



The Shepherd Centre

Giving deaf children a voice



# 2017 IMPACT REPORT





## ABOUT THE SHEPHERD CENTRE

The Shepherd Centre is a registered charity, founded in 1970 by Dr Bruce Shepherd AM and his late wife Annette to provide a family-centred early intervention program to teach children with hearing loss to learn to listen and speak.

The Shepherd Centre's mission is to enable children who are deaf or hearing impaired to develop spoken language so they may fully participate in the world and, in doing so, reach their full potential. This was the mission established by the Shepherd family almost 50 years ago and remains our organisational vision to this day.

Since inception, The Shepherd Centre has helped more than 2,500 children with hearing loss to develop spoken language, attend mainstream

schools and participate fully in society. This has been with thanks to our incredible supporters; without their assistance we would not be able to deliver the exceptional outcomes we do.

Each year we help more than 500 families who turn to us for help. These families have access to a wide range of services either in one of our five centres across NSW and the ACT or through our teleintervention program through which we also support children in Tasmania and remote areas of Australia as well as families living overseas.

The vast majority of children who graduate from our world-leading services go on to attend mainstream schools and achieve spoken language on par with their hearing peers by the time they start school. These outstanding outcomes have confirmed The Shepherd Centre as an internationally recognised world-leader in the field. Please enjoy our Impact Report which highlights all of our incredible achievements from the past year. We are grateful for your support to enable us to be able to help so many children and their families.

The vast majority of children who graduate from our world-leading services go on to attend mainstream schools and achieve spoken language on par with their hearing peers

*The Shepherd Centre is a Quality Innovation Performance (QIP) verified organisation in accordance with the NSW Disability Services Standards and is registered as a charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).*



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## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN AND CEO

Despite a challenging year for our sector, The Shepherd Centre team has helped transform the lives of more than 500 children with hearing loss. Our world-leading outcomes show language for children completing our Early Intervention Program (with hearing loss alone) was again better than the average of children without hearing loss. Across all children (children with hearing loss alone and those with additional needs or other complicating factors), the typical language was well within the normal range.

Our incredible outcomes have been achieved despite challenges with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Advocacy by the sector notwithstanding, the NDIS is still letting children with hearing loss down. Many children only receive funding for half the services they require. It can take a full year from when a child first enters a service to when their NDIS plan is approved – meaning the charity is left without any financial support in that time. We currently have the financial reserves required to continue however this situation is not viable in the longer term.

Last year we received the benefit of two large gifts allowing us to report a strong surplus. These include the legacy of the late Mr Eric Dare, which is being held for the long-term benefit of the charity; and the use of the gift from Sargents Pies Charitable Foundation that has enabled the purchase of a property in Campbelltown for us to establish a centre for this area at a later date.

Excluding these gifts, our underlying result is a significant shortfall due to the NDIS. We continue to advocate with the government and the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and are hopeful that the issue will be addressed during 2018.

Despite these financial challenges, we have continued to extend and further develop our services. We have commenced planning for the new, state-of-the-art centre to be established in Campbelltown, a rapidly growing area without any local services. Our Beyond Sound alumni program is providing support to our graduates for success at school, university and the workforce.

We are also seeing a dramatic growth in the number of children with hearing loss turning to us for support, as shown on page 6. This is due to the increased awareness of the importance of early intervention and the outcomes that children receiving our services achieve. However, we know that half of children with hearing loss are not getting specialist services to achieve their potential and we are developing ways to ensure these children can access the help they need. We are also working on ensuring that the funding required to support them is available through either the NDIS and/or philanthropic support. These are the foundations of our Sound Future plan which we will roll out over the coming years.

We thank our incredible supporters and donors who have made it possible for us to continue to provide our services. We are grateful for your ongoing support which will transform thousands of children's lives.

Peter Mattick AO  
Chairman

Dr Jim Hungerford  
CEO

## KAI'S STORY

Five years ago Ashlie and Drew's lives were turned upside down when their newborn son Kai failed a routine hearing test at just two days old. 'I remember closing the car door,' says mum Ashlie, 'and saying to Drew, "I think there's something wrong" as Kai didn't flinch. I could tell that he couldn't hear.' Kai was just two weeks old when he was formally diagnosed with severe to profound hearing loss.

'It was horrible. I didn't know anything about cochlear implants or anything. I wondered what I would do with a deaf baby. It was all too much,' said Ashlie.

'We thought Kai would live in a very silent world and we'd have to learn sign language. We thought he would have to attend special schools and that he'd have limited work options when he is older,' said dad, Drew.

Drew and Ashlie took Kai to The Shepherd Centre soon after his diagnosis and at six months, Kai was fitted with two cochlear implants.

The first words they said to their little boy when his implants were switched on were 'I love you'.

Kai continued to have life-changing therapy at The Shepherd Centre for five years including education around social skills to get him ready for school.

'The Shepherd Centre has given us amazing support from the day we walked in and we met with the counsellor. I felt like it was a second home,' added Ashlie.



Kai graduated from The Shepherd Centre's services at the end of 2017 and has since started at mainstream school where he is thriving.

This is one of many incredibly moving stories of the hundreds of children that come through The Shepherd Centre's Early Intervention Program.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, **23 children received "Little Voices" scholarships** in 2017. Our scholarship program allows families to continue receiving services even if they do not receive sufficient NDIS funding.

*With special thanks to our sponsors*







## OUR OUTCOMES

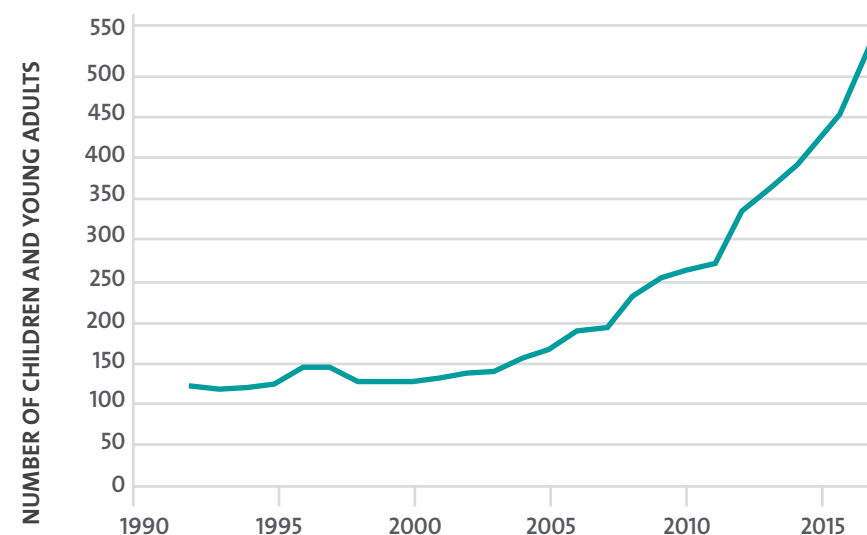
### LIKE EACH CHILD, EACH TYPE OF HEARING LOSS IS UNIQUE

Our innovative early intervention and school age programs are focussed on meeting the unique needs of each individual family and child, to ensure they receive the appropriate and tailored support they need. Each one of our five centres in NSW and the ACT provides a full range of programs so that families who live locally, or in rural and remote areas of Australia and throughout Victoria and Tasmania, can access everything they need in the one place. For those that can't make it to a centre, we deliver all of our services via video conferencing through our Teleintervention Program, coupled with our eLearning platform, Connect.

### EARLY INTERVENTION AT THE SHEPHERD CENTRE

Our world-renowned Early Intervention Program focuses on training parents to seize every opportunity in day-to-day life to teach their child to listen and speak. We know from experience that the most effective learning takes place at home, every day, through constant interactions with family members during activities such as cooking, washing, going to the shops or outdoors in the park. The Shepherd Centre works with families to create learning opportunities for their child during these daily experiences; and to use them to develop their skills in listening, speech and language so they can learn to speak. Our focus is on teaching parents, caregivers and the extended family, so they in turn can be the best teacher for their child, in all of their environments.

