



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

EARBUS FOUNDATION OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA

VALUES, MISSION & VISION

Earbus Foundation of Western Australia's mission is to reduce the incidence and impact of middle ear disease (Otitis media) in Aboriginal and at-risk children in Western Australia to achieve parity with non-Indigenous children.

The Foundation exists to support all children and their families who may be at risk of developing Otitis media or hearing loss.

Our Vision is that current and future generations of Indigenous children can succeed at school unhindered by the debilitating effects of Otitis media and its impacts upon their ability to learn and achieve their full potential.

Our Vision also extends to early detection, prevention and access to diagnostic services of hearing loss for newborn babies.

Our Core Values are the centre of all our internal and external interactions and are fundamental to everything we do. These values are the non-negotiable, unchanging heart of our organisation. We stress the critical importance of all employees living these values and representing these values to the public we serve.

**BE OPEN & HONEST,
BE LOYAL & SUPPORTIVE, BE BRILLIANT**

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CHAIRPERSON REPORT

2021 was another challenging year for Earbus Foundation.

Like many NGO's, due to the ever-changing landscape of a world with the permanent yet unpredictable presence of COVID19, there were some tough but necessary decisions to be made around income and staffing as well as program delivery. I am proud of the decision made by CEO Paul Higginbotham to operate at capacity despite revenue challenges, meaning, for the second year of the coronavirus pandemic, Earbus did not seek to offset lost revenue by cutting staff.

It is decisions like these, as well as the way in which Earbus leadership and staff fiercely execute their roles as trustees of the donated dollar, that make me so proud to serve on the Board. I thank my fellow Board members for their dedication and support and for giving up their personal time for this fantastic organisation.

To the co-founders - Paul, Lara and Dee – your passion for the work Earbus does in hospitals and communities around our magnificent state hasn't wavered since those days around the kitchen table when you developed the model that has such a positive and measurable impact on the ear health of Aboriginal and educationally at-risk kids. I thank you for your continued enthusiasm and for your leadership.

To the amazing individuals that make up the Earbus team - you all did a wonderful job continuing your travel to towns and communities considering the environment and restrictions you have faced. I have frequent contact with a lot of people in communities around the state and the resounding sentiment is one of gratitude for the continuation of the service; that even though it was a bit restricted, comments came back to me that when things happen, services to communities are the first trips to be cancelled, and Earbus did the opposite. Earbus kept showing up.

And to our funding partners, I would like to thank all our supporters and sponsors from Government, corporate and private. From the smallest student fundraiser to multi-year partnerships, every dollar goes directly to achieving our mission.

Let's hope 2022 is a better year.

Sue Beath
Kariyarra Elder
Chairperson, Earbus Foundation



CEO REPORT

After the turmoil and disruption of 2020, we were hopeful that the impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic would have abated and some measure of normality could be restored in 2021. In many ways however, 2021 proved to be a more challenging year than its predecessor. For the first time in its 8-year history, the Foundation sustained an operating loss. The typical way to arrest this would have been to cut staff numbers significantly and close some unfunded programs. We chose not to do this, so some of the operating loss was self-inflicted in order to stay true to our core value of loyalty and supportiveness and retain our hard-working and committed staff.

The sources of difficulty were threefold; many trusts and philanthropists redirected their support to either COVID-specific activities or attendant mental health issues. Our usual grant seeking activities were thus diminished dramatically and around \$260,000 of annual income disappeared. One of our previous major sponsors did not renew its commitment and this left us in the difficult situation of withdrawing services from needy children and communities or continuing to offer our expertise and assistance. We chose the latter, albeit in a modified form. Our self-generated clinic and other income did not develop as strongly as we would have experienced in a pandemic-

free environment and so some losses were carried; the alternative would have been to shut this service down. In total our revenue side was down by around \$640,000 in 2021 – a 16% setback for a charity with a \$4 million income base.

So, considerable time was invested in re-thinking more efficient ways for Earbus Foundation to continue its important work. Management structures were the first to be reviewed and we opted for a flatter structure, which had always been our intention when establishing the charity. A default hierarchical structure emerged when Earbus expanded very rapidly in a short space of time and covered additional remote regions of WA. That has now been corrected and the flatter structure should be more efficient as well as more suited to an organisation that aspires to be close to its clients – communities, families and children.

Flattening the organisational structure took us on a journey to empower our clinical Outreach teams and strengthen their decision-making options with critical support from management. This important piece of developmental work was outsourced to Perth-based consultancy The Knowledge Society and generously funded by Lotterywest. This involved mapping the Earbus experience for clients, clinicians and communities in detail and agreeing a suite of meaningful performance measures that align closely with our values of openness and honesty, loyalty and supportiveness and brilliance. The future of Earbus Foundation and its services is being crucially shaped by this work and we hope its impact will be manifested as we commence our next year of regional services.

Searching for efficiencies and restructuring management allowed us to cushion the loss of income, and although

our operating loss was significant, our accumulated reserves are considerable and allowed us the luxury of making choices that stopped children and communities from losing access to valuable services and support. Organisational change always challenges staff morale and some people chose to move on to other employment. While colleagues are always missed when they leave, the truth is that everyone will eventually leave and need to be replaced, and there can be a sense of excitement and renewal as new staff join with refreshing enthusiasm and different skills.

In recruiting Gabriela Budilova as our new Business Manager, we said goodbye to Diane Boyce, who had made a remarkable contribution to Earbus Foundation which included a year of voluntary bookkeeping in the foundational stages. In acknowledging that the organisation had grown beyond her capacity to assist, Diane showed the same generosity and selflessness that led her to volunteer in the first place. Gabriela's recruitment was a seminal moment as it finally provided the time and expertise to update and streamline our finance and HR systems. The work that Gabriela has done in her short time with us has been seismic in its impact and we are deeply sorry to lose her due to a family relocation over East.

Our Kimberley program came to the end of its 4-year funding commitment from the State Government and we are enormously proud of the inroads we made into ear disease in this region, despite many challenges throughout the contract term. The Kimberley represents WA's – if not Australia's – sternest test for delivering regional and remote Outreach. To have a significant and measurable fall in disease across our sites was a validation that the Earbus model can perform in the toughest of environments and circumstances. While

there are many people to thank, I especially salute our AMS partners – Yura Yungi Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation (YY) and Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service (OVAHS) – for their unflinching support; our staff throughout for their commitment and hard work; and the former Health Minister, Roger Cook, for his support and funding to get the program underway.

Earbus Foundation has been very fortunate to attract strong corporate support to cover shortfalls in government funding for Aboriginal ear disease. WA's resources industry is world-class and the major source of national wealth; a world leader in both sustainability and remote technology deployment. WA is the world's largest iron ore supplier, with multiple iron ore projects, especially in the Pilbara region in the north of the state.

New mineral exploration now has the spotlight on lithium and vanadium to meet growing demand for green energy alternatives and new battery technologies. Around 60 per cent of Australia's gold reserves can be found in WA and the mineral exploration sector directly employs more than 20,000 people. (Source: <https://www.ausimm.com/insights-and-resources/mining-industry/australian-mining-industry>).

For such an impactful and influential sector, mining on traditional lands, it is vitally important that Aboriginal people share in this wealth creation and prosperity. All of our sponsors have invested in Earbus in order to enhance future employment prospects for local Aboriginal people and to support children to have a future consistent with their innate potential. Earbus Foundation is deeply grateful for this support coming as it does from across the sector – iron ore, petroleum, gold, lithium – and across the regions – Pilbara, Goldfields, Southwest and Perth. In 2021 this was our bulwark and underpinned our determination



City of Vincent Deputy Mayor Susan Gontaszewski with Earbus CEO Paul Higginbotham

to keep services running. Without these partnerships it is doubtful if much of value could be achieved. A special thanks to Alcoa Australia, who are underwriting a 3-year program, which in its launch year reached 23 sites and 660 children.

One of the three founders of Earbus Foundation, Dee Parker, brought her active clinical service to an end with our final Kimberley trip in November. Dee's astonishing contribution to improving Aboriginal ear health started with 90 week-long regional trips over 4 years from 2014 to 2017. Lara Shur and I were alongside her on almost every one of those trips and, working as a team, we learned so much from each other about ear disease, treatment, culture and families. I wish Dee a well-deserved and happy retirement – truly a privilege to work with, and learn from, such a consummately skilled professional.

A sad loss cast a cloud over 2021 with the passing of Dr Will Thornton in a motorcycle accident in the UK. In 2014 and 2015, Will was an Earbus GP stalwart and integral to the establishment of quality services and the development of Earbus Foundation. Will's passion, skill and good fellowship made all our trips together both successful and enjoyable. We felt his loss very keenly as a valued part of the Earbus family.

Three of our other consultant clinicians came to the end of their Earbus careers – Drs Sue Jackson and Karen Moller, and Nurse Practitioner Maggie Weyland-Peck. Again, they have all been with us since the early days and have been instrumental in building our reputation for clinical excellence and cultural safety. I have spent many hours sitting alongside each of them watching them treat children with respect, care and compassion, and I know they will be missed by their Earbus colleagues for their good fellowship as well as their clinical expertise.

All in all, a tough year! Made easier however, by the continuing hard work and dedication of our amazing staff and their passionate commitment to our shared values of openness and honesty, loyalty and brilliance – my thanks to all for their contribution in a difficult year.

Our Board stayed the course as we made tough choices and for their voluntary contribution we are especially grateful, as we are for Sue Beath's astute and knowledgeable leadership. Our Board has a 50/50 gender balance and a 50% Aboriginal representation and we are justifiably proud of its leadership and governance.

This 'new normal' is characterised by uncertainty, unpredictability and frequent disruption. It challenges all of us in ways we have not previously experienced and with the expectation that WA's state border will open in 2022, we have many more challenges to come. Needless to say these impacts are often most keenly felt by those whom society leaves behind – Aboriginal children, families and communities are sadly in this cohort more often than not. In 2022 we will endeavour to be there as a necessary and vital support in ensuring a better and fairer future for these important and First Australians across our state.

Paul Higginbotham
Earbus CEO

“We have many more challenges to come. Needless to say these impacts are often most keenly felt by those whom society leaves behind – Aboriginal children, families and communities are sadly in this cohort more often than not. In 2022 we will endeavour to be there as a necessary and vital support in ensuring a better and fairer future for these important and First Australians across our state.”

Paul Higginbotham
Earbus CEO

FACTS ABOUT OTITIS MEDIA

**Aboriginal children have the worst ear health of any people in the world,
with prevalence rates 10 times that of non-Indigenous children.¹**

Ear disease often results in an avoidable hearing loss in early childhood, and children who can't hear, can't learn.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) specifies that rates of Otitis media above 4% in children constitutes a "massive public health problem" requiring urgent attention (WHO/CIBA Foundation, 1996).

Costs to the community of middle-ear disease (OM):

- lost well-being (estimated between \$1.05b and \$2.6b a year);
- productivity and other non-financial costs (\$67 m annually); and
- the total top-down health system expenditure on OM (\$391.6m a year in 2008).²

Costs to WA education systems arise from children suffering educational and developmental delays, low levels of literacy and numeracy, school absences, behaviour issues and disengagement, leading to increased risk of contact with the juvenile justice system. Around 74% of juveniles in detention in WA are Aboriginal children, a massive overrepresentation. High rates of recidivism can lead to life-long entanglement in the justice system.

Aboriginal children in Australia experience an average of 32 months of middle-ear infections between the ages of 0 and 5 years, compared to just three months for non-Aboriginal children.³

OM is highly treatable, but left undiagnosed and untreated it has multiple flow-on effects that ultimately perpetuate the very poverty that gives rise to the disease in the first place, thus continuing the cycle. With effective treatment, children can avoid sustained hearing loss and have their opportunities to learn and succeed at school fully restored.

As various Australian Senate Committees have heard:

"...hearing impairment is a significant contributor to the causal pathway that represents a failure basically of education and health to deal with those issues and they get picked up by the justice system... hearing loss may not cause criminal activity, when considering the stigmatizing effects of hearing impairment on self-concept, educational attainment and social skills, there is a causal link to criminal activity."⁴

"There is a crisis in Aboriginal ear and hearing health in Australia. Aboriginal people suffer ear disease and hearing loss at up to ten times the rate of non-Aboriginal Australians, and arguably the highest rate of any people in the world"⁵

REFERENCES:

- 1 - Senate Inquiry of the 42nd Australian Parliament – "Hear Us: Inquiry into Hearing Health in Australia" 2010 p xv
- 2 - Report by Access Economics Pty Ltd for Glaxo Smith Kline, The Cost Burden of Otitis Media in Australia, February 2009
- 3 - Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008, p134
- 4 - http://www.aph.gov.au/senate/committee/clac_ctte/hearing_health/report/c08.htm#anc4
- 5 - Senate Community Affairs References Committee, 2010, p.xva

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

We thank our Auditors HTG Partners for their diligence, professionalism and advice. Earbus Foundation's Annual Audited Financial Statements are lodged with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission and can be downloaded from their website at www.acnc.gov.au

Operating Results

In 2021 Earbus Foundation returned a net loss of \$157,634, the first time the Association has traded negatively since services commenced. There was a significant diminution in the amount of grants for which we were eligible as most philanthropists and trusts shifted their focus to the COVID pandemic and related mental health issues.

