

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**September 2014**

### **HEAR AND SAY WORLDWIDE APPOINTS NEW GLOBAL AMBASSADOR**

Hear and Say is delighted to welcome Jay Chou, singer, songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, actor and movie-maker to the appointment of Hear and Say WorldWide Ambassador. The announcement of this appointment will be a landmark signifying a change in the way Hear and Say has been working in Asia.

Previously, Hear and Say has trained individual professionals in Asian countries, but now we are ready to tackle a “whole continent” approach starting with a new ambitious project for Korea early in 2015. Professionals from some 20 programs for children receiving cochlear implants, and 70,000 deaf babies - more than 1,000 deaf babies born per year - will have the opportunity to learn to listen and speak. This will form a sound foundation for these children so they can learn to read, receive an education and have vastly increased employment opportunities.

Brisbane based not-for-profit Hear and Say is helping some of the approximately 32 million children in the world with preventable or treatable hearing loss by training hearing health professionals through its global professional training arm, Hear and Say WorldWide.

The goal is to show governments and communities that public health measures can effectively reduce the incidence of hearing loss, and that in the majority of cases, early diagnosis and proven interventions can reduce the significant impact of hearing loss (World Health Organization (WHO), 2013). Knowledge and training on how to do this is unavailable in many countries and areas.

Associate Professor, Dimity Dornan AO, Executive Director and Founder of Hear and Say said, Hear and Say WorldWide training helps provide the knowledge for establishing community-based programs similar to Hear and Say for prevention, identification and management of hearing loss in these areas.



"This work requires funding so that Hear and Say, itself a not-for profit program giving hearing services to over 650 children in Australia, is able to deliver professional training in low- and middle-income countries, said Associate Professor Dornan.

Asia, with nearly 12 million children with hearing loss, is one of the areas of critical need, according to the WHO, because of lack of awareness of hearing loss, its prevention and treatment, and use of drugs causing hearing loss. There are very few professionals trained to help young children in particular who need to be able to learn to listen and speak so they can communicate, be educated and become part of their communities.

An Ambassador has a very significant role to play because their public profile can help to showcase the need for support. As hearing loss is the most common disability in newborns, a celebrity Ambassador can shine light on this problem, often hidden from view because one cannot see hearing loss. This focus is critical in giving the everlasting gift of listening, talking and learning to these young children.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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