### OUR GROWTH



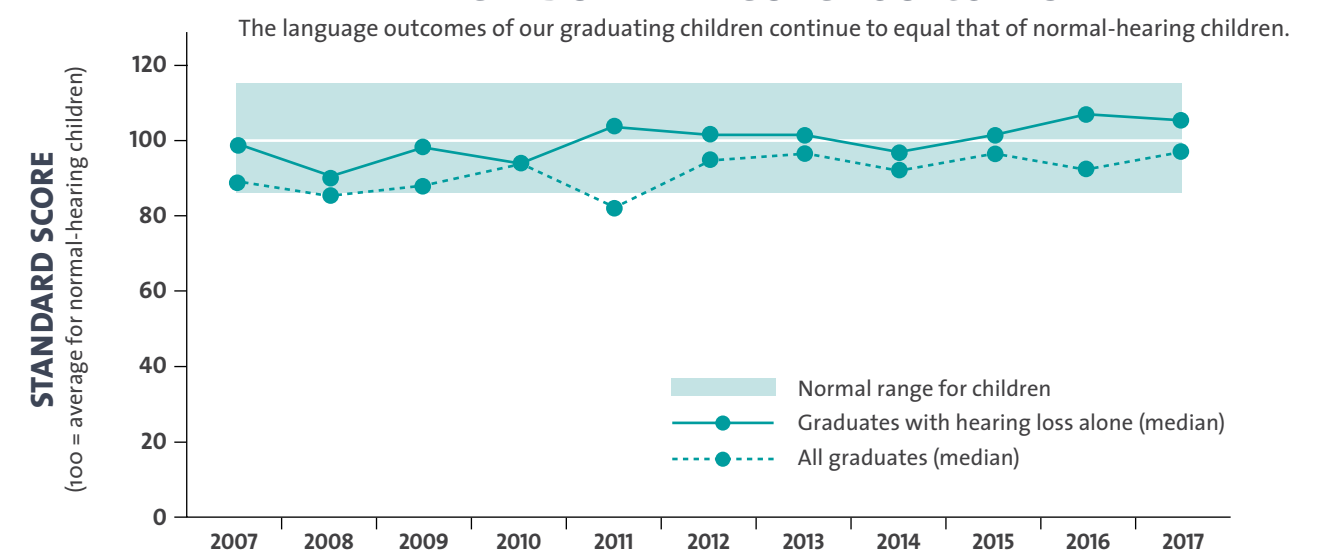
## EARLY INTERVENTION OUTCOMES



\*comparing the number of children in the graduating group (i.e. children who have finished early intervention at age five and go on to commence school) who scored in the normal range or higher for their age, to the number of children with typical hearing who score at these levels.

\*\*on formal testing.

### GRADUATE LANGUAGE OUTCOMES





## SOPHIE'S STORY

### 2017 Graduate of the Year

Born nine weeks premature, 20 year old Sophie Geeves was diagnosed with severe bilateral hearing loss as well as cerebral palsy and attended weekly sessions at The Shepherd Centre from the age of six months. Sophie's hearing loss eventually progressed to a profound bilateral hearing loss and she was fitted with her first cochlear implant at the age of four and her second at 14. 'The Shepherd Centre has had a profound impact on both my life and my family's,' says Sophie. 'Without their support, we wouldn't have the life we do today.'

Sophie successfully completed her Higher School Certificate, undertook tertiary studies and now works at a disability-based organisation called Hireup which is an online platform that gives Australians with disabilities the power to find, manage and hire their own support workers. 'The auditory-verbal skills I gained through attending The Shepherd Centre have allowed me to have the confidence to express ideas and opinions to fellow colleagues. Without it, I wouldn't be able to carry out a conversation on the phone with clients which is a major part of my role.'

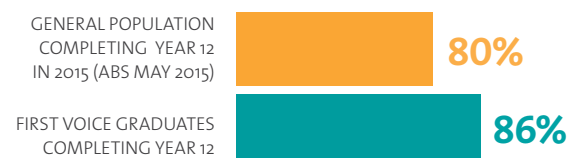
Sophie says the biggest challenge for her has been getting people to understand that hearing loss is a significant disability and presents challenges even though it's not always visible to the outside world. 'With the help of intensive therapy and technology, you are able to achieve anything in life.'

## LONG TERM IMPACT

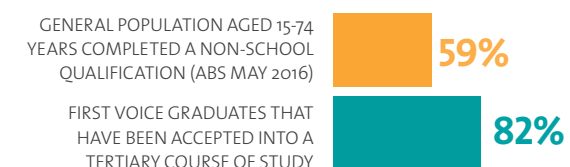
In 2017, First Voice\* released the results of a study involving The Shepherd Centre and its graduates highlighting the benefits of early intervention for young adults who have had hearing loss since childhood.

The results of the survey show that the overwhelming majority of our graduates have developed into independent, contributing members of society, with high levels of education, social participation and full-time employment.

### Mainstream attendance and highest completed level of schooling



### Acceptance in to tertiary or vocational study



**84%**  
of graduates participate in social activities

**95%**  
of graduates attended a mainstream high school

**77%**  
of graduates have been in regular paid employment

*\*First Voice is the representative organisation for charities in Australia and New Zealand that provide listening and spoken language early intervention services for children who are deaf or hearing impaired. [www.firstvoice.org.au](http://www.firstvoice.org.au)*

## IN 2017 THERE WERE...

15

internationally certified  
Listening and Spoken  
Language Specialists  
(one of the largest number of any  
program in the world)

437

music, social  
skills and school  
readiness groups

417

Communication  
Assessments

545

**CHILDREN AND  
YOUNG ADULTS**  
with hearing loss  
**HELPED**  
by The Shepherd Centre

1073

Child and Family  
Counselling sessions

328

hours of support  
at Kidscape  
playgroups

1849

Audiology  
sessions

3782

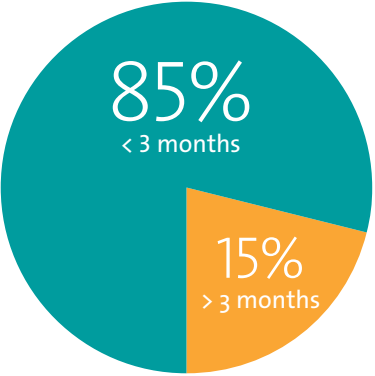
Listening and Spoken  
Language Therapy  
sessions

375

NDIS planning  
and support  
sessions

# A SNAPSHOT OF OUR CHILDREN IN 2017

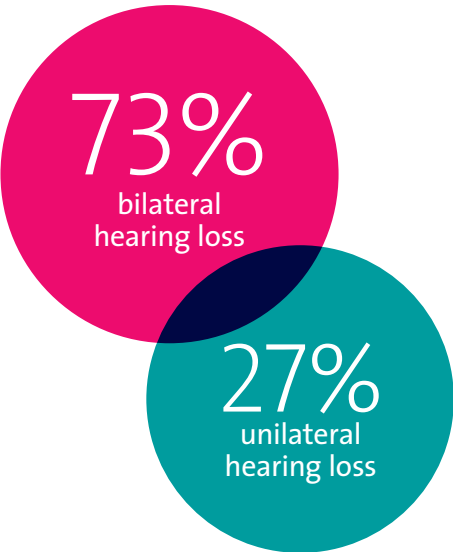
### Age of diagnosis (for early intervention clients)



### Children with needs in addition to their hearing loss

One in five children at The Shepherd Centre has diagnosed additional needs that impact on their hearing. These, and many other factors, are considered when developing a program tailored to each child's needs.