Total income for 2021 was \$3,224,091 with expenses reaching \$3,381,725. With the cessation of the state government-funded Kimberley program on 30 September, our overall annual income dropped from a 2021 high of \$3.6 million. One of our major sponsors did not renew and this caused considerable budget pressure and some staffing adjustments; our monthly wages bill fell steadily from a high of \$200,000 to \$150,000 as we strove to minimise the impact.

We did not implement wide staff redundancies or cut programs, which meant we accepted an operating loss as the cost of staying true to our core value of loyalty and supportiveness.

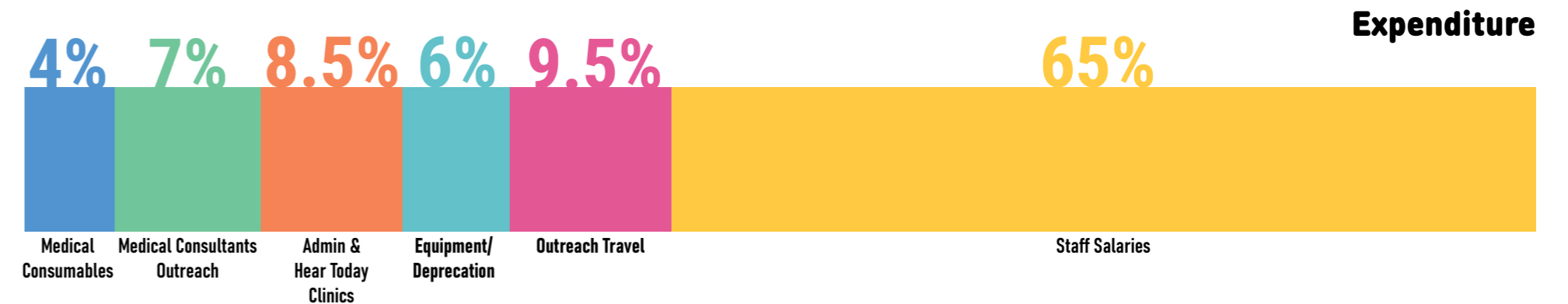
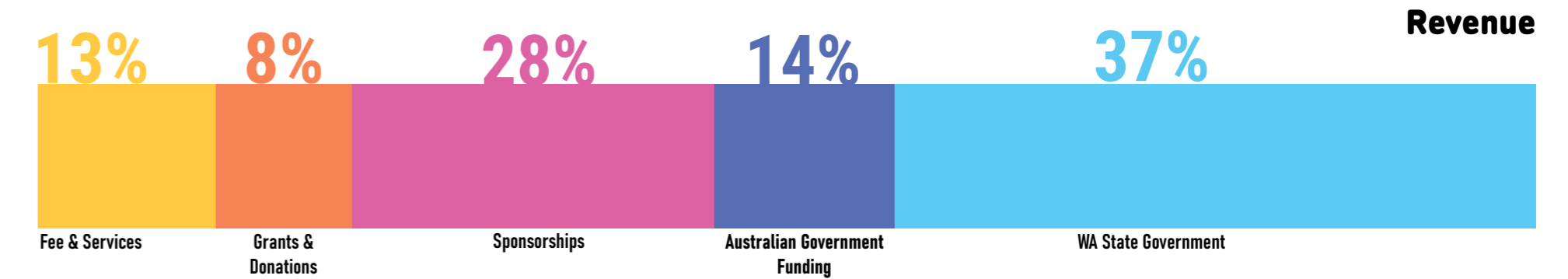
In previous years, Earbus Foundation has returned annual surpluses in line with - or exceeding - budget projections. Surplus accumulated funds are held as contingency to support long term stability, business reinvestment and, in 2021, allowed us the luxury of cushioning these impacts and accepting an operating loss. Current accumulated cash assets stand at \$1,786,169.

Capital Assets

Audiology and medical equipment funded by grants and donations rose due to grants from trusts and foundations throughout the year. With the assistance of BHP, we purchased a new Pilbara Central Earbus; non-current assets stand at \$927,485.

Funding Sources

Earbus holds contracts with both state and federal governments; provides contracted audiology services to WACHS; generates significant fee income from testing and assessment services at its Northbridge office (and elsewhere); and attracts philanthropic support from individuals and charitable trusts. The Neilson Foundation has been the largest individual contributor, with generous and much appreciated six-figure donations, in each of the past five years.





DIRECTOR, CLINICAL SERVICES

The clinical services at Earbus focus on provision of ear services to those in need who are particularly vulnerable, be it as a result of their age, remote location or social circumstances. Our youngest client this year was seen before their due birth date - he was prematurely born - and our oldest client this year was 85 years of age. We have seen clients from Esperance to Wyndham and many places in between. At our Hear Today Perth-based clinic we promote Expert, Experienced and Ethical services and I think this captures the work all our clinicians have undertaken this year. Those who choose our services as paying clients assist those who need our services but are unable to pay.

2021 was challenging but exciting for clinical staff working across our programs. Our staff must be some of the most adaptable and flexible professionals around and there was nothing thrown at them this year that they didn't take in their stride. A remarkable group of audiologists, nurses, nurse practitioners and ear screeners working collaboratively with many external partners to achieve outstanding results for so many children and families.

Our services across programs encompass remote Outreach programs, metro Outreach, Newborn Hearing Screening, the Hear Today Clinic and the introduction of hearing aid fittings for adults living rurally, as well as a few in Perth. This addition ensures that we are able to provide

assistance to as many people as possible in regional WA who would otherwise need to travel to Perth for services. Our telehealth services continued, allowing some clients to have medical services not otherwise available.

The audiology team launched Auditory Processing Assessments at our satellite clinics in both Bunbury and Kwinana this year. These clinics aim to assist both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children in being diagnosed with a debilitating disorder that often results following a long history of middle ear disease. When the brain is deprived of sound during those early formative years it may fail to develop neural pathways necessary to make sense of our increasingly complex world. Our audiologists are able to assist families once diagnosis occurs so that rehabilitation options tailored to each individual child can be offered.

The clinical team have been mentored and guided under our Clinical Governance Framework with Clinical Patron Professor Harvey Coates providing leadership in this area. We continue to provide culturally safe spaces for children and families and this is evident by the high consent and uptake rates we have across regions and programs. Part of this process included having audiology students from University of Queensland and Melbourne University join our teams on the road so that learning can be transferred to future generations of audiology clinicians.

I continue to believe that the Earbus Outreach Program offers outcomes and results that need to be replicated across the rest of Australia. Our partner organisations are pivotal to these outcomes, with each bringing opportunities to learn from each other for the benefit of Western Australian children. This year our partner organisations included Wirraka Maya Aboriginal

Health Service Corporation (Port Hedland), South West Aboriginal Medical Services (SWAMS), Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Services (PAMS), Derbarl Yerrigan Aboriginal Medical Services, Ord Valley Aboriginal Health Service (OVAHS), Yura Yungi Medical Service Aboriginal Corporation (YY), Royal Flying Doctor Service, Starlight Children's Foundation, regional and remote schools, Department of Child Protection and Family Services, Leonora Pharmacy, Pilbara Pharmacy Services, Gumala Aboriginal Corporation, Guardian Pharmacy Tom Price and Jigalong Aboriginal Corporation.

Likewise, there are outstanding clinicians who dedicate time to work with us for the benefit of kids in the regions. ENT specialists Dr David Hall, Dr Anton Hinton-Bayre and Professor Harvey Coates have each invested time in upskilling clinical staff and we are truly appreciative of their service to community and to Earbus. This year we have also said farewell to Nurse Practitioner Ms Maggie Wayland-Peck, along with General Practitioners Dr Sue Jackson and Dr Karen Moller. All three have worked with us for many years and we will miss their knowledge and comradery on the road.

The Earbus team of audiologists has continued to provide audiology services to communities in Newman, South Hedland and the Kimberley under contract with WA Country Health Services (WACHS). These clinics are invaluable in ensuring that information is shared between organisations so that duplication is avoided and that those requiring services are able to receive them in a timely way.

Earbus clinicians have continued to support the Ears2learn Program, which is now operating through Goodstart, a not-for-profit Early Learning and Childcare Kindergarten. Screener Reggie Van Heythuysen provides

basic ear health screening to children under 4 years of age across the Perth Metro region. Reggie also accompanied the Pilbara team on an Outreach trip in August so that she could broaden her skills and see the Earbus model in action. Children requiring follow up treatment and educational support for ear health are seen by the Metro Earbus team to allow a seamless service provision to these families.

Despite how we all feel in this COVID world, travel for work isn't actually glamorous and our teams endure long hours, extreme heat - and sometimes cold, too, in the desert in winter - and many hours away from family and friends. Why do they do this you may ask? A passion for social justice and a desire to give back to WA children. These are people I am proud to be associated with and I take this opportunity to thank each one for their ongoing support and efforts.

Dr Lara Shur Au.D

Director, Clinical Services & Outcomes
Chief Operations Officer & Co-Founder

RESEARCH PROJECTS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

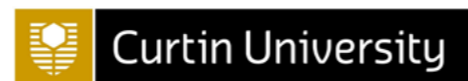
This year we have had some opportunities to present the work we do at national conferences and local events. Audiology Australia, the national body for audiologists, accepted both of two abstracts we submitted. One presentation focussed on the work we have done in regional and remote WA over the last 5 years, and the other looked at the complexities of testing children from diverse backgrounds. These presentations were part of an online national conference.

Earbus is involved with two exciting research projects in collaboration with our research partners across the globe. Firstly, we are working with the developers of the OtoSight Middle Ear Scope, formerly known as the TOMiScope. PhotoniCare Inc., who are based in the United States, have designed and built a tool for testing for Otitis media to help clinicians who aren't ENT specialists diagnose what is actually going on behind the eardrum.

This scope is a form of ultrasound that can show what is happening behind the eardrum and can be used even when the ear canal is largely obstructed. The research project is looking at how this may assist the clinical team in identifying Otitis media more accurately.

Locally, the Earbus team are working with University of Western Australia and Curtin University's Biomedical Engineering Researchers on the Earbuddy project: A non-invasive treatment for Otitis media with effusion.

The Earbuddy is a sippy-cup styled device that assists in equalising pressure within the middle ear space. It has been trialled successfully in a small cohort of children under 4 years in the Ears2learn program and it is hoped that these outcomes can be replicated with a larger group of children in 2022. Regional Aboriginal children will be included in the clinical trial once ethics approval is obtained.



PROFESSOR HARVEY COATES RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP AT GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY

Australian Indigenous children suffer chronic middle ear infection at amongst the highest rates in the developed world. Individuals and communities experience long term health, social, educational and economic consequences resulting from this infection. Developing an effective vaccine could prevent such infections, alleviate suffering and widen future life opportunities for all Australian children, particularly Australian Indigenous communities.

Earbus Foundation proudly announced a 4-year partnership with Griffith University in Queensland to create The Harvey Coates Research Scholarship honouring our Patron, Professor Harvey Coates AO, and acknowledging his lifelong commitment to Aboriginal ear health.

Earbus' support will fund a PhD student to conduct Otitis media research in Griffith University's Institute of Glycomics on the Gold Coast. The Institute for Glycomics, founded 21 years ago, uses multidisciplinary research approaches centred around glycomics to address diseases of global impact.



Research will focus on development of a new vaccine to prevent middle ear infection in Australian Indigenous children. This project will expand a successful pilot program which developed a novel 'pilot conjugate vaccine' that targets two of the main bacteria that cause middle ear infection, namely, *Moraxella catarrhalis* (Mcat) and Non-typeable *Haemophilus influenzae* (NTHi).

The unique pilot conjugate vaccine includes a carbohydrate antigen from Mcat and a protein from NTHi. Encouragingly, the research found mice injected with this novel vaccine made antibodies that kill strains of both bacteria. This was recently published in the scientific journal *Vaccine* (2019).



