikato

Supporters:

- Simpson Grierson



Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Group Income and Expenditure Statement for Cochlear Implant Foundation & Hearing House Services Limited. For the year ended 30 June 2025

Revenue	For the year ended 30 June 2025	For the year ended 30 June 2024
Donations	583,347	453,830
Donations - Mobile Van	-	200,000
Investment & Interest (net of fees)	347,952	246,184
Northern Cochlear Implant Trust (Government Contract)	2,988,000	2,536,209
Ko Taku Reo (Paediatric Contract)	145,424	131,249
Other Services & Net Sales of Inventory	239,228	313,627
Tenancy Rentals	116,555	91,552
Total	4,420,506	3,972,651
Expenditure		
Overheads	984,731	878,053
Wages & Salary Costs	2,504,510	2,286,063
Total	3,489,241	3,164,116
Surplus	931,265	808,535

Group Balance Sheet for Cochlear Implant Foundation & Hearing House Services Limited. For the year ended 30 June 2025

Assets	As at 30 June 2025	As at 30 June 2024
Bank	1,885,165	2,176,379
Accounts Receivable	337,389	317,227
Investments	3,680,629	3,413,898
Term deposits	1,060,773	335,250
Property Plant & Equipment	8,201,390	8,273,435
Total	15,165,346	14,516,189
Liabilities		
Accounts Payable & Accruals	499,755	465,768
Income in Advance	187,435	203,075
Loans	1,688,392	1,988,846
Total	2,375,582	2,657,689
Net Assets	12,789,764	11,858,500

DONATION & CONTACT DETAILS

THERE ARE MANY WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT THE WORK WE DO

Donate

There are several ways you can donate to The Hearing House.

Online: www.hearinghouse.co.nz

Post: Send your donation to The Hearing House, PO Box 74-022, Greenlane, Auckland 1546
Please include your contact details so we can send you a donation receipt.

Internet Banking: You can make a payment online directly into our bank account: ASB 12-3055-0201946-000.
Please include your name as reference.
Please email us on reception@hearinghouse.co.nz if you would like a donation receipt.

Become a Hearing House Hero

We depend on supporters like you to give on a regular basis throughout the year. Donating by automatic payment is easy to set up and can be cancelled at any time. It also helps to keep our costs low, while spreading your gift over time.

To become a Hearing House Hero, go to our website and following instructions. <https://www.hearinghouse.co.nz/hearing-house-heroes>

Leave a gift in your will

We would be very grateful if you would consider leaving a gift for The Hearing House in your will. For a confidential conversation about this, please contact us at fundraising@hearinghouse.co.nz

Volunteer

We are always looking out for volunteers to lend a helping hand. We'd love to hear from you if you would like to help us make a difference.

Donate your used equipment

You can donate your old hearing aids or spare cochlear implant equipment to those who cannot afford them otherwise.

Many of our kiritaki struggle to stay on air because of the cost of replacement parts. Your used equipment can help transform health and quality of life for a person in need who couldn't otherwise afford their hearing equipment.

You can help by:

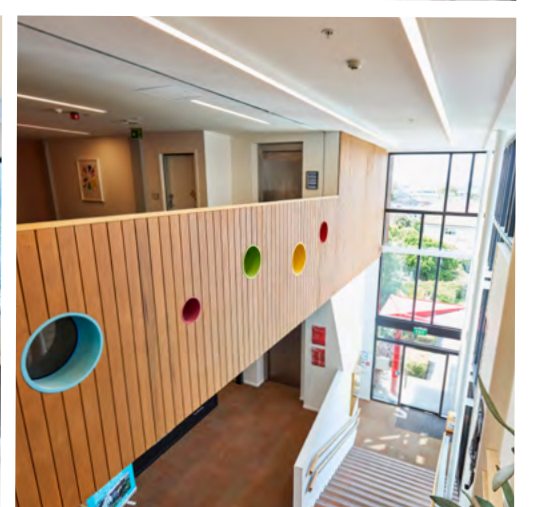
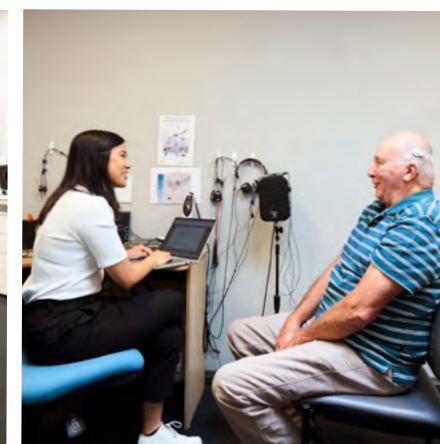
Dropping in old equipment to us at
The Hearing House, 251 Campbell Road, Greenlane, Auckland 1061.

Contact us on: 09-579-2333/ 0800-2-LISTEN/
0800-254-783 or email reception@hearinghouse.co.nz
We can arrange to pick up the old equipment.

Published by

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251 Campbell Road Greenlane Auckland 1061
reception@hearinghouse.co.nz
www.hearinghouse.co.nz
Phone: 09-579-2333 or
0800-2-LISTEN/ 0800-254-783

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Artwork by Bev Hickson-Snook



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