### Bilateral and unilateral hearing loss

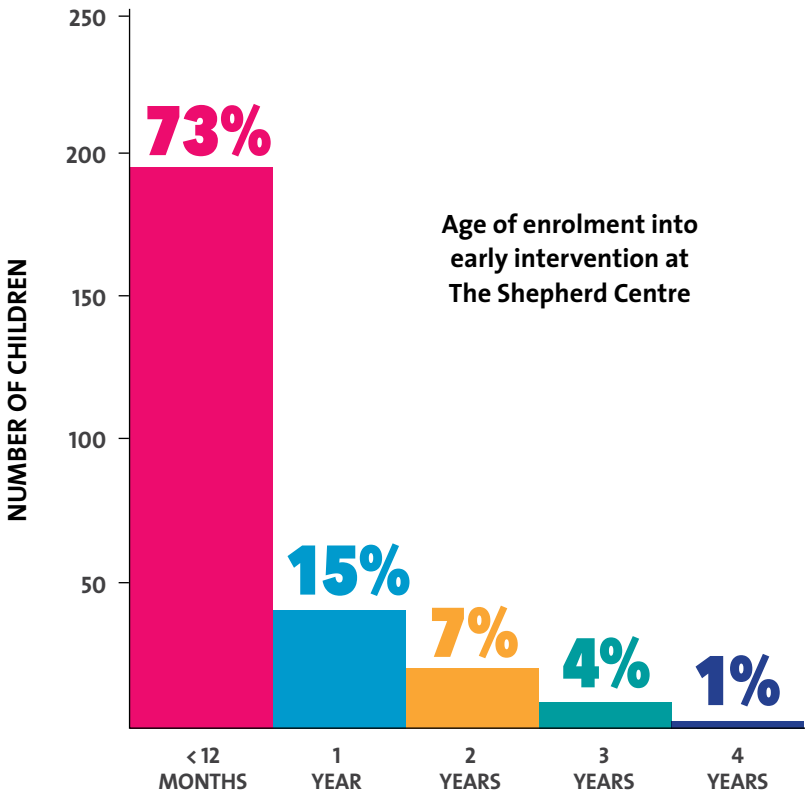


### Age of entry to our early intervention services

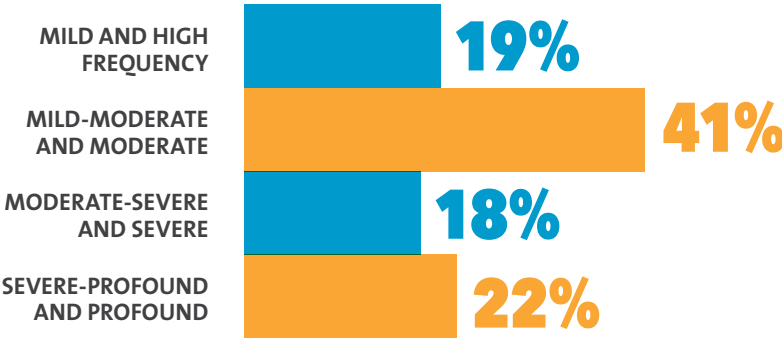
The majority of our children join The Shepherd Centre early intervention services under the age of 12 months. This reflects the success of Universal Newborn Screening practices across NSW and the ACT.

### Hearing loss remains the most common disability diagnosed at birth.

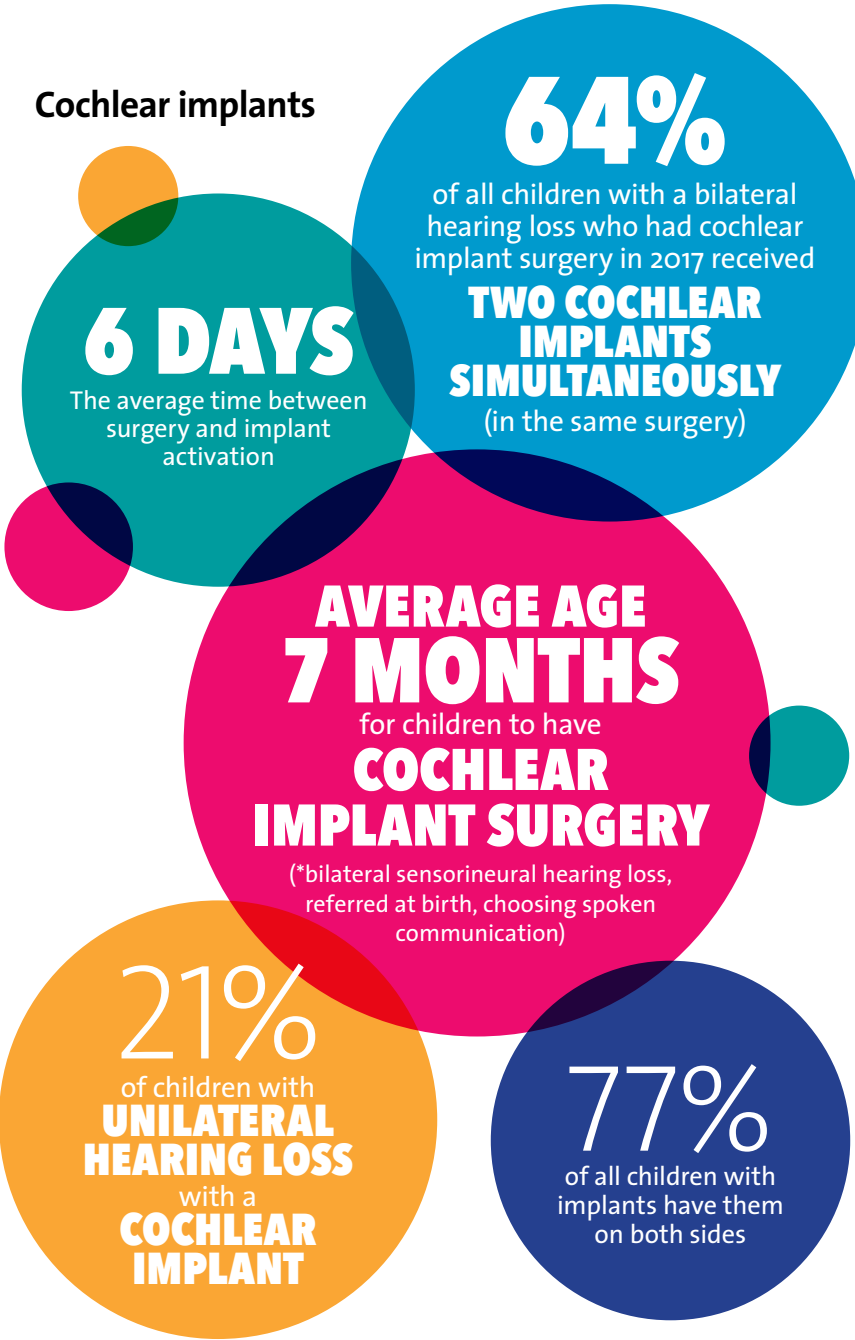
The incidence has stayed steady over the years, and rises from 1 in 1000 at birth to 1 in 300 by school age (due to acquired and developing hearing loss). The Shepherd Centre remains committed to advocating for the introduction of toddler/preschool hearing screening to pick up all hearing losses at the earliest opportunity.



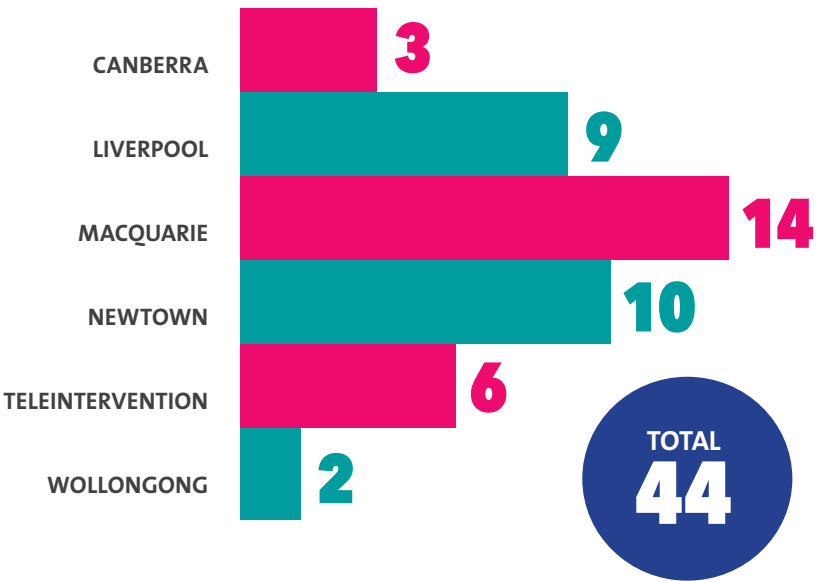
### Level of bilateral hearing loss



### Cochlear implants



### Graduating children by centre

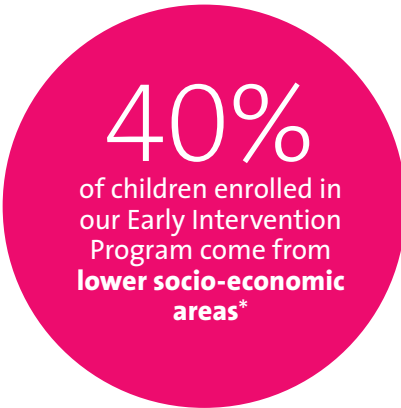


### Our centres

**NEWTOWN**  
**WOLLONGONG**  
**LIVERPOOL**  
**MACQUARIE**  
**CANBERRA**  
**TELEINTERVENTION**  
**CAMPBELLTOWN\***

*\*planned*

### Geographical areas



*\*as defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics areas 1-5 in the Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA)*

### Languages used

**OVER 30%**

of our children use a language in addition to English

**ARABIC**  
**URDU** **INDONESIAN**  
**VIETNAMESE**  
**MANDARIN**  
**PORTUGUESE**  
**TURKISH** **BENGALI**  
**ASSYRIAN**  
**CANTONESE**  
**KOREAN**



# THE SHEPHERD CENTRE'S THEORY OF CHANGE

The work we do and the way we do it is informed by years of research and experience in the field of paediatric hearing loss. The Shepherd Centre's Theory of Change identifies the short and long-term returns to our economy and society made possible by early intervention programs; and the positive impact these programs have on the lives of Australians with hearing loss.