Earbus Founders Lara Shur, Paul Higginbotham and Dee Parker



Blue skies in the Pilbara



REGIONAL PROGRAMS

PROGRAM REPORT

KIMBERLEY

The Kimberley Outreach Program has been the most challenging program for Earbus from a geographical, political and clinical perspective. This program has run from 2018-2021 and provided services to thousands of children during this time. The Kimberley is the region with the most transient of populations, with some children changing schools and locations several times in a school year. Continuity of service provision proves to be difficult as a result and, because the Earbus Outreach Program wasn't funded across the entire Kimberley, only the East Kimberley, tracking and clinical case management is a full time endeavour.

This region also includes a school with 369 children enrolled in the program and this is only 67% of the Aboriginal children at this school - so a day at the school can involve walking 10-15kms to round up the kids who need to be seen.

The team saw 781 children this year for services, with 236 new children added to the program. The program ran across 14 sites spanning an area of 117,514 km². Over the life of the program, 1,698 children received ear health services.

Staffing a regional office during this year became particularly challenging as the uncertainty around funding impacted our ability to recruit and retain

ear health staff. Recruiting in the regions is difficult enough when we can offer a 3-year contract. Trying to recruit with funding for less than a year was impossible. Our Kimberley-based team saw many changes in personnel over the year and most of the program was delivered using a FIFO model of service delivery as a result. The Team performed 1,761 ear checks, 568 audiology tests and offered 776 additional Nurse Practitioner consultations.

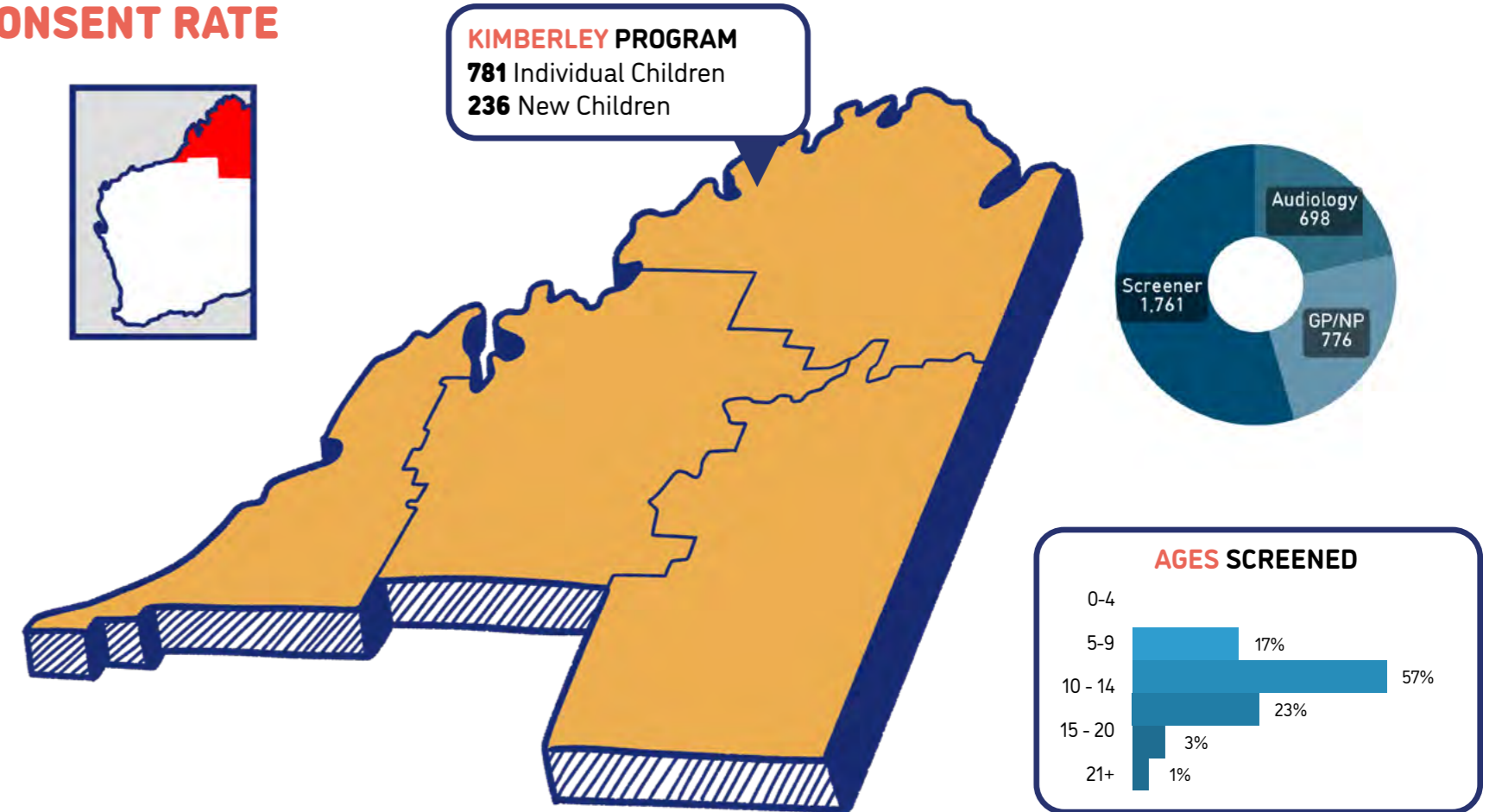
We also had students from Kimberley Aboriginal Medical Service (KAMS) join the teams for several months this year, as we committed to capacity building with local people as vital for the Kimberley region.

Sadly, the East Kimberley program funding has now ceased following the Health Department's decision not to renew the contract for service provision. Paul, Dee and I undertook our last clinical trip together in November - quite an occasion following 8 years of travelling and working together to fix some very challenging ears across the state.

Dr Lara Shur Au.D
 Director, Clinical Services & Outcomes
 Chief Operations Officer & Co-Founder



3,235 CONSULTS
82% PEAK CONSENT RATE



PROGRAM REPORT PILBARA SOUTH

This year we have seen growth within the Earbus program in the Pilbara South region, with more children becoming familiar with our services and team. We have seen a shift in the students from Paraburdoo particularly, who began the year feeling apprehensive, which is understandable for young children, ending the year being excited by the prospect of visiting the bus.

This is a testament to the hard and continuous work from the team, led by Audiologist Adelina Duncan and Registered Nurse Catherine Zeevaarder. Their commitment to the region has allowed children to have continuity of care and has promoted trust within the program. A big thank you to our Nurse Practitioners Ludmila Kosheleva, Deirdre Louw, Stephanie Dowden and Maggie Wayland-Peck for their work in the Pilbara South region this year.

It is wonderful to finish the year with a consent rate of 70.5% after starting 2021 on 54%. Within the Pilbara South region, we completed a total of 995 screens in 2021. Of the 284 individual students that we saw this year, 132 children were new to the Earbus program. While Hearing Loss and Otitis media rates are high for this region, it is wonderful

to see the rate of Chronic Suppurative Otitis media sitting at 2.5% for the year, well below the World Health Organisation's benchmark of 4%.

On our final trip to Tom Price this year we revisited a student that had been referred to the ENT after having ongoing fluid in her ears. She had grommets inserted in October and was ecstatic when she told the Earbus team "I'm so happy I can hear better now".

The total pass rate for ear screens in the region was 58% in 2021, a wonderful result for the children. The percentage of eardrum perforations present is the lowest in all Pilbara regions at 3.2%.

We send our sincerest thanks to our wonderful partners: to Gumala Aboriginal Corporation for supporting the team with accommodation in Tom Price; for the continuation of our strong partnerships with Nintirri Centre and WACHS, which provides us with ongoing support in the region; and to our major sponsor for this region, Rio Tinto.

Lucy Muir
Outreach Program Coordinator

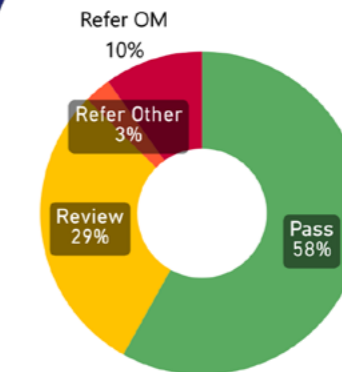
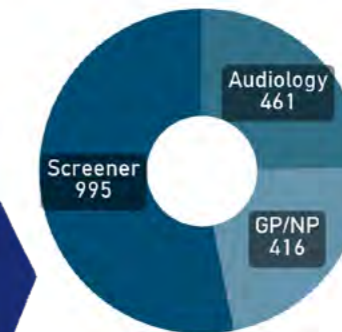
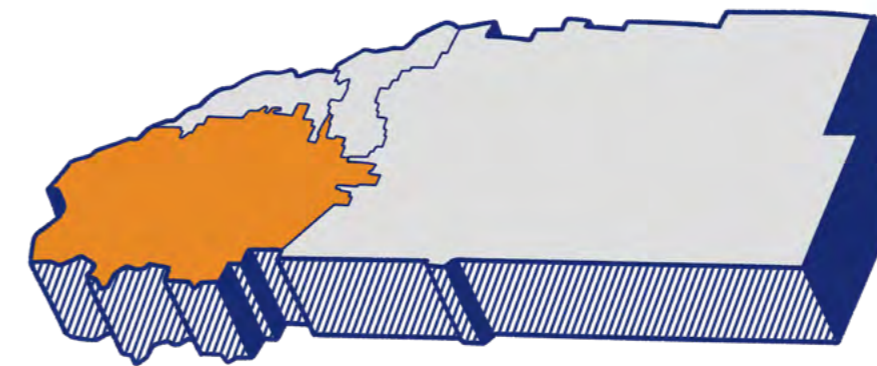
"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children at educational risk in Paraburdoo have benefitted from the regular, attentive and culturally-responsive care of Earbus Foundation's outreach team. Earbus continues to enable our school and community to identify children who are in need of additional health care or educational adjustment due to poor ear health or hearing loss, and provides prompt treatment for those in need. This includes some of our most vulnerable students, thereby supporting their full participation in school. The Foundation's ongoing work in remote communities where health services can be inconsistent is highly valued."

Caragh Livingstone
Deputy Principal - Paraburdoo Primary School

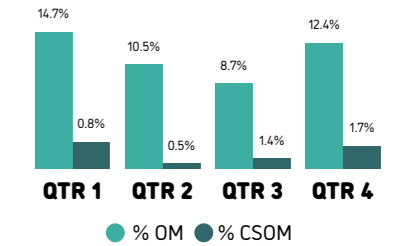
1,872 CONSULTS
70% PEAK CONSENT RATE



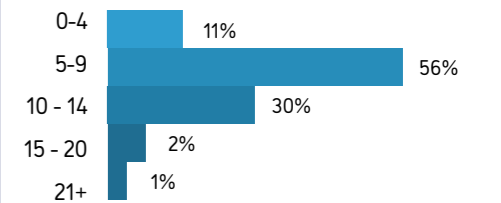
PILBARA SOUTH PROGRAM
284 Individual Children
132 New Children



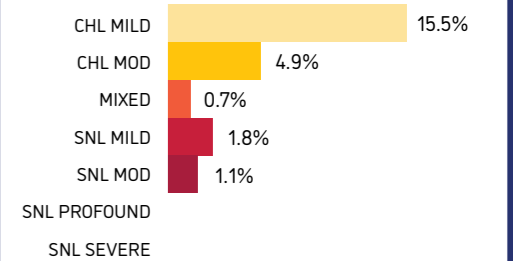
ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF EAR DISEASE FOR CHILDREN IN THE PROGRAM



AGES SCREENED



TYPES OF HEARING LOSS



PROGRAM REPORT

PILBARA CENTRAL

It was a very exciting start to the year in the Pilbara Central region with a purpose built Earbus launched at South Newman Primary School on the 22nd of March. The BHP-funded bus was welcomed warmly with a smoking ceremony from local Elders who talked about the importance of children's hearing, especially within a culture that has a foundation built on oral history and storytelling. The bus has brought an extra element to our clinical team's visits, with students enjoying an interactive and fun experience on the new bus.

The consent rate for Pilbara Central - still in its early stages - has grown from just 27% to 60% in less than 12 months. This is wonderful to see within a program that is still in its infancy. During the year, Earbus completed 736 ear screens of 331 children, with 200 of them being new to the program. The region saw a drop in Otitis media from 18.9% at the start of the 2021 to 9.7% by the end of Term 4. We also recorded a drop in Chronic Suppurative Otitis media from 8.1% to 4.2% as well as a decrease in Hearing Loss from 18% to 4.2%.

The percentage of eardrum perforations significantly decreased from 17% in 2020 to 10.9% in 2021. These numbers are encouraging to see and highlight the benefits of regular visits from Earbus contributing to the wellness of the children in the area.

