



Indigenous EarInfoNetwork

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Program/project title	Now Hear Trial Project
Organisation/institution	NT DEET
State/Territory	NT
Online info	
Aim/objectives	To improve teacher and system capacity to provide effective learning opportunities to the large number of Indigenous students with Conductive Hearing Loss (CHL) in order to improve these students' learning outcomes.
Description	<p>Ear disease, consequent hearing loss and associated disabilities constitute a major public health problem in the Northern Territory. Indigenous children living in remote communities continue to experience overwhelmingly high rates of the ear disease Otitis Media (OM).</p> <p>In a recent survey of 29 communities throughout the NT conducted by the Menzies School of Health Research, an overall average of 25% of young Aboriginal children had perforated ear drums, 31% had middle ear fluid in both ears, and only 7% of children had normal middle ears.</p> <p>Five communities had perforation rates greater than 40%. The World Health Organisation states that in a population where 4% or more children have perforations with discharge, there is a massive public health problem requiring urgent attention.</p> <p>The associated hearing loss during speech and language development and the early school years (particularly where English is the second language) has life-long impact. Research has shown that infants and preschool children who experience prolonged OM have demonstrated problems associated with school performance on school</p>

readiness tests, reading, various literacy measures and poor comprehension. Good communication skills are essential for educational attainment, employment and social development.

Classroom organisation can contribute significantly to the learning outcomes for children with hearing loss. In the classroom the learning of children with hearing loss is affected by the effects of classroom and environmental noise, classroom acoustics, seating arrangements and communication behaviours. Teachers need to have training in classroom organisation, and acoustic management programs need implementation. There is a lack of system policy to ensure that this issue is appropriately addressed by the relevant areas of DEET.

The Now Hear trial project targets six focus schools in order to improve conditions for learning for Indigenous students with CHL through acoustic modifications to existing infrastructure, the introduction of amplification technologies, ear health programs and pedagogical practice.

The schools are Ntaria, Haasts Bluff, Mt Liebig, Yirrkala CEC, Milikapiti and MacFarlane Primary. Five Education Advisers - Hearing will support the implementation of the project in these schools. The Education Advisers- Hearing will take the necessary steps to:

- * measure and report to teachers/principals the acoustic classroom levels and develop practical modifications with schools to address acoustics issues
- * provide training to school staff on the maintenance of acoustic amplification equipment to assist students (such as hearing aids, FMs, Sound Field Systems)
- * provide systematised professional development to school staff to improve their capacity to effectively teach students with hearing loss
- * gather student performance data including attendance and literacy and numeracy outcomes measured against the NT Curriculum Framework
- * support policy changes implemented by health services for the provision of screening, audiological testing and treatment of CHL, and
- * use of the Now Hear continuum (Attachment 2) as a means of monitoring and assessing schools' and teachers' capacity to meet the needs of students with CHL.

Anticipated project outcomes in the focus schools are:

- * improved educational outcomes for students with CHL
- * increased capacity for schools to address the needs of learners with CHL
- * increased numbers of schools with acoustic improvements to classrooms (acoustic modifications for two classrooms in each of the chosen schools)
- * improved uptake and sustainability of sound

	<p>field amplification systems (soundfield amplification systems for one classroom in each of the pilot schools)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * increased interagency involvement and support, and * improved Conductive Hearing Program accountability, quality assurance systems and quality improvement processes through: the monitoring of improvements in the effectiveness of learning for students with CHL; the ongoing development of the continuum as the key tool to measure school and teacher capacity to meet the needs of students with CHL; and the establishment of procedures for developing service agreements with schools and DHCS on a range of professional development and advisory services.
Timeline	2006 - 2007
Partners (if applicable)	<p>The Now Hear trial project targets six focus schools. The schools are Ntaria, Haasts Bluff, Mt Liebig, Yirrkala CEC, Milikapiti and MacFarlane Primary.</p>
Funding	Indigenous Education Strategic Initiatives Programme (IESIP)
Outcomes and outputs	<p>Improved educational outcomes for students with CHL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * increased capacity for schools to address the needs of learners with CHL * increased numbers of schools with acoustic improvements to classrooms (acoustic modifications for two classrooms in each of the chosen schools) * improved uptake and sustainability of sound field amplification systems (soundfield amplification systems for one classroom in each of the pilot schools) * increased interagency involvement and support, and * improved Conductive Hearing Program accountability, quality assurance systems and quality improvement processes through: the monitoring of improvements in the effectiveness of learning for students with CHL; the ongoing development of the continuum as the key tool to measure school and teacher capacity to meet the needs of students with CHL; and the establishment of procedures for developing service agreements with schools and DHCS on a range of professional development and advisory services.

Evaluation

The evaluation will be undertaken by an external evaluator and be completed in the first half of 2007.

Lessons learned

To be determined

Further information