## THE PROBLEM

- Children with hearing loss have significant challenges in language and social skills
- Most children don't receive the expert integrated support they need
- These children don't achieve their potential
- The cost and impact of unaddressed hearing loss on society is immense

## OUR TOOLS

- 80 dedicated and expert staff
- 45 years of dedicated research and experience
- Leading IT systems enabling clinical and family focus
- Ongoing strong philanthropic support
- Outstanding connections to partner organisations

## OUR WORK

- Enabling access to sound through devices such as hearing aids and cochlear implants
- Expert parent education, support and mentoring
- Specialised Listening & Spoken Language Therapy
- Dedicated programs to support advocacy and social skills development

## OUR OUTCOMES

- Parents are empowered to support their child's full development
- Children enter mainstream school with spoken language matching that of children without hearing loss
- Children develop social skills matching those of children without hearing loss
- Children are able to advocate for themselves in their school and social environments

## THE IMPACT

- Children complete high school and enter higher education at the same rate as the general population
- Young adults enter the workforce and become active economic contributors to society
- Adults engage with the community and form strong families supporting the growth of social capital

# BEYOND SOUND ALUMNI CLUB

In 2017 The Shepherd Centre proudly launched its Beyond Sound program – an alumni club for graduates and families of The Shepherd Centre. The club's vision is to provide mutual support, community activities, ongoing improved outcomes and networking and professional development opportunities.

## BEYOND SOUND GALA DINNER

The club quickly gained momentum with more than 100 members joining in the first two months. In June 2017, a gala event was held at Sydney Town Hall to formally launch Beyond Sound and celebrate the remarkable journeys of more than 2,500 graduates the centre has produced over its 47-year history – and raise essential funds to ensure a bright future for the many graduates yet to come.

More than 400 guests – past graduates and their families, stakeholders, dignitaries and supporters – came together to celebrate the evening's theme, "family, love and loudness". An incredible \$300,000 was raised on the night to create 15 scholarships for future students.

## BEYOND NOW CONFERENCE

Beyond Sound has continued to go from strength to strength, connecting graduates with a wide range of resources and support to help guide them along life's journey. In November 2017, we held the inaugural "Beyond Now" conference for over 40 delegates at the University of Sydney Business School.

Expert speakers from a variety of fields shared their wisdom and insights across key topics including the future role of technology in hearing loss, disability and employment, tools needed to confidently disclose hearing loss to a potential employer, turning disability into a job-seeking advantage and the value of mentorship.

Following overwhelmingly positive feedback, the conference will now become an annual event for Beyond Sound members.

If you, or a member of your family, are a past graduate of The Shepherd Centre, and you'd like to be a part of this exciting and rewarding program, email [alumni@shepherdcentre.org.au](mailto:alumni@shepherdcentre.org.au).

*Beyond Sound Corporate supporter*



# STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

The amazing outcomes our children are able to achieve is a combination of hard work by families, our staff and our supporters – all of whom are a part of The Shepherd Centre family. That's why it is so important for us to listen to the feedback from everyone who works with us.

Families, donors and staff are encouraged to contact our CEO Dr Jim Hungerford directly or send an email to [feedbackandcomplaints@shepherdcentre.org.au](mailto:feedbackandcomplaints@shepherdcentre.org.au). We also have three major surveys that we undertake every year: Family Satisfaction Survey, Donor Survey and Staff Survey that inform us on how well we are supporting our stakeholders.

## WHAT OUR FAMILIES SAY...

The vast majority of families are very satisfied with their service, rating it 9 out of 10

'The Shepherd Centre has helped our family in many ways over the years and we are forever grateful for everything they have helped our child achieve.

The thing that was most prominent in our time at The Shepherd Centre was the help they gave our family as a whole.

Even when it felt like everything was falling apart, the staff never judged us and our behaviour, they just built a stronger wall around our family to help us hold together and get through the bad times.'

Overall results from the Beach Center Family-Professional Partnership Scale\*

4.72

versus 4.64 last year

Net Promoter Score\*\*

81%

## WHAT OUR STAFF SAY...

87%

of our staff reported being very happy to be working at The Shepherd Centre

'The Shepherd Centre is a wonderful organisation to be a part of. It has been such a great learning opportunity for me and I look forward to continuing to contribute to this organisation and continuing on this journey.'

96%

would recommend The Shepherd Centre as a place of work to others

## WHAT OUR DONORS SAY...

'At the age of 92 years I am still enjoying quite good hearing and am grateful that through The Shepherd Centre, I am playing some small part in helping children who are not so blessed.'

'I realise how devastating it must be for parents to discover their baby has hearing loss and what a relief it must be to be introduced to The Shepherd Centre and know what wonderful work you all do to help the children.'

'I especially admire the way The Shepherd Centre involves and supports a child's parents in their program of treatment and education.'

\*where 4 is satisfied and 5 is very satisfied. \*\*the % of people marking 9 or 10 out of 10 for likelihood to recommend The Shepherd Centre, minus the % of people marking 1 to 6 out of 10.



# 2017: A YEAR OF CHANGE

The introduction of the NDIS across Australia has finally put the choice of services into the hands of people with disability and their families. Sadly, implementation of this wonderful goal has been marred.

Despite this, The Shepherd Centre remains a passionate supporter of the principles of the NDIS. At The Shepherd Centre in 2017 we have been working at all levels to ensure a smooth transition and secure appropriate funding amounts for all our families.

Over half of our families within the 2016 NSW rollout areas were on approved plans by the end of 2017, along with a small handful of families in the 2017 area.

We're continuing to support new families in applying for eligibility to the scheme from the earliest possible point; and acting as Transition Providers for the NDIA to facilitate the planning meetings for many The Shepherd Centre families.

During 2017 we strongly supported the adoption of the automatic eligibility for children with diagnosed hearing loss to the scheme; and have been continuing to actively lobby and participate in discussions with the government and the NDIA on the rollout regarding areas of concern.

We are working towards a future where every child with hearing loss has the opportunity to reach their full potential

We are committed to continuing to advocate for and on behalf of every one of our families to ensure they receive appropriate funding amounts for the services they need, in an appropriate time frame.

## SOUND FUTURE

We're continuing to build and work towards our Sound Future for children with hearing loss and their families.

We are working towards a future where every child with hearing loss:

- Has the chance to speak and listen
- Can grow into a confident young person to explore the world and follow their dreams
- Has the opportunity to reach their full potential

Key developments of 2017 included enhanced support for children with mild and unilateral hearing loss through Sound Direction Plus; the purchase of land for our future Campbelltown Centre; and expanding our Teleintervention Program.

## SOUND DIRECTION PLUS - A WORLD-FIRST

The number of families seeking support for their children with **mild and unilateral hearing loss** continues to grow. We have developed and established our Sound Direction Plus Program to address their specific concerns and needs. In 2017, we helped 22 children and their families on this program. They are supported by communication assessments, Individual Family Service Plans, an online program for networking, information and support, Functional Listening Checks and in-person audiological consultations to ensure they receive the customised intervention they need and want.

*Thank you to the supporters of Sound Direction Plus*



## CAMPBELLTOWN - "THE POTENTIAL IS HEAR"

The explosive population growth in Western Sydney has resulted in increasing numbers of children with hearing loss without access to a local service. Thanks to the generosity of the Sargents Pies Foundation we have been able to purchase a property in Campbelltown for the establishment of a state-of-the-art centre to support the hundreds of local children in need.