Pilbara Central had a committed team with Audiologist Adelina Duncan and Registered Nurse Catherine Zeevaarder on all trips throughout the

year. This continual care and connection is imperative for students to get the most out of the program and reap the health benefits through familiarity and trust with our clinicians. Again we thank our Nurse Practitioners Ludmila Kosheleva, Deirdre Louw, Stephanie Dowden and Maggie Wayland-Peck for their work in the region this year.

We would also like to thank Rebecca Anderson and the whole team at Creating Communities: Newman Futures Project. It has been wonderful collaborating at Train Park in Newman for some fun filled days while enabling vulnerable children and adults to have their ears screened and treated and have referrals made.

We developed a signed MOU with Puntukurnu Aboriginal Medical Service, which has created a partnership that will assist in the ongoing support and collaboration for children in the community.

We are forever appreciative of the ongoing support for Earbus Foundation, and the immeasurable guidance from the strong leaders and Elders in the local community. Thank you Margaret Samson, Clive Samson, Peter Tinker and Colin Peterson.

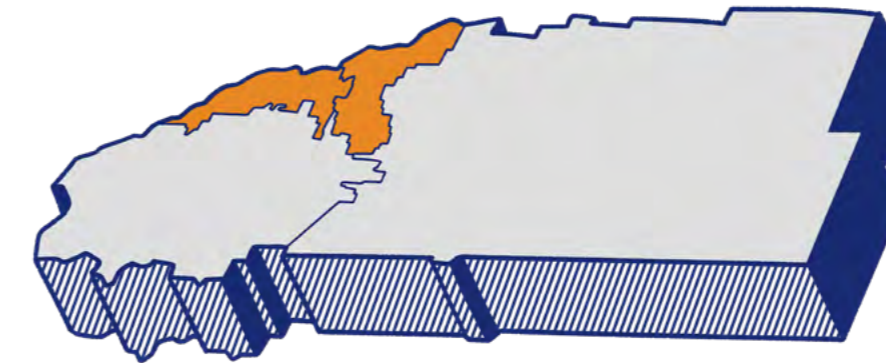
Lucy Muir
Outreach Program Coordinator

"Since 2020, I have seen firsthand the impact Earbus Foundation has had within our community. The importance of young families having these checks done regularly to improve and maintain healthy ears will only benefit students through their school attendance years. Thank you to the Earbus team."

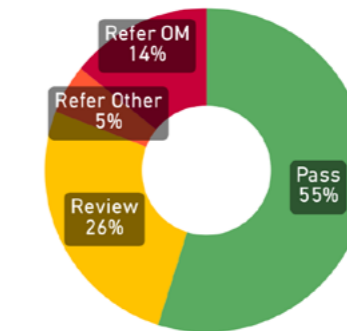
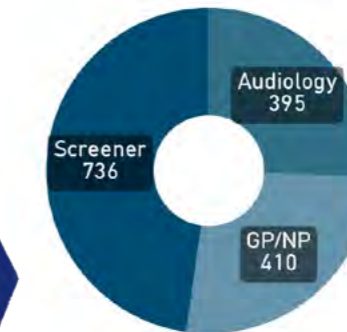
Lee-Anne Ugle

Coordinator - Newman YMCA Remote School Attendance Strategy (RSAS)

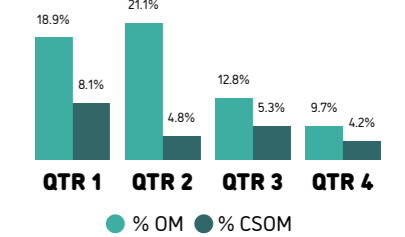
1,541 CONSULTS
68% PEAK CONSENT RATE



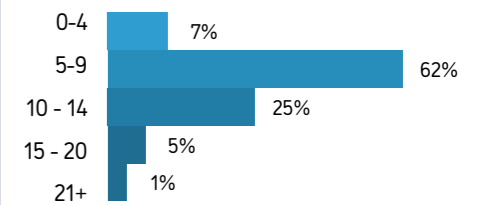
PILBARA CENTRAL PROGRAM
331 Individual Children
200 New Children



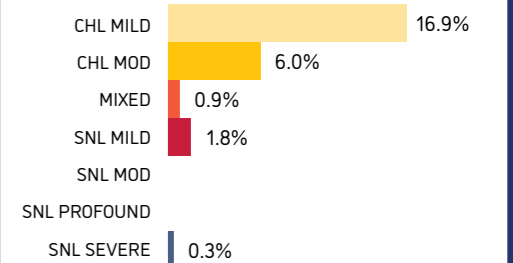
ESTIMATED PREVALENCE OF EAR DISEASE FOR CHILDREN IN THE PROGRAM



AGES SCREENED



TYPES OF HEARING LOSS



PROGRAM REPORT PILBARA EAST

This year, the Pilbara East region continued to build on its well-established foundations. Hedland Senior High School was a new addition to our locations in 2020 with a consent rate of just 43.5%. However, in 2021 this grew to 79.3%, which is a wonderful indication of how the school and students have responded to the services offered by Earbus. Registered Nurse Michelle Andrew has been working with Earbus in the Pilbara East region for three years and her wealth of knowledge of the ear health of children in the area is exceptional.

Audiologist Stephen Wong joined the Pilbara East team this year to work alongside Nurse Practitioners Helen Dawe and Ludmila Kosheleva and General Practitioner Dr Sue Jackson as well as Ear Nose and Throat (ENT) specialists Professor Harvey Coates and Dr Anton Hinton-Bayre. Thank you all. The students have benefited from your hard work and dedication.

At the beginning of 2021, the Pilbara East consent rate was 74%, rising to 84% by end of Term 4. The team completed 1,458 screens on 720 students. Of this cohort, 207 were new to Earbus, which is reflected in the rise of consent rates over 2021. By covering a large number of new students we have picked up a greater amount of pathology in the region. We saw more children that were returning to school after long absences with a year that was less impacted by COVID shutdowns than 2020.

In the second quarter, the Pilbara East region had Hearing Loss peak at 32.2%; at the year's end this has decreased to 21.4%. This downward trend is similar in the rates of Otitis media, peaking in the second quarter at 27.8% and finishing the year on 17.5%. It is encouraging to see pathology fall after regular visits from the Earbus team, though there remains significant work to do in this region to reduce these figures below the World Health Organisation benchmark of 4%.

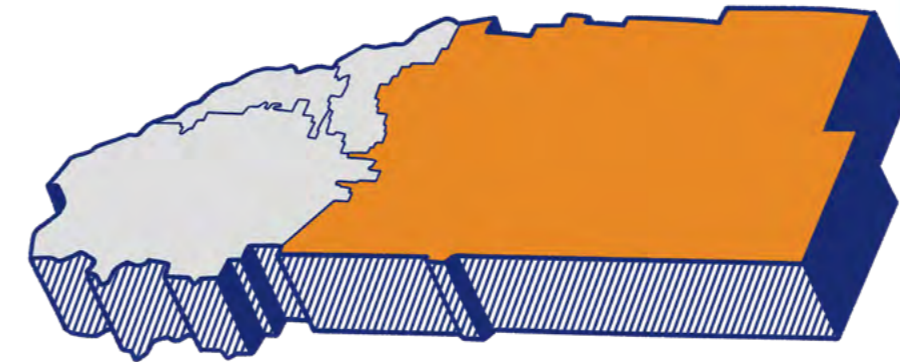
During a trip to a community this year a student in Port Hedland was suffering from long term hearing loss. This year he had grommets inserted and the very next day his mum said that he can now hear her whisper – an outstanding outcome. On another occasion, we had an appointment for an adult to see our ENT after Nurse Practitioner Helen Dawe, who was doing an assessment on the adult, discovered a serious illness.

Through this assessment, this adult was taken to the local district hospital to receive treatment that was unavailable in community. Although we are primarily an ear health service supporting children, having the ability to offer additional health care to communities whenever we can is something that Earbus is proud to provide.

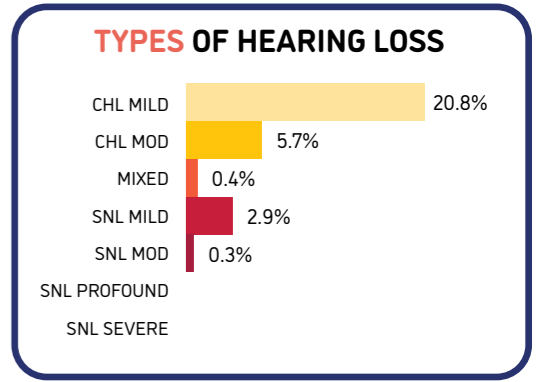
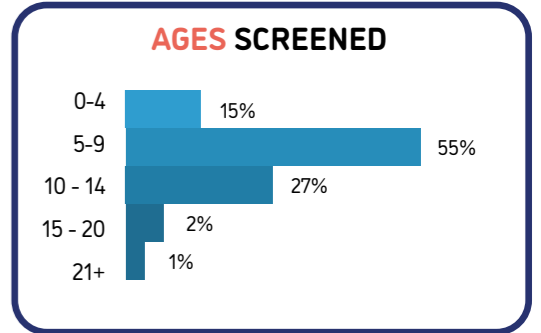
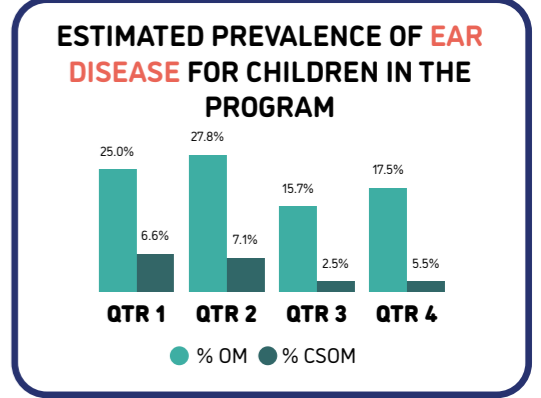
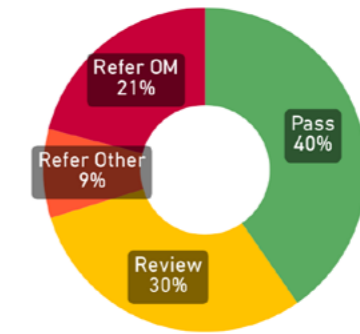
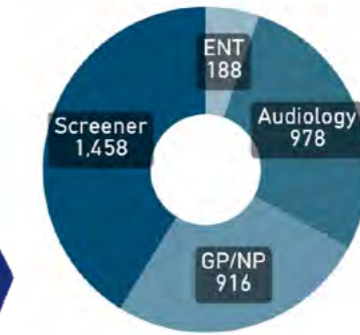
Thank you to our partners in the Pilbara East region for their ongoing support in 2021. We wouldn't be able to offer this essential service to the community without the help that we receive from Rural Health West, Wirraka Maya Health Service, Fortescue Metals Group, Roy Hill and Silver Chain.