## TELEINTERVENTION

Our Teleintervention Program continues to grow and provide a greater range of services than ever before. Increasingly, this is not just for **37 families from rural and remote areas**, but also for families with commitments that mean they can't make it in to a centre in person.

## TEACHER TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As you can see on pages 18 and 19, we are growing all of the services we provide to school age children and their families, in both type of programs and services, as well as occasion of service across all of our centres. We are also growing the support we provide directly to schools, both in training and consultancy capacities. In 2017 we provided training to over **300 itinerant support** teachers for hearing, across the Department of Education and Catholic Education areas. The teacher training programs we provide are fully accredited in NSW (NESA), the ACT (TQI) and internationally through the Alexander Graham Bell Academy.

You can read more about our innovation in our program development and design on pages 24 and 25, and pioneering research on page 26.

## EQUAL OUTCOMES FOR ALL CHILDREN

Children with disabilities who live in socially and economically disadvantaged areas are at risk of not achieving the same results in tests like standardised language assessments. The intervention provided by The Shepherd Centre is able to support families through these challenges. The typical language for children attending our programs from even the most disadvantaged areas is within the normal range.



# SCHOOL SUPPORT AND EARLY LITERACY

## LISTEN FOR LITERACY

Focussing on listening, speech and language is so crucial in the early years to develop a solid communicative base as well as the foundations needed for literacy. Reading can be a challenge for children with hearing loss, as so much of early literacy involves listening to what letters sound like, identifying different sounds in words, being able to “segment” sounds apart and “blend” them together.

**To overcome this challenge, in 2017 we introduced our new Listen for Literacy Program** that has been specifically designed and developed by early childhood teachers and speech pathologists at The Shepherd Centre to teach these essential pre-reading skills.

**Our results indicated that although 70% of children demonstrated developing skills in identifying the first sounds in words, only 29% of early intervention graduates were able to competently identify letters.**

These results, along with wider research that highlights the importance of focussing on literacy for children with hearing loss, such as those in the Australia-wide LOCHI Study (Longitudinal Outcomes of Children with Hearing Impairment), confirmed the need for our new Listen for Literacy Program for children in their last year before school and first year of school.

## SCHOOL AGE SERVICES

A great outcome from the NDIS has been the ability to offer an increased number and type of programs and services for children of primary school age and above. Our School Age Services

have grown from strength to strength in the past year as we fully roll out services for this age group.

These include:

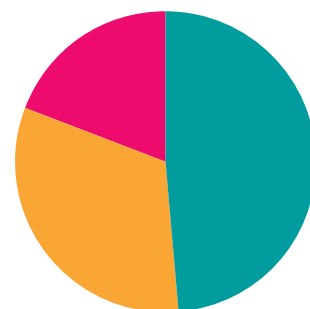
- Individual Sound Development sessions
- School consultation visits by specialists
- Confident Kids in the Classroom social skills group program
- Listen and Learn Intensive Packages for children with delayed skills
- Communication Assessments
- Audiology Assessments and Consultations
- Empower Me course for extended family members
- First Sounds Fundamentals to build knowledge and advocacy skills for cochlear implant evaluation and post-operative therapy

Although the NDIS provides some funding for these services, they would not be possible without the generous support of our donors.

We are so grateful for the gifts that enable the establishment and ongoing development of these life-changing programs.

## NUMBER OF SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN IN OUR PROGRAMS

5–8 YEARS	82
9–12 YEARS	54
13–16 YEARS	32



‘I have loved this group that The Shepherd Centre is providing which offers social skills support after graduation from early intervention’

*Parent participant, Confident Kids in the Classroom*

‘I loved that my child saw other kids his own age with hearing loss. It’s a rare setting where he is in the majority (regarding his hearing) than the minority’

*Parent of 2017 Confident Kids in the Classroom participant*

## CONFIDENT KIDS IN THE CLASSROOM

**In the first year of this amazing new program, 16 children (aged 5-8 years) and their families learnt valuable social skills to help them in their school settings.**

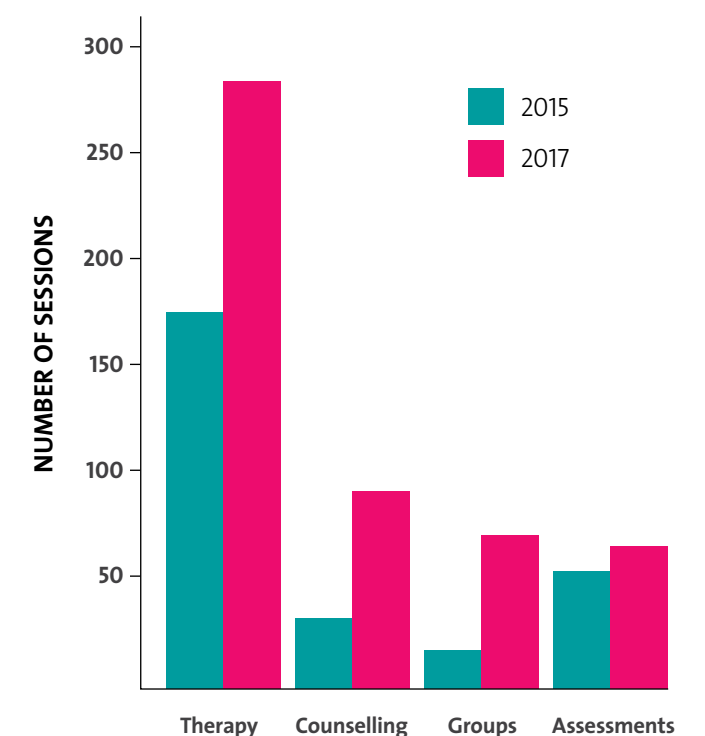
Classrooms are challenging learning environments for children with a hearing loss, and this small group program has been designed by The Shepherd Centre for children in their early primary school years to develop the communication skills, confidence and assertiveness they need every day in these learning environments. In particular they work on:

- listening from a distance
- participating in group situations
- understanding in background noise
- responding appropriately to the conversations of their peers
- working with classmates to problem-solve and interpret social scenarios and emotions

Parents participate in a parallel program, learning the skills required to help their child manage social situations and express and cope with their emotions.

Following the success of this program we are working with the Centre for Emotional Health at Macquarie University to develop a subsequent 9-12 year old Confident Kids program for rollout in 2018.

## SCHOOL AGE SERVICES PROVIDED IN 2017



2017 saw a significant rise in our School Age Services across all areas from previous years, as we launched fully in to the school age space.

# TELEINTERVENTION

Increasingly The Shepherd Centre is adapting to meet the growing needs and demands on families and provide our services and programs in flexible, accessible ways. Teleintervention is one such way that has transformed the provision of services for families who live significant distances from centres, or who aren't able to attend the centre in person due to commitments.

**2017 outcomes from our Teleintervention Program show that they are on par with children receiving an in-person service.**

**The Shepherd Centre is the first in the field internationally to be able to offer tele-group programs to children and families.** Families videoconference into in-person groups, or join specific tele-groups, where we facilitate a group for families through teleintervention, as we would do in person. It's been a priority for us to find ways all Shepherd Centre services can be accessible to families regardless of location, situation, commitments or setting.

**THE LANGUAGE SKILLS**  
of the children in the  
teleintervention group were  
**IN THE SAME RANGE**  
with children receiving an  
in person service

**37 FAMILIES**  
from rural and  
remote areas received  
teleintervention  
services in 2017

## WHAT OUR STAFF SAY...

'The tele Music Time group was a really positive experience. I thoroughly enjoyed it and the families were good fun and really made it work.'

## WHAT PARENTS SAY...

'We're so happy with the program – the regular contact is really useful, the weekly and now fortnightly sessions let us know we're on the right path.'

'Teleintervention is really helpful. It means not travelling every week. It works really well although sometimes it is hard when my child tends to run the session!'

'I wasn't sure a tele-group would work but as my child is the only one with hearing loss where we live, I wanted to try it and it was great!'



## THOMAS' STORY

Thomas lives near the rural country town of Dunedoo in Western NSW. Now five years old, Thomas was implanted with cochlear implants in both ears at just five months of age. His parents Sarah and Henry were initially concerned that there would be no services to support their son with hearing loss given their remote location.