Lucy Muir
Outreach Program Coordinator

3,540 CONSULTS
88% PEAK CONSENT RATE



PILBARA EAST PROGRAM
720 Individual Children
207 New Children

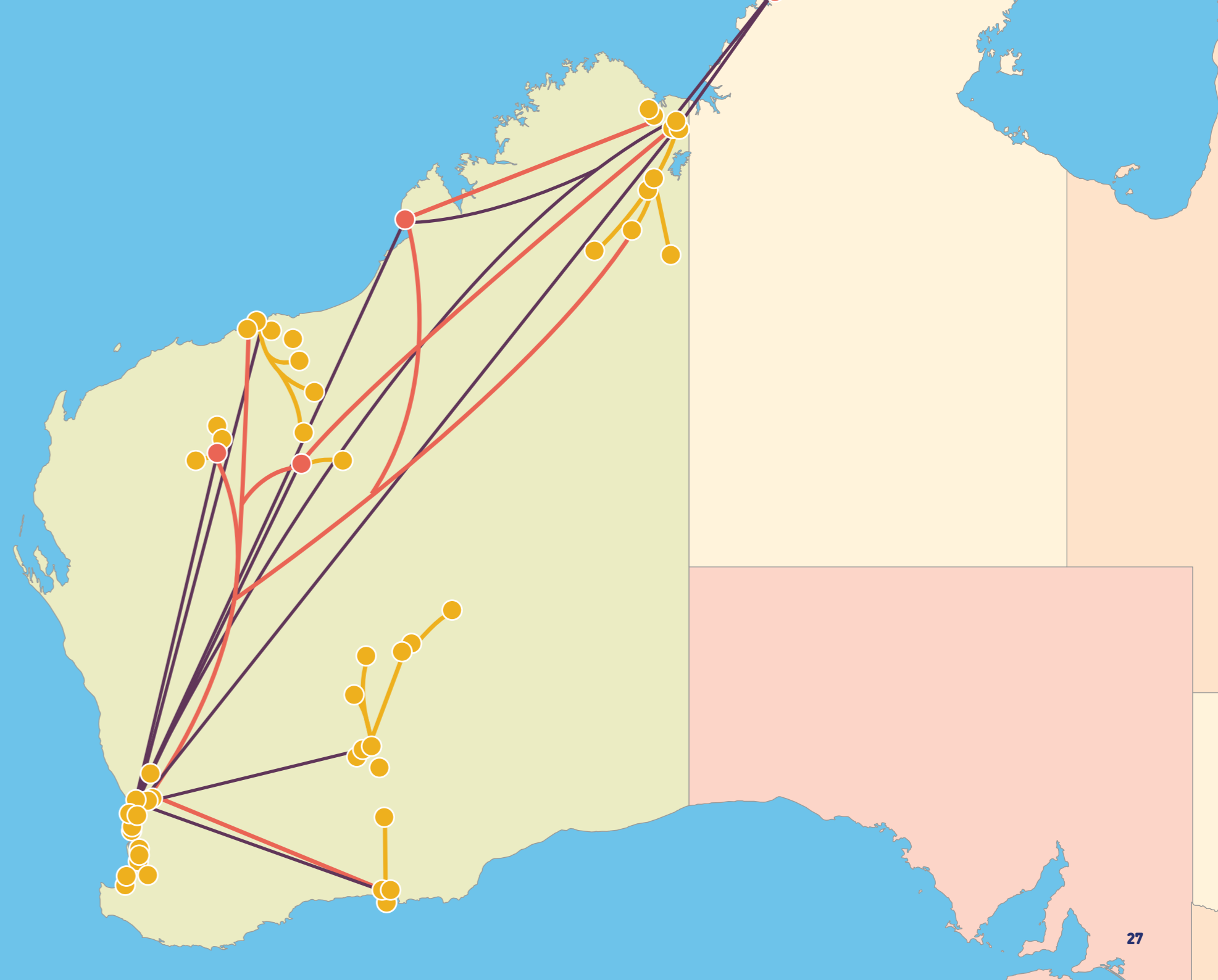


over **160,000**^{km} flown
on **137** flights

to make **614** visits to
114 schools and communities

providing **21,331** consults, including
10,746 ear checks
4,370 General or Nurse Practitioner consults
5,767 Audiologist consults, and
448 Ear, Nose & Throat consults

to **4,908** individuals



PROGRAM REPORT

GOLDFIELDS

Reflecting on the clinical outcomes in the Goldfields Program in 2021 has highlighted the strong foundations that have been established in the region. The Goldfields Outreach Program is one of the longest running programs at Earbus. The strength of the program is a testament to the collaborative relationships that have been established and upheld. There are many stakeholders in the region that should be acknowledged; their support is needed for effective service delivery.

The staff at the schools we visit have been essential in building family engagement and supporting the management of treatment pathways. School nurses, AEOs, Principals, Deputy Principals and School Officers have all supported our clinical teams in following up high priority children and assisting families attending specialist appointments. This has been important to ensuring the services reach the kids that need it most. Ear disease can be a barrier to school attendance and education. While middle ear disease is uncomfortable and can make kids feel unwell, it can also cause avoidable hearing loss.

Unfortunately, high priority kids are typically the ones that are absent from school when the team visits. The support of the school in encouraging these kids to see Earbus is very much appreciated. Other collaborative partners in the region include Wanslea, local WACHS nurses, Hearing Australia and the School of Educational Needs: Sensory. It has been

a productive collaboration in the Goldfields, and we look forward to our partnership with the Connected Beginnings initiative next year.

Our long-term regional partner, AngloGold Ashanti, has continued to support Earbus Foundation. Their additional funding of a part-time position for a Kalgoorlie-based screener increased service delivery in the region. Our clinical team continued to work with regional screener Carol Yarran and also welcomed Alison Dimer to the team for part of this year. AngloGold Ashanti also sponsored an additional trip, allowing a clinical team to visit Kalgoorlie Boulder Community High School and provide education on ear health as well as clinical services. Earbus delivered 11 clinical trips in 2021 to ensure stability and continuity of treatment pathways. The team visited 12 sites throughout the year, welcoming North Kalgoorlie Primary School to the itinerary. In total, there were over 3,860 individual consults comprising of 1,717 screens, 1,024 audiology consults, 919 GP/Nurse Practitioner consults and 200 ENT consults. There were 5 ENT clinics throughout the year and 1 surgery day at Kalgoorlie Hospital, as well as referrals to Perth Children's Hospital and Royal Perth Hospital.

Pleasingly, the overall data captures a decrease in rates of Chronic Suppurative Otitis media (CSOM), Otitis media (OM) and Hearing Loss in the region from the previous year. The percentage of CSOM

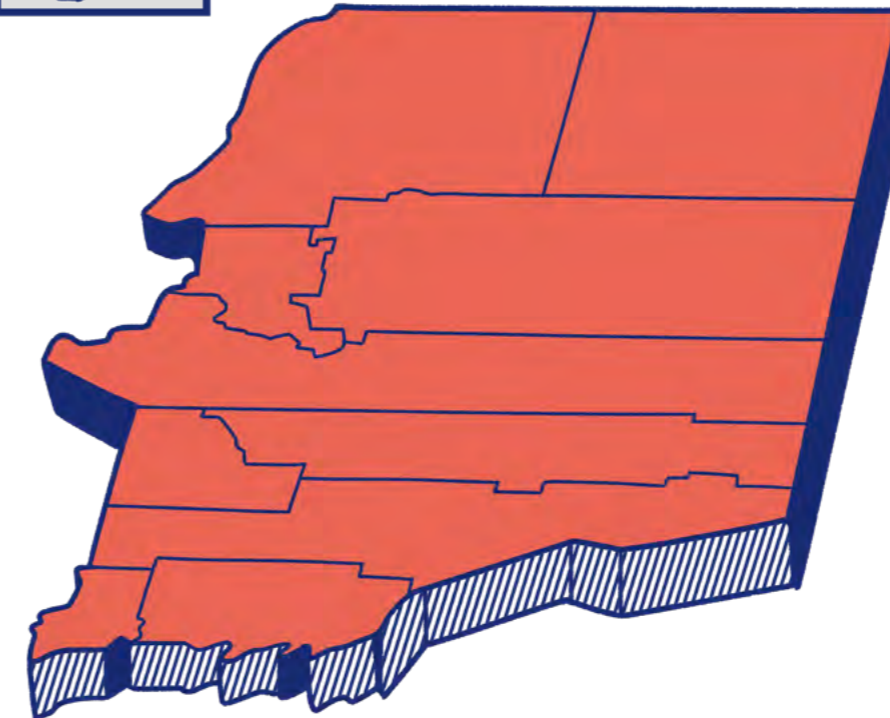
reduced from 5.6% in 2020 to 3.9% in 2021; OM reduced from 23.7% to 17.9% and Hearing Loss reduced from 17.5% to 13.4%. This, along with a consent rate ranging between 74% - 100% across all sites, is a positive reflection of the successful year we have had in this region.

We thank Program Manager and Nurse Daniel Larranaga; Audiologist Adelina Duncan; GP Dr Karen Moller; Nurse Practitioners Victoria Thomas and Carly Martin; and ENTs Professor Harvey Coates AO and Dr Anton Hinton-Bayre for their involvement in the Goldfields region in 2021.

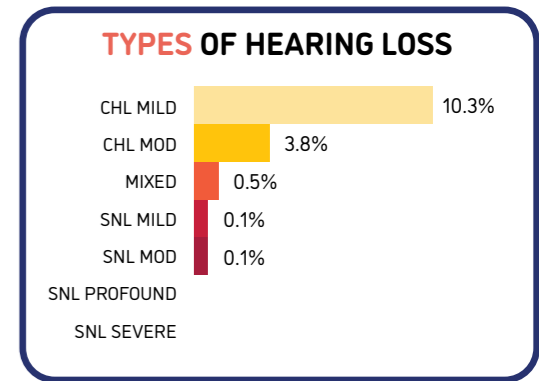
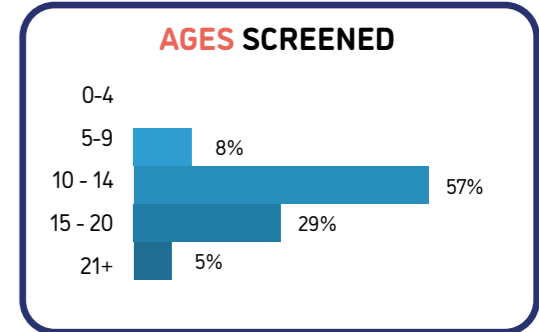
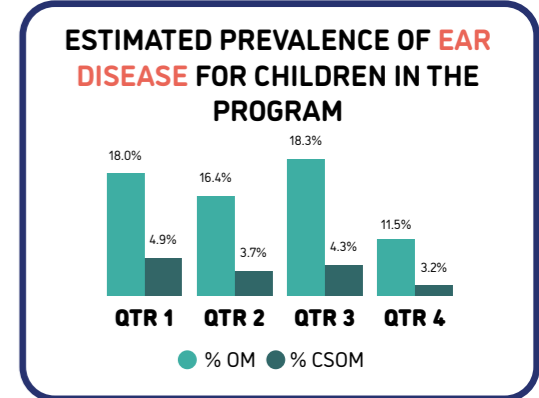
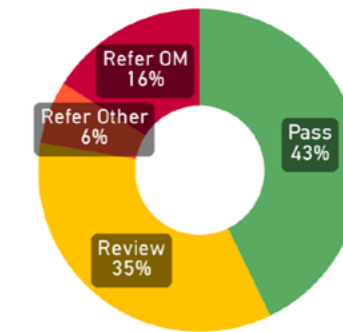
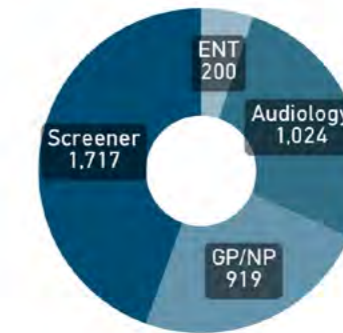
We also acknowledge Nurse Practitioners Deirdre Louw and Ludmila Kosheleva; Screener and Administration Officer Calvin Williams; Regional Screeners Carol Yarran and Alison Dimer; and Enrolled Nurse Lucinda Cross. We appreciate their contribution to the Goldfields region and congratulate Calvin on his new role in our Perth Metro program.

Lucy Mitchell
Paediatric Audiologist

3,860 CONSULTS
88% PEAK CONSENT RATE



GOLDFIELDS PROGRAM
754 Individual Children
227 New Children



PROGRAM REPORT

ESPERANCE

There were 6 clinical visits to the Esperance-Norseman region in 2021. The team visited 8 sites and also provided consults by appointment to reach out to vulnerable kids who do not attend school. The consent rate in this region remains very strong across each site with a range of 84.1% at one site to 100% of kids at other sites consented to the program, which is a very pleasing.

The ongoing support from our sponsors Rural Health West via their 'Healthy Ears – Better Hearing Better Listening Grant' and IGO Ltd has enabled the Earbus team to continue to deliver high standards of ear health service to meet the community's needs. We also appreciate the support of the schools and local WACHS nurses.

There have been many highlights including the Little Yorgas program at Nulsen Primary School, where a group of young ladies empowered younger students in prevention of ear disease by applying the "Breathe, Blow, Cough, Wash, Chew" that Earbus staff had educated them on.

The clinical team conducted 1,644 consults in 2021. This includes 762 screens, 443 audiology consults, 395 GP/Nurse Practitioner consults and 44 ENT consults. The prevalence of CSOM remains below the World Health Organisation benchmark at 2.4%. Hearing Loss was recorded at 19.8% and Otitis media at 21%, reinforcing the need for Earbus services.