'We were worried we might have to uproot our lives and relocate in order to find essential services for him,' said Sarah.

However the Armstrong family were able to access the life-changing early intervention therapy offered by The Shepherd Centre through their popular Teleintervention Program which enabled Thomas and his parents to participate in sessions through videoconferencing facilities and online programs.

'Thomas is not limited by his diagnosis of hearing loss in any way,' said Sarah. 'We are extremely optimistic about his future.'

Thomas is five years old and now attends mainstream school with his mates. He was one of 44 children to graduate through The Shepherd Centre's Early Intervention Program in 2017.



# LEARNING TOGETHER

## TALK TOGETHER

An intervention and direction education program for all parents and carers when they first join The Shepherd Centre. It provides them with the fundamental skills and knowledge they need to guide their child in developing listening, speech, language and social skills through the supportive network of other families, professionals and health providers.

## LISTEN & LEARN

Our flagship package program, developed and constantly adapted from internal and external evidence, to guide and coach families in supporting their child listen and speak in their everyday contexts and natural settings. Delivered through a team of Listening & Spoken Language Specialists/Speech Pathologists; Paediatric Audiologists; and Child and Family Counsellors working in partnership with every child's family.

## ACOUSTIC SKILLS MUSIC PROGRAM

Designed by music therapists, this program focusses on positive parent-child interactions through musical activities that provide critical listening opportunities to develop the acoustic and intonational skills needed for language and communication.

## CONFIDENT KIDS

Our world-first social skills program for children with hearing loss. This program has been customised for children of different ages (4-5 years, 6-8 years and 9-12 years) to teach the social, pragmatic, confidence, assertiveness and Theory of Mind skills needed for everyday successful interactions and communication.

## OFF TO SCHOOL

Specifically designed for children with hearing loss to prepare them in their key transition to school stage. Focussing on pre-literacy and numeracy concepts, classroom vocabulary, skills and etiquette, and a focus on independent use of assistive listening devices. A concurrent parent program equally helps prepare parents for this important milestone.

## EMPOWER ME

Following the philosophy "it takes a village to raise a child", Empower Me is a short workshop program for extended family members and caregivers to understand more about hearing, language development and how they can help and support these aspects and of their child with hearing loss, developing the capacity and connection of these relationships.



## OUR PRESCHOOLS

Our two Preschool Programs are based in Wollongong and Casula. We offer small, language-rich environments to support children with and without hearing loss in an integrated environment. During 2017 we had a strong focus on community involvement with our children participating in Pet Week, Harmony Day and Loud Shirt Day while also enjoying performances from the local public school dance group. We had some wonderful support from Quota International and the HMAS Albatross during the year.

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

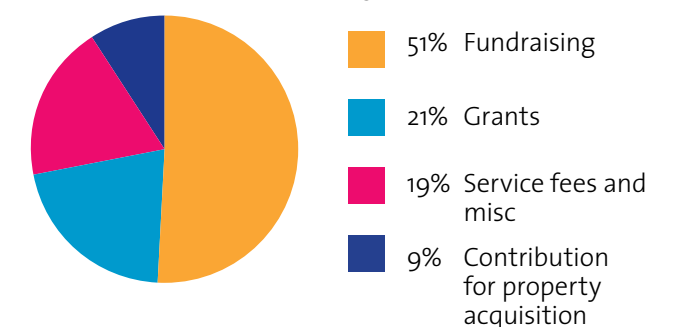
Our audited financial statements are available on our website and have been lodged with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission.

We achieved a very healthy surplus of \$1.83m in 2017 compared to a deficit of \$965k in 2016 and as a result our net assets increased by 38%. The outcome for 2017 was significantly influenced by two large and generous gifts which included a distribution from the estate of the late Eric Dare and the use of the gift from Sargents Pies Foundation to purchase a property in Campbelltown.

We are continuing to advocate with the Federal Government, the NDIS and the NDIA to highlight how crucial adequate funding of multidisciplinary early intervention programs is for the long term outcomes of hearing impaired children. In the meantime we remain committed to providing the children in our early intervention programs the services they require to achieve the best possible outcome regardless of the level of NDIS funding provided. We are able to do this through ongoing philanthropic support of our generous donors.

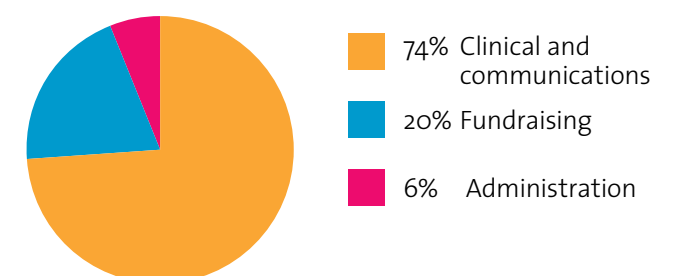
### OPERATIONAL INCOME

Where the money comes from



### OPERATIONAL EXPENDITURE

Where the money goes



Our group programs would not be possible without our loyal supporters



# OUR INNOVATION JOURNEY

The Shepherd Centre has never been afraid to do things differently. Since its inception, Dr Shepherd and his family had a vision for his children that was more than what was available at the time. Over the years this has led to hearing devices in both ears, equipment for the first newborn screening of hearing in Australia, and intervention and services for children with all types and levels of hearing loss. Since that

time we have continued Dr Shepherd's vision to improve what we do and how we do it, for the benefit of all children and families.

Our programs and services innovate and evolve through our research, evidence in the field and feedback from graduates and current and past families.

## PROGRAMS

### TALK TOGETHER

A platform to empower and enable new families with fundamental information about their child's hearing loss, listening and communication development in the early years, in a supportive, facilitated setting.

### LISTEN & LEARN AND SOUND DIRECTION PLUS

Tailored and customised programs for children with all levels of hearing loss.

### LISTEN FOR LITERACY

Furthering listening and communication development into the vital pre-literacy skills children need to learn to read, prior to and when they begin in the classroom.

## CUSTOMISED SERVICE DELIVERY

### INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP PROGRAMS

To provide both parents and children the opportunity to learn in focussed, intensive individual settings and from peers and others in social, group contexts.

### INDIVIDUAL NEEDS OF EACH CHILD AND FAMILY

Personalised programs and service plans for each and every family to meet their individual needs, focus and development areas.

### CONCURRENT PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Providing opportunities for parents and carers to learn by watching, observing, supporting and discussing strategies and techniques to continue to develop their child's skills.

## STRATEGIC GROWTH

### eLEARNING

"Connect", our parent portal, provides families the opportunity to access many of our programs through an on online eLearning platform. This offers the flexibility of learning at a time and place that suits them, compatible with their home devices.

### PROGRESSIVE PROGRAMS ACROSS AGES AND STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

Expansive range of services to encompass the needs of infants, through toddlers, preschool years, beginning, middle and later school age and early high school as children's goals change and develop.

### EXPANDED RANGE OF GROUP PROGRAMS

Focussed on supporting all areas of a child's development, including music, social participation and inclusion skills, school readiness, early literacy, parenting programs and courses specifically for extended family members.

### PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION TRAINING COURSES

In 2017 we provided 14 Professional Development workshops to specialist professionals and teachers in the field across NSW, Tasmania and the ACT. All our courses are nationally and internationally accredited.



### IN PERSON AND TELE-INTERVENTION SERVICES

We pride ourselves on being able to now provide all of our services and programs both in person at all of our centres and through our tele-intervention program, direct to families homes and everyday environments.

Special thank you to our partners for ongoing collaboration



Our programs and successful outcomes wouldn't be possible without our key supporters





# OUR RESEARCH BASE

In 2017, through guidance by its Research Advisory Committee, The Shepherd Centre was involved in internal and external research projects with organisations including the Hearing CRC, Cochlear Limited, the MARCS Babylab at Macquarie University (Child Language Lab, Centre for Emotional Health and ARC Centre of Excellence in Cognition), Western Sydney University, Queensland University, Sydney University, Newcastle University, Griffith University, Melbourne University, First Voice organisations and the National Acoustic Laboratory. These projects and those over the next few years cover the areas of:

- social skills
- mental health
- inclusion and participation
- teleintervention and remote services
- unilateral and mild hearing loss
- functional listening skills
- early literacy development
- parental engagement
- best practice in cochlear implantation
- speech clarity
- school age outcomes
- language development
- the impact of the NDIS

## KEY COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

**The Functional Listening Index – Paediatric (FLI-P)**, with the HEARing CRC, Macquarie University and Cochlear Limited. The FLI-P is the first listening tool to provide a way to understand how a child is using their access to sound to acquire “real world” listening skills and develop their language.