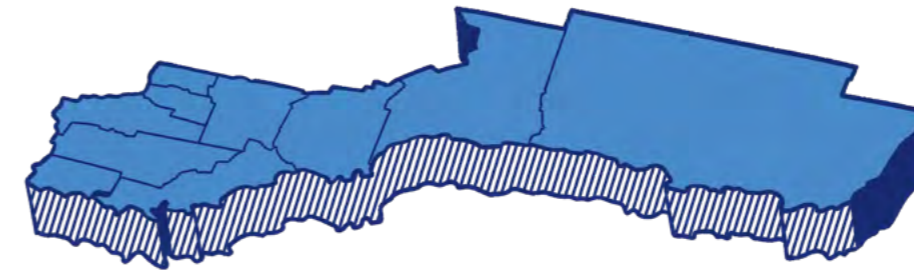
2021 saw changes in personnel over the year and we recognise our committed staff who supported the continuation of services in the region throughout these changes. We thank Program Manager Jessica Bennett-Hullin; Nurses Catherine Zeevaarder, Charlotte Radford, Daniel Larranaga and Samantha Coates; Audiologists Belinda Porte Garcia, Adelina Duncan and Timothy Kop; Nurse Practitioners Deirdre Louw, Victoria Thomas and Ludmila Kosheleva; and ENT Dr David Hall.

Lucy Mitchell
Paediatric Audiologist

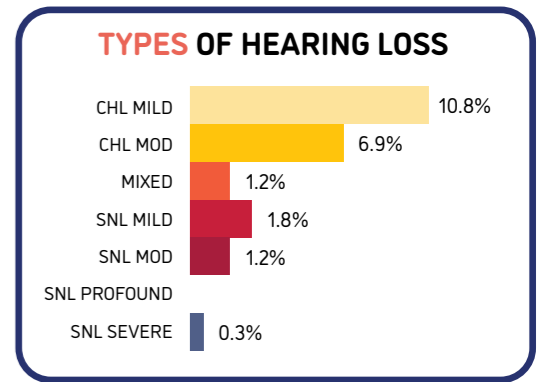
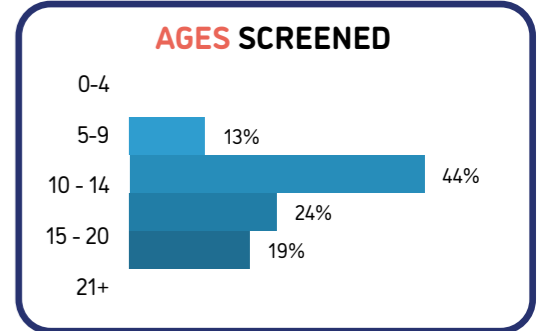
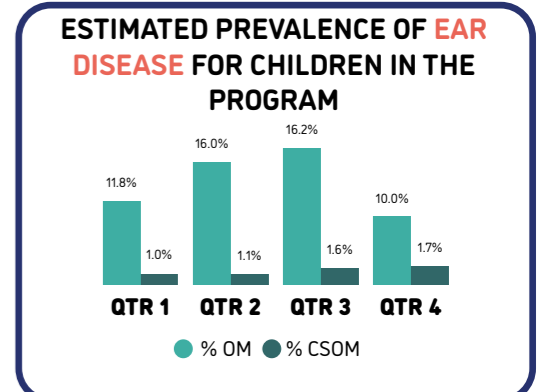
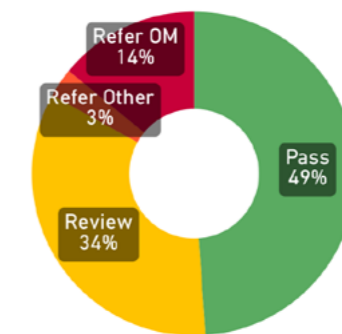
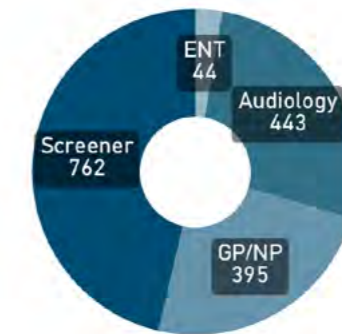
"I can only express our gratitude of the valued Earbus service that visits Nulsen Primary School. With a current Indigenous student population of 38%, the continued service of Earbus addressing ear health in our Aboriginal children and young people is highly valued. With Earbus providing comprehensive ear screening, surveillance and treatment and giving access to students and their families to GPs, Audiologists and ENTs, the complex needs of our students can be met more effectively and efficiently. This, in turn, enables our students to function in their classrooms and achieve their academic potential through listening and learning. The Earbus team are always friendly, approachable and accommodating of our school and students' needs. The economic and social impact this service has within our school community is immeasurable."

Megan Johnston
Deputy Principal Nulsen Primary School

1,644 CONSULTS
97% PEAK CONSENT RATE



ESPERANCE PROGRAM
333 Individual Children
112 New Children



PROGRAM REPORT SOUTHWEST

2021 saw many changes to the Southwest program. A very exciting milestone, with the support of long-time education partner Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School, saw Earbus begin providing auditory processing assessments to Aboriginal children at our Bunbury Clinic, a vital service for the region.

Children who have listening difficulties despite having hearing within the normal range may have an Auditory Processing Disorder (APD), and early childhood Otitis media, or a middle ear infection, is a strongly associated risk factor. APD assessments are expensive and oftentimes inaccessible for Aboriginal children. However, through the generosity of our sponsors and our collaboration with Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School staff, we have been able to provide these assessments as part of our Southwest Program. We look forward to continuing to grow this aspect of the program into next year.

In 2021 our Southwest team conducted 363 screens, 142 audiology appointments and 69 GP and Nurse Practitioner consults. It should be noted that these figures are a result of the more targeted approach taken in the region in 2021 and the movement of

some schools to other programs. The consent for this region remains high at 88%.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our Southwest screener, Jammima West, who finished up at the beginning of Term 4. Jammima has been an invaluable member of the Earbus team and played a key part in establishing the strong relationships we have with the schools and communities we visit in the Southwest. We wish her all the best in her new study and career opportunities.

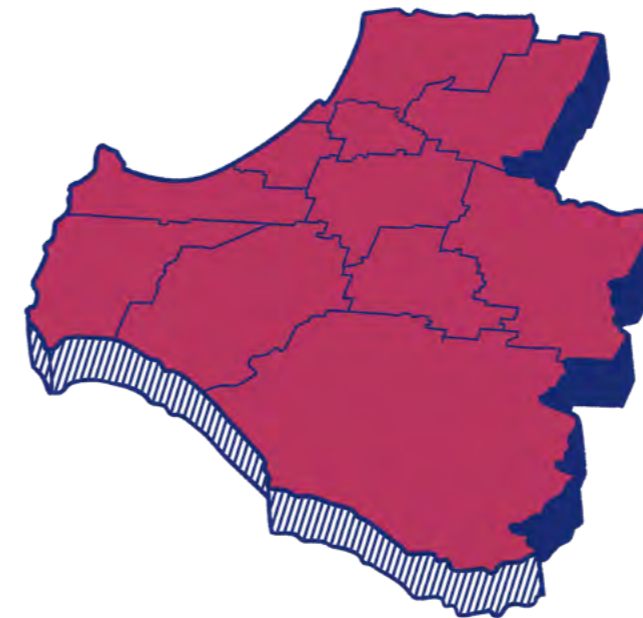
We would also like to thank the communities, schools and our incredible sponsors for their ongoing support. The program would not exist without each of you.

Tim Kop

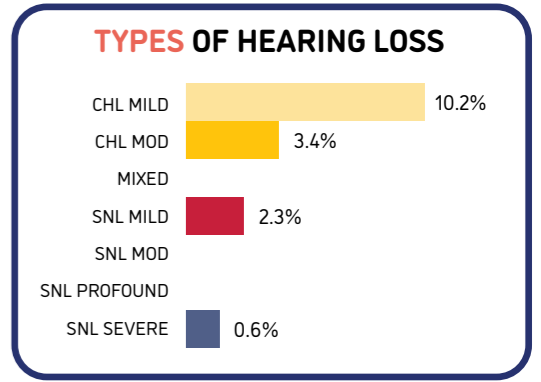
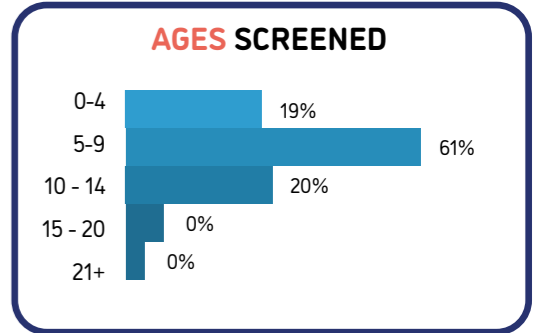
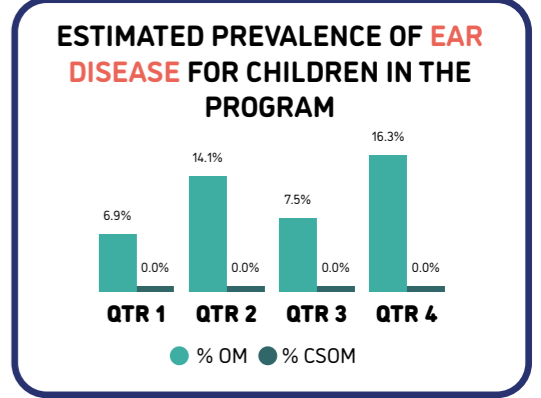
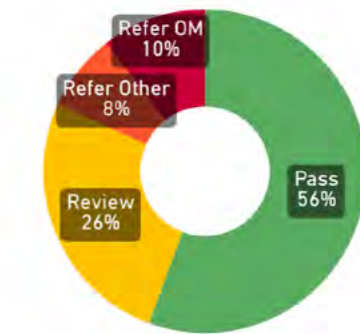
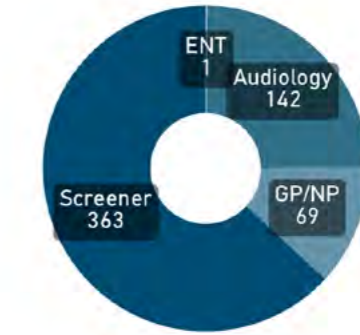
Program Coordinator Alcoa Earbus Program & Southwest



575 CONSULTS
88% PEAK CONSENT RATE



SOUTHWEST PROGRAM
117 Individual Children
63 New Children



PROGRAM REPORT

ALCOA EARBUS PROGRAM

It has been a rewarding first year for the Alcoa Earbus Program.

This new program has enabled schools in the Peel and Southwest regions to receive the same high-level hearing health care services Earbus currently provides in our already established programs. Community and school engagement has been high, with 23 schools and early learning centres joining the program since the beginning of the year. New interest has been expressed by several other sites as we look ahead to 2022.

This excellent level of engagement has allowed our team of experienced clinicians to see 723 individual children, 416 of whom are new children to the Earbus program. In addition, 737 audiology and 196 Nurse Practitioner consults were conducted over the course of this first year.

Results for 2021 showed rates of Hearing Loss at 12.9% and Otitis media at 10.4%, highlighting the need for the program. Very pleasingly, Chronic Suppurative Otitis media (CSOM) is well below the World Health Organisation benchmark of 4%, sitting at 1.2% for this region.

This first year has seen the strengthening of existing partnerships as well as the establishment

of new relationships through Waroona Interagency meetings. Looking ahead, 2022 is shaping up to be another exciting year at Earbus and the Alcoa Earbus Program has great potential to positively impact the lives of many more children and families as it continues to grow.

We are thankful to our naming sponsor, Alcoa, who have made this program possible. The launch of our partnership during National Reconciliation Week was moving and significant, with local Elders, dignitaries and media present. Bindjareb Elder, Franklyn Nannup, welcomed guests to Country and performed a traditional smoking ceremony at Carcoola Primary School, where we were delighted to have some of the children join in.

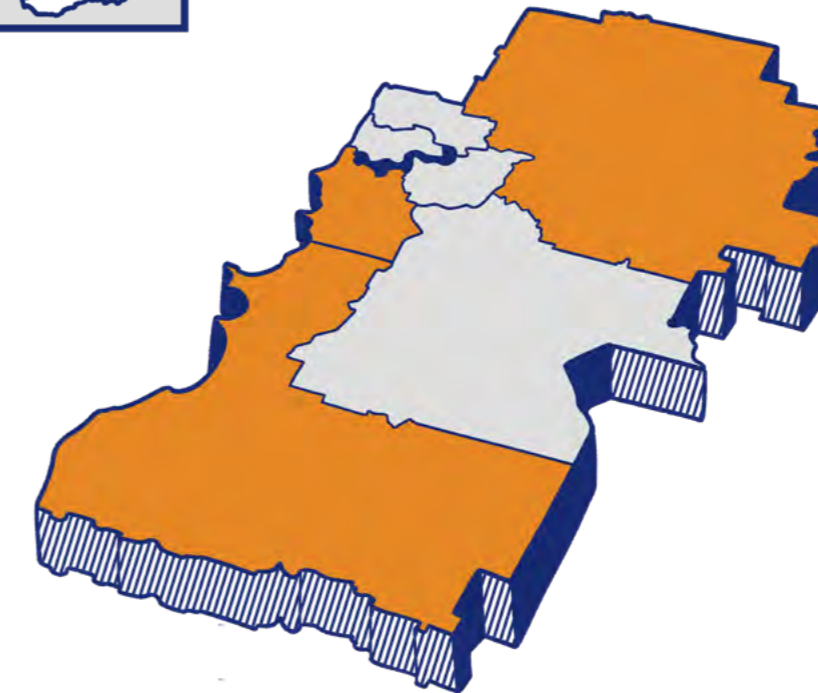
We also extend thanks to our program clinicians, with a notable thank you to our Patron, Professor Harvey Coates, for providing ENT consultation to so many high-priority children via multiple day trips to the region.

Tim Kop

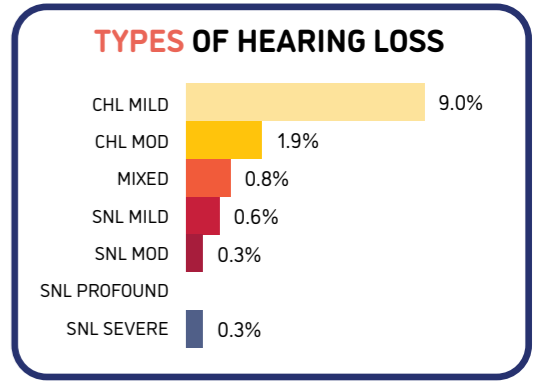
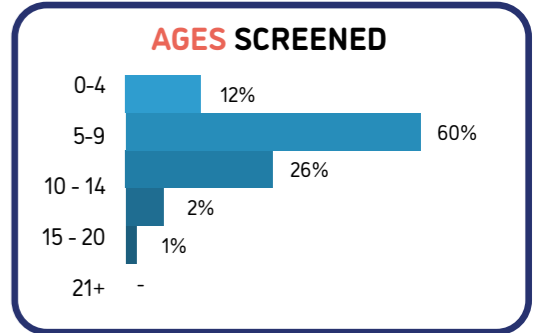
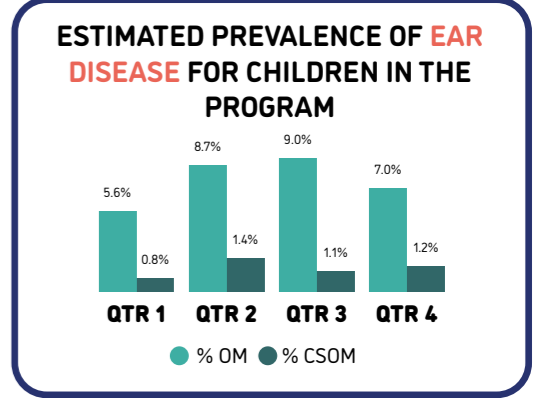
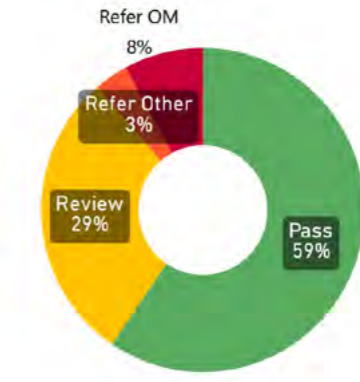
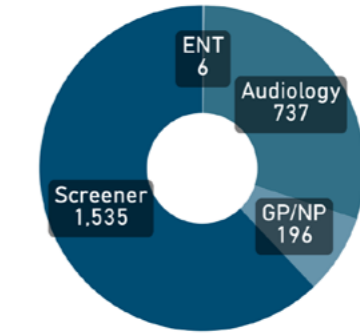
Program Coordinator Alcoa Earbus Program & Southwest



2,474 CONSULTS
62% PEAK CONSENT RATE



ALCOA EARBUS PROGRAM
723 Individual Children
416 New Children



PROGRAM REPORT

METRO

The Metro Earbus made visits to day-cares, kindergartens, young parent centres, family centres and schools across Perth and nearby regions. In addition to these sites, we continued to provide support to early learning centres via the Ears2Learn Program. More than 200 children across 12 centres were screened, with 46 surgical interventions resulting from the referral pathway of this collaborative program with Connecting Community for Kids (CC4K). CC4K is a collective impact initiative dedicated to improving the well-being and development of children and families across Cockburn and Kwinana. We also visited a number of Nido Early Schools after they reached out to us towards the end of Term 4.

In 2021 over 800 children were screened across the Metro program. In total, Earbus performed 1,419 screens, 889 audiology appointments and 273 GP/ Nurse Practitioner consults – a great effort. This could not be achieved if it wasn't for the dedication and effort from our team and the support and engagement from our schools and communities in the areas in which we serve.

Our priority for 2021 was to increase the consent rate and maintain our focus on treating the children

already established in the program, particularly those identified as high priority. Our consent rate reached 80% this year and we expect that to increase in 2022.

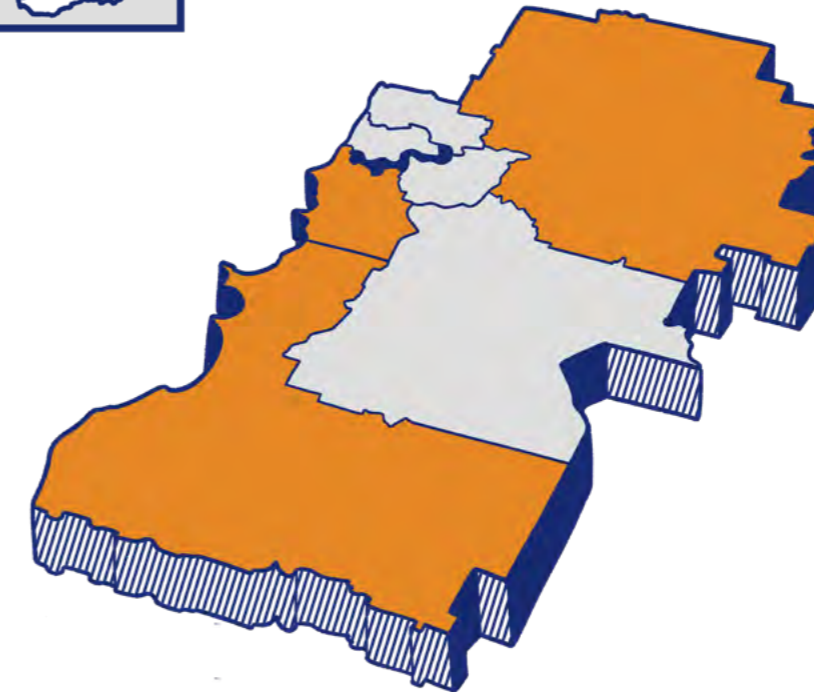
Overall, 2021 has been the implementation of our planned vision for the program. From the lessons we learned in 2020, delivering the program during a global pandemic, we were able to provide an increase in treatment with positive health outcomes for Aboriginal and at-risk kids.

Calvin Williams
Program Coordinator Metro

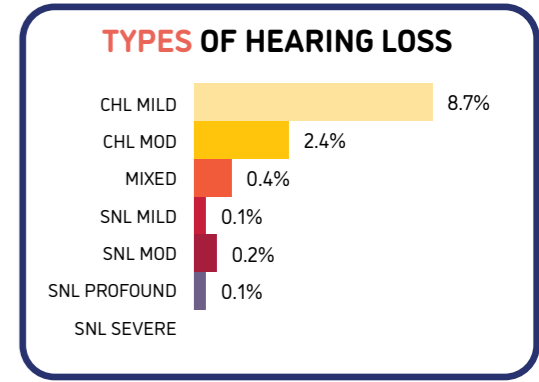
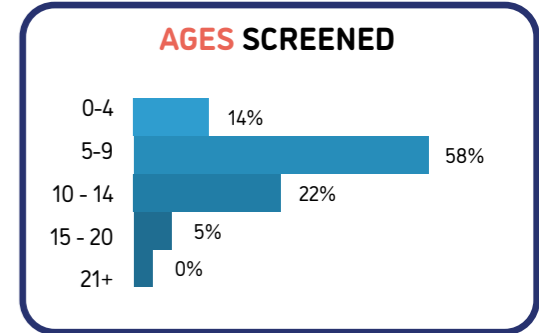
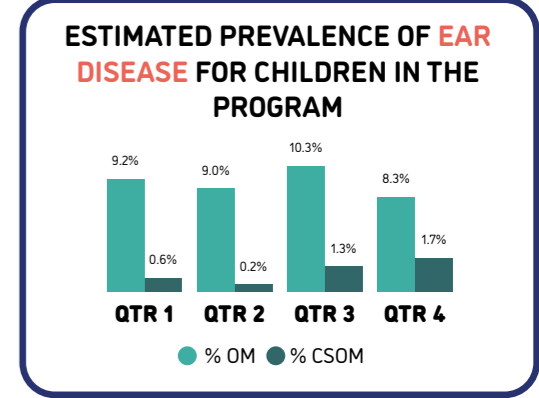
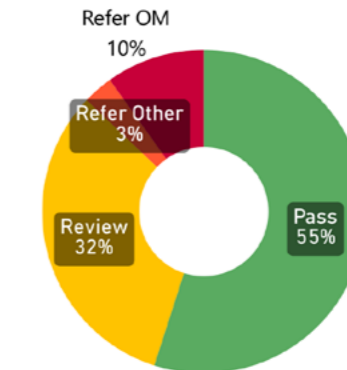
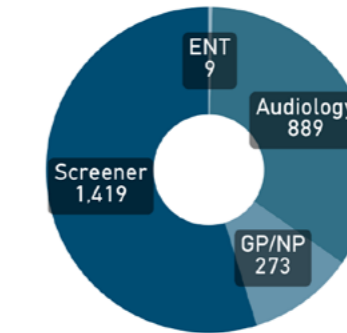
"Our involvement with Earbus has been fantastic. The regular communication and on-site support has been important in assisting our efforts to strengthen the capacity for our families to connect with essential services. Our students are better for our strong relationship with Earbus."

Mike Mount-Bryson,
Principal - Lockridge Primary School

2,590 CONSULTS
80% PEAK CONSENT RATE



METRO PROGRAM
805 Individual Children
370 New Children





Marble Bar, Pilbara East



Approaching Yandeyarra after the wet season

NEWBORN HEARING SCREENING

There has been plenty of challenges in 2021 to test the Newborn Hearing Screening Program (NBHS), but a committed team - and collaboration from our partners at St John of God Healthcare (SJOG), Ramsay Health Care and the Children and Adolescent Health Service (CAHS) have enabled the private Newborn Hearing Screening Program to continue to screen babies birthed in one of the seven private hospitals across Perth, Bunbury and Geraldton without disruption to the service.

Our Hear Today Clinic was a great support to the program by providing outpatient screening service, diagnostic testing and follow up hearing assessments to children across the metropolitan area.

The NBHS Program screened 7,567 babies and performed just under 8,000 screens in 2021, including referring 46 babies for Diagnostic Assessment. 13 infants were diagnosed with Permanent Childhood Hearing Impairment (PCHI), and 3 with conductive hearing loss.

The program employs 11 Newborn Hearing Screeners, including 3 audiologists, who work hard to ensure every newborn is afforded the opportunity to have a hearing screen. We are so grateful for their efforts, hard work and dedication, which is reflected in the capture rate of 98.64%.

Impacting the number of babies screened in 2021 was Ramsay Health Joondalup Campus Family Birthing Suite (JHC) remaining closed until August 2021. We're delighted to have resumed full service at JHC in late August 2021 and welcome their team back on board.

The quality and standards of our service are important to us, and the parent survey that commenced in 2020 has continued to provide useful feedback and review through 2021. We were delighted to receive very positive feedback: 99.2% of families surveyed felt their babies were looked after; 99.8% were impressed by the screener's performance; and 99.2% felt they were well informed.

The program had a fortuitous end to 2021 with the delivery of 12 devices from the Victorian Health Service. These nearly new devices will augment our current fleet of equipment, enabling the NBHS Program to continue to provide this important service to newborns in WA.

Suzie Costello
Manager, Paediatric Hearing Services



HEAR TODAY

Children learn to talk by hearing – listening to words and the sounds which surround them. Hearing levels which are adequate for speech and language development are vital for ensuring children reach their developmental milestones in this area.