**Seeds of Language Development: Development of hearing impaired infants’ speech perception and vocalisation over the first three years of life** with the MARCS institute and the University of Western Sydney. This project examines the aspects of language acquisition that predict later language delay associated with hearing loss, to inform improvements to interventions.

**Acquisition of Plural Morphology** with the Child Language Lab at Macquarie University. This project found that children with hearing loss developed the knowledge of English grammatical rules differently to children with typical hearing. We are now working on what this means for intervention and teaching strategies.

**Going Digital: Enabling caregivers to optimise the linguistic environment for children with significant hearing loss** with the Hearing CRC and Melbourne University. The first part of this project established the current state of affairs in teleintervention and is on developing and implementing a decision aid for parents to decide if teleintervention, face-to-face or a combination is the best service delivery method for them.

**Social skills and Theory of Mind in graduating children** with The Early Start Program and the University of Wollongong. This project examined the social understanding, responsiveness and engagement of children. Findings indicate that in formal testing of Theory of Mind acquisition (an indicator of social understanding) children at The Shepherd Centre were on a par with their hearing peers in the total number of skills acquired however the order in which they acquired skills was different to typical hearing children.

Our key research partners



## REFLECTIONS FROM A PAST STUDENT

I was born with a bilateral sensorineural profound hearing loss – which means I can’t hear. Except I can – I am a hearing, speaking member of society who just happens to be totally deaf. While I can read and talk and write, this has come at the great cost of 17 years of therapy and rehabilitation, surgery and advocacy.

In a world of uncertainty, we are inclined to pathologise and diagnose everything we can. Every idiosyncrasy has a clinical definition in a medical dictionary. People tend to view disability as different to “the norm” – the unlucky outcome in the clear-cut binary of typical versus atypical.

Being born profoundly deaf, I have experienced this binary in action. Because of years of speech and auditory therapy, people tend to separate me from my disability and treat me as a total equal. While complimentary, this treatment tends to disregard my requirements as people assume that I’m somehow not actually deaf or my “level” of deafness is inconsequential.

‘I’m a speaking, listening deaf person, which defies all stereotypes but represents a small and under-appreciated minority’

People assume that I’m joking when I say I can’t hear them, or they don’t understand how I can miss things when I have cochlear implants and auditory therapy. This is because of a black and white mindset around hearing loss – I don’t fit the traditional definition of a deaf person (ie I can speak and hear) and therefore my disability and my ability can’t be reconciled.

I believe that disability should be perceived as a spectrum, rather than a matter of black and white. Sometimes I can hear, and sometimes I can’t. I’m a speaking, listening deaf person, which defies all stereotypes but represents a small and under-appreciated minority.

*Hamish Fairlie is a graduate of The Shepherd Centre.*



## OUR BOARD

### MR PETER MATTICK AM, CHAIRMAN

Peter has a long history supporting charities both personally and professionally. He joined the Board after learning about the organisation's world-renowned programs through his friend Michael Shepherd. As a co-founder of leading marketing and communications company Salmat, Peter knows the importance of communication. The Shepherd Centre's vision to assist deaf children achieve spoken communication with their families resonated strongly with him.

### MRS COLLEEN CHAPMAN, DIRECTOR

Colleen is an experienced finance professional with a proven track record in successful financial and change management in some of the largest insurance firms in Australia. Colleen first became involved with The Shepherd Centre when her son Regan was born with severe hearing loss in 2004 and has worked closely with the team throughout his ongoing journey.

### MS FIONA FAIRLIE, DIRECTOR

Past-parent Fiona has a background in marketing and advertising. She created and managed her own fundraising event for The Shepherd Centre called "The Walk-for-Talk Fun Run". Fiona won the inaugural City2Surf charity prize in 2007, raising over \$30,000 for The Shepherd Centre. Fiona has been involved with The Shepherd Centre for over 15 years, since her son was diagnosed with a profound hearing loss at eight months. Fiona now works with vision and hearing-impaired school students in mainstream schools in the Catholic Education Office's Sensory-Impairment Program.

### MR CHRIS LADAS, DIRECTOR

In 2006, Chris experienced two significant life changes – in partnership with his family, he took over Melissa Confectionery; and in the same year, Chris and his wife welcomed their second child, Alexander, who was born with profound hearing loss. It was shortly after this that the Ladas family was introduced to The Shepherd Centre. Chris was appointed to the Board as a parent representative in 2008, and says his appointment has enabled him to give back to The Shepherd Centre in a significant and meaningful way.

### MR PHILIP ROSSI, DIRECTOR

Philip's first experience of The Shepherd Centre was during his school days, when he became great friends with Danny and Penny Shepherd. However, it wasn't until his son Charlie was born and diagnosed with hearing loss in 2002 that The Shepherd Centre became a major part of Philip's life. As the active owner of a large private company, Philip brings both commercial experience and strategic insight to the Board.

### DR HUGH TORODE, DIRECTOR

Hugh gained Fellowship at the Royal Australian College of Obstetrics and Gynaecology in 1986 and began Consultant Practice at Royal North Shore Hospital in 1988. He also took on a Consultant post at the Mater Hospital when it opened in 1991 and North Shore Private in 1998. His son Will has hearing loss and is a former student of the centre. They share a love of sailing and, in 2013, sailed the Sydney to Hobart race to raise funds for The Shepherd Centre.

### MS SUSAN TURNER-KAPSANIS, DIRECTOR

Susan first became involved with The Shepherd Centre when her son, Alex, was diagnosed with hearing loss in 2001. Susan brings her legal, business and personal experience of hearing loss to the Board. Susan is a lawyer as well as co-founder and director of health related businesses Vitalis Home Care and The Medical Concierge; previously she chaired The Kind Exchange in Singapore and was a Board member of The Northern Nursery School.

## OUR COMMITTEES

### Marketing Advisory Committee

Our Marketing Advisory Committee provides external advice and expertise to help guide our communications and promotional strategy.

**Samuel Shepherd**  
*Committee Chair*  
Managing Director at Bellringer Property Group.

**Peter Mattick AM**  
Co-founder of leading marketing and communications company, Salmat.

**Angus Browne**  
Co-founder of DMA Migration and is a digital marketing specialist.

**Adrian Falk**  
Director and founder of Believe Advertising & PR.

### Research Advisory Committee

Our Research Advisory Committee includes specialist researchers in associated fields, academics and key staff members and has been created to assist The Shepherd Centre's direction and involvement in research, analysis and outcomes.

**Professor Jennie Brand-Miller**  
*Committee Chair*  
Professor of Human Nutrition at the University of Sydney and Ambassador of Cochlear Limited.

**Professor Robert Cowan**  
Principal Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne, Adjunct Professor at Macquarie University and CEO of the HEARing Cooperative Research Centre.

**Professor Jim Patrick AO**  
Chief Scientist and Senior Vice-President of Cochlear Limited.

**Professor Greg Leigh AO**  
Director of the RIDBC Renwick Centre and Co-joint Professor at Macquarie University.

**Associate Professor Alison Purcell**  
Senior Lecturer at the University of Sydney.

**Dr Coral Kemp**  
Honorary fellow at Macquarie University, an independent special education consultant and a committee member of the International Society on Early Intervention.

### Finance and Audit Committee

The role of the Finance and Audit Committee is to provide financial oversight of The Shepherd Centre including budgeting, financial reporting, investment management, creation and monitoring of internal control policies and overseeing insurance risk.

**Mr David Mattick**  
*External Chair*  
Director of Matsal Investments which owns and manages property assets across the industrial, retail, hotel and accommodation sectors.

**Mr Peter Mattick AM**  
Chair and Board member of The Shepherd Centre

**Mr Philip Rossi**  
Board member of The Shepherd Centre

**Ms Colleen Chapman**  
Board member of The Shepherd Centre

## OUR AMBASSADORS



### PENNY MCNAMEE

Australian stage and screen actor, Penny McNamee is a proud ambassador to The Shepherd Centre. Currently appearing on long-standing TV drama, Home and Away, Penny's cousin Naomi came through The Shepherd Centre's programs.