Causes of hearing loss in children can range from mild hearing loss, where a child may hear most but not all the sounds that surround them, to significant hearing loss, where a child may be completely unable to hear. Earbus' Hear Today Clinic provides affordable, ethical and high-quality hearing services within a family-centred practice. Children who have hearing disorders are identified early and receive appropriate treatment.

Our 5 fully trained paediatric audiologists provide culturally appropriate, patient-centred care in a relaxed and fun environment. Each are specialised in testing children of all ages, many of whom have difficulties that can make traditional testing stressful for families. We routinely test children from birth onwards and the focus of our assessments is ensuring each child has a positive outcome.

In 2021 more than 1,000 appointments were seen at Earbus' Hear Today Clinic. These included 491 full hearing assessments, 40 auditory processing assessments and 11 adult hearing assessments. The Hear Today Clinic also provides Infant Diagnostic

Testing (IDT) for babies referred through the Newborn Hearing Screening program. In 2021, 48 babies were referred to the Hear Today Clinic for Diagnostic Hearing Tests of which 13 had permanent childhood hearing impairment.

Families who discharge prior to a newborn hearing screen in hospital are provided with an outpatient appointment at the Hear Today Clinic. Almost 200 babies were welcomed for their newborn screen in 2021.

Testing children all day, every day isn't the only thing that makes the Hear Today Clinic unique in WA. Children in regional and remote areas often have no access to services because of their geographical location or, often due to their socio-economic status. Earbus Foundation is dedicated to ensuring that hearing services are available to all children, not only those who can afford them.

We believe that every child should be able to hear so that they can realise their full potential. This means that families attending our Perth-based clinic help to support service provision to disadvantaged children across WA - every paying client helps us provide services to those less fortunate.

The Hear Today Clinic has also been supporting Earbus Outreach teams in investigating the need

for adult hearing aids in the remote regions of WA and, as part of their preliminary research, adults in the Perth Metro area have been benefitting from discussions, testing and fitting of hearing aids. This has been a great success so far and we look forward to watching this grow in all regions in the future.

The Hear Today Clinic moved in December 2021 to our new premises at 35 Brewer Street Perth, where we look forward to welcoming children and families in 2022.

Suzie Costello
Manager, Paediatric Hearing Services

ST PATRICK'S COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

Earbus Foundation works at +110 locations across the Pilbara, Goldfields, Kimberley, Peel, Perth Metro, Southeast and Southwest regions of Western Australia, partnering with local Aboriginal Medical Services; schools; daycares; kindergartens and child parent centres as well as agencies such as Royal Flying Doctor Service and Starlight Children's Foundation.

It is our spirit for collaboration which led to a conversation at an awards night back in 2019 between Earbus CEO, Paul Higginbotham, and the Chief Executive Officer at St. Patrick's Community Support Centre, Michael Piu.

Both organisations work to support vulnerable West Australians. Following a conversation about the plight of homeless people in Fremantle, a pilot program developed between Earbus and St Pat's to trial the delivery of ear health services to the community.

Earbus' partnership with St Patrick's Community Support Centre offers free, quarterly hearing clinics to homeless people who may have hearing loss. Earbus provides experienced audiologists to run the

clinic and offers homeless people the same high standard of care they would receive if they were a paying client.

The partnership started in October 2020 once COVID restrictions were eased and continued into 2021. At the first clinic, 9 St Pat's clients engaged and received full audiological service and follow up. In April 2021, 5 new clients took up the service.

For homeless people, hearing loss can add to the already challenging circumstances they are experiencing. St Pat's chief executive Michael Piu says Earbus play a vital role in helping local homeless people.

Earbus CEO Paul Higginbotham says "We are in awe of the dedicated team at St Pat's and the work they do. We are honoured to be able to assist."

The quarterly audiology clinics at St Patrick's Community Support Centre will continue in 2022.

"People experiencing homelessness already face significant barriers to achieving quality of life and this is further compounded by the effects of hearing loss, which has been shown to increase social isolation and reduce earning potential."

Michael Piu

St Patrick's Community Support Centre Chief Executive

FAREWELL, DEE PARKER

I have known Dee Parker for nearly 20 years and worked with her in Aboriginal ear health since 2011. And now the time has come for Dee to retire from permanent work and it's certainly a time of mixed feelings. Dee deserves to have time with family and friends, particularly as her parents are getting on in years and her grandchildren are growing whilst she is on the road. But I will miss working so closely with Dee, as both colleague and friend.

Paul, Dee and I undertook our last clinical trip together to the Kimberley in November following 8 years of travelling and working together. We have felt like a work family as well as friends and each know the other's likes and dislikes –from all the meals we have cooked and eaten together on the road as well to who is a morning person and who needs to be left alone to come to terms with the day! We have laughed, cried and shared so many incredible moments. Personally, she has been a bedrock; professionally I have learned so much from her. As co-founder of Earbus, she will continue to be involved through some contract work with the Foundation so that her expertise carries forward and her knowledge is shared.

Dr Lara Shur Au.D

Director, Clinical Services & Outcomes
Chief Operations Officer & Co-Founder

I learnt so much working alongside Dee every fortnight on Outreach for the first 4 years of Earbus operations. Her genuine love for the kids, her amazing memory for faces, names and ears – truly the most extraordinary recall I have ever come across professionally! Dee's enthusiasm and energy often kept us afloat in the hurly-burly of being on the road every second week during school terms. And I'll never forget the two of us changing the first-ever Earbus flat tyre in 42-degree heat on the dirt road to Warralong in the Pilbara.

In setting up Earbus Foundation, Dee was one of the original Three Musket-Ears and so much a part of the fabric and values that Earbus sought to create. I cannot imagine anyone else who I would rather have had alongside me in those foundation years – caring, joyful, skilled, enthusiastic, knowledgeable and fun! Thanks Dee, I will always treasure those times and our camaraderie and friendship – it was instrumental in building Earbus Foundation and making it a success.

Paul Higginbotham

CEO and Co-Founder, Earbus Foundation

Dee, you are always welcome here, you're part of the Djidi Djidi family!

Staff wanted to pass on their thanks and very best wishes. Being at the coal face they are the ones that see the results of what you and your team does.

Your dedication, follow up, knowledge and empathy are so valued. Wish we could bottle you, Dee. It has certainly been a rewarding journey!

Much thanks and much love from us all at Djidi Djidi, most of all the students and families that have been impacted by your work.

We wish you all the best!

Bronwyn Mumme

Principal, Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School



HIGHLIGHTS

2021

FEBRUARY

- New Earbus for Newman thanks to BHP and the students at South Newman PS who provided artwork
- Alcoa Earbus Program commences with support from Alcoa Australia and Stan Perron Charitable Trust

MARCH

- Earbus Patron Professor Harvey Coates AO presented the 2021 Libby Harricks Memorial Oration on Indigenous Ear and Hearing Health – Tackling the Silent Epidemic

MAY

- Earbus Foundation starts to migrate to new email addresses using .org.au
- Services commence to WA Wheatbelt region with first visit to Pingelly Primary School

AUGUST

- Earbus Foundation wins national HESTA Award in Allied Health category

JULY

- Newborn Hearing Screening contract renewed through to September 2022

NOVEMBER

- Earbus wins Outstanding Achievement Award at Australian Charity Awards
- Earbus relocates to new premises in Brewer Street Perth

Patrons

Professor Harvey Coates



Professor Harvey Coates AO DM MS FRCS(C) FRACS DABO is a clinical professor at the University of Western Australia in the School of Health Sciences. He is an Honorary Distinguished Research Associate at the Telethon Kids Institute. After undergraduate training at the University of Queensland, he completed his otolaryngology training at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. He was consultant ENT Surgeon to Princess Margaret Hospital for 38 years before retiring, as well as Clinical Lead in the Kimberley.

He is particularly interested in research and has a Master's degree from Minnesota and a higher Doctorate from UWA on 'translational research in Otitis media in Western Australian children'. His current research is in bacterial biofilm; innovative ear drops; Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, and ear disease in Aboriginal children.

He is co-founder, with two colleagues, of the first paediatric ENT society in Australasia in 1985, and former Chair of the Aboriginal sub-committee of the Australian ENT Society (ASOHNS). He was the impetus behind the founding of the Chair in ORL- HNS at UWA and, with audiologist Jay Krishnaswamy, developed the first large-scale newborn hearing screening in Australia in 2000. He has been consulting with Aboriginal Medical Services since 1993 and has conducted ear clinics in Bali and

Vanuatu. He has lectured at Harvard, Pittsburgh and South Western Universities and has worked with the World Health Organisation for three years.

Professor Coates has published over 100 papers and 18 book chapters and was on the editorial boards of two major journals in his specialty. He is patron of Better Hearing Australia (WA), Deafness Council WA, Earbus Foundation of WA and EON Foundation.

He has been awarded the Fiona Stanley Medal (2001); Lions William R Tresise Humanitarian Award (2002); Dr Harry Blackmore Award (2004); ASOHNS Society Medal (2013); Inaugural Royal Australasian College of Surgeons ATSI Health Medal (2015). In 2005 he was appointed Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for service to medicine in the field of paediatric otolaryngology as a clinician and researcher; to Indigenous health; and to the community through contributions to major medical research and educational organisations.

Wendy Duncan



Former Member for Kalgoorlie, Wendy Duncan, was born in Kalgoorlie and grew up on a pastoral station in the goldfields. She was educated by School of the Air and recalls times when she went out gathering bush tucker with the local Aboriginal women as among her most precious memories.

Wendy's passion for politics and concern for human rights was awakened by a year on a Rotary Exchange scholarship in South Africa during the apartheid era. She cites Nelson Mandela as one of her strongest influencers.

After completing a degree in politics and Australian history at the University of Western Australia, Wendy undertook post-graduate studies in Canberra and worked with the National Farmer's Federation on its formation. On her return to Western Australia Wendy and her husband ran their own business in the pastoral industry and farming in Esperance. During that time Wendy had four children, worked with law firms, local government and small rural enterprises while studying externally through Curtin to gain a Graduate Diploma of Business.

Seeing the neglect of regional areas by government, Wendy became involved in the Nationals rising to be its first female State President. Working alongside Brendon Grylls, she helped develop the Royalties for

Regions policy. She entered Parliament in 2008 and successfully held three seats – two in the Legislative Council and one in the Legislative Assembly, retiring at the 2013 election.

Wendy was the first female Leader of the Nationals in the Legislative Council, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Regional Development, and Deputy Speaker in the Legislative Assembly. More recently Wendy graduated from the Institute of Company Directors Course.

During her time in Parliament Wendy was a passionate advocate for regional development with a particular focus on the health and well-being of those in more remote areas, and the mining industry and mining education. She was the founding chair of Headspace Kalgoorlie-Boulder and actively campaigned on issues of FASD and Aboriginal child health and has been a passionate supporter of Earbus Foundation of WA since its inception.

EARBUS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIRPERSON

Ms Sue Beath has been involved with Earbus for over a decade, initially in her role as Manager of Indigenous Education for the WA Education Department. Sue has worked in both urban and regional settings supporting thousands of Aboriginal children and overseeing AIEO staff supporting those children in classrooms. Sue joined the Earbus Foundation Board of Directors in 2019 and became Chairperson in April 2020.

Specialty Areas of Expertise: Education, Health, Aboriginal Culture, History and Communities

DEPUTY-CHAIR

Dr Julie Owen is originally from Adelaide but has lived and worked in regional WA for 30 years. She has extensive qualifications, experience and engagement in Aboriginal health, education and women's issues. Julie has teaching qualifications, a Masters in Population Health and counselling degree and was the first Aboriginal graduate from UWA's School of Population Health, completing a PhD in Aboriginal Health. This is Julie's second appointment as a Board member, re-joining the Board in April 2019 and becoming Deputy-Chair in April 2020.

Specialty Areas of Expertise: Education, Health, Aboriginal Culture, History and Communities

TREASURER

Mr Steve Shur is an Insurance Broker with 44 years' industry experience. From 1989 to 2000 he ran Stephen Shur Investments in South Africa, a successful general insurance brokerage in Johannesburg. He migrated to Australia in 2000 and is currently senior Account Executive at Trident Insurance Group. Steve holds a Diploma of Financial Services and is responsible for advising his clients on insurance cover and their legal obligations and risks. A founding member of Earbus Foundation, Steve's second stint on the Board commenced in April 2020.

Specialty Areas of Expertise: Finance, Governance, Insurance Risk, Corporate Relations

BOARD MEMBER

Dr Lara Shur Earbus co-founder Dr Lara Shur has an undergraduate Honours degree in Speech & Hearing Therapy, a Masters degree in Audiology, a Clinical Doctorate (