### MIKE GOLDMAN

TV and radio personality, Mike Goldman, first started supporting The Shepherd Centre for its Loud Shirt Day fundraiser however his connection with the organisation became even deeper as one of his friends has two children who have come through The Shepherd Centre's Early Intervention Program.





# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

## POWER OF SPEECH

The Shepherd Centre hosted two Power of Speech events in Canberra in 2017. In March, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and politicians including Tanya Plibersek, Gai Brodtman, Dr Mike Freeland and Craig Laundry witnessed fantastic speeches by children with hearing loss from across Australia and New Zealand.

Representing The Shepherd Centre were the Nasser siblings, both past graduates of our Canberra centre. Older brother Ayham, 11, was diagnosed at birth with profound hearing loss and received a cochlear implant on his first birthday; while sister Saja, 9, was born with moderate to severe hearing loss and received her cochlear implants at age three.

In a rousing speech, Ayham delighted guests with his enthusiasm and big dreams for the future: 'I want to be the first professional soccer player with a cochlear implant, and show the world that deaf people have talent, and that they are capable of everything they want!'

*Power of Speech Major Corporate Sponsor*



In August, it was time for a debate with six young adults aged 15-25 presenting to an audience of politicians and hearing industry representatives about the topic "Assuring the future for people with hearing loss". Our remarkable young speakers questioned a panel of politicians about the future of hearing loss. The panellists Emma Husar MP, Trent Zimmerman MP and Senator Rachel Siewert all committed to making hearing health in Australia a national priority.

## LOUD SHIRT DAY

Thank you to everyone who got loud in October to support children who are deaf or hearing impaired for our biggest fundraiser of the year. It was a fantastic month that raised awareness and support for The Shepherd Centre and \$55,000 towards our services. Our ambassador Mike Goldman was kind enough to host a Loud Shirt Day fashion show at Cochlear Limited which included some particularly cute participants.

All of the events and fundraising makes a huge difference to supporting families that attend The Shepherd Centre.



## BRUCE TURNS 85

As we celebrated Dr Bruce Shepherd's 85th birthday in Bowral with a small gathering of his family, friends and Shepherd Centre supporters, we took a look back at the history of The Shepherd Centre, and celebrated the lasting legacy created by Dr Bruce and Annette Shepherd – one which has changed the lives of more than 2,500 children with hearing loss and their families.

What was to become The Shepherd Centre began as an idea in the minds and hearts of two men, and one woman, in the late 1960s. Orthopaedic surgeon Dr Bruce Shepherd and businessman Keith Campbell had been urged by Bruce's wife, Annette Shepherd, to build a kindergarten to support both deaf and hearing children. Their aim was to provide an integrated environment in which children with hearing loss could learn to listen and speak alongside their hearing peers.

Almost 50 years on, The Shepherd Centre's mission remains unchanged. Thanks to their incredible foresight and persistence, the future for children with hearing loss in Australia is very bright. We would like to express our deepest gratitude to Dr Shepherd on behalf of staff and students past and present, families, friends and supporters of The Shepherd Centre.





## THE VIALE'S LIFE-CHANGING GIFT

What would it mean to you to be able to change a child's life forever? Anna Viale tells us why her and her husband John, made the remarkable decision to leave a legacy to The Shepherd Centre in their Wills.

John and Anna's long history of giving stems from an innate desire to help others. Having moved to Australia from the UK in the mid-1980s, John and Anna have been strong supporters of organisations which give help and hope to those less fortunate.

'Both of our children work in medicine, and we passionately believe in the importance of advancing medical research in order to help others live a better life,' Anna explained.

'We wish to help others overcome their hurdles – and we are very committed to supporting the development of new technologies and techniques which will give people with disabilities the chance to live better lives.'

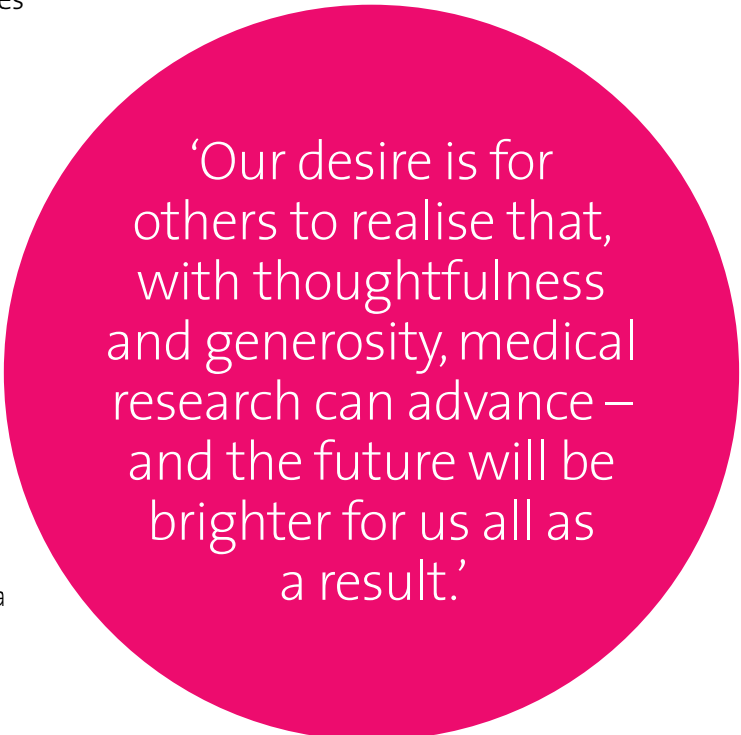
This commitment to improving the lives of others led Anna to The Shepherd Centre, where she was invited to tour one of our centres to see the impact of her support first-hand. This visit left an indelible mark.

'I've always believed that hearing is one of the most important gifts in life. By supporting The Shepherd Centre, you are truly giving the gift of hearing to children with disability – as well as the chance to live a full and fortunate life.'

Anna hopes that hers and John's generosity will act as a catalyst for others to do the same.

'It's so important to give hope to people who are less fortunate than ourselves,' Anna said. 'Our desire is for others to realise that, with thoughtfulness and generosity, medical research can advance – and the future will be brighter for us all as a result.'

Every gift, no matter how small, is life-changing for a child with hearing loss. After taking care of your loved ones, consider leaving a gift that will quite literally be music to a child's ears – and give them a voice. For a confidential, obligation-free chat about leaving a gift in your Will, contact Sharlene Dadd on 02 9370 4453 or [sharlene.dadd@shepherdcentre.org.au](mailto:sharlene.dadd@shepherdcentre.org.au).



'Our desire is for others to realise that, with thoughtfulness and generosity, medical research can advance – and the future will be brighter for us all as a result.'



# HOW YOU CAN HELP

## CHILD SCHOLARSHIP

Support a child's journey through The Shepherd Centre  
Contact us on 1800 020 030

## FUNDRAISING ONLINE

A fun and easy way to help. We work closely with Everyday Hero using their online fundraising portal. Whether you're running a race, trekking, climbing a mountain or celebrating a birthday, wedding or other life event, it's easy to get started.

## GIFTS IN WILLS

Leave your legacy by making a gift in your Will to The Shepherd Centre. More information at [www.shepherdcentre.org.au](http://www.shepherdcentre.org.au) or call 1800 020 030.

## DONATE ONLINE

[www.shepherdcentre.org.au](http://www.shepherdcentre.org.au)

## BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

Sign up online at [www.shepherdcentre.org.au/donate](http://www.shepherdcentre.org.au/donate)  
The most efficient way to make your donations, that provides long-term certainty to our children.

## VOLUNTEER

at any of our five centres. Opportunities in administration, grounds maintenance, events and more!

## CORPORATE VOLUNTEER DAY

Rally your staff together to come and help out at one of our centres. A fun and rewarding way for your team to help!



# The Shepherd Centre

Giving deaf children a voice



[shepherdcentre.org.au](http://shepherdcentre.org.au)

146 Burren Street, Newtown NSW 2042 Ph: 1800 020 030 [enquiries@shepherdcentre.org.au](mailto:enquiries@shepherdcentre.org.au)

*The Shepherd Centre is a not-for-profit organisation and has Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status with the Australian Tax Office. ABN 61 000 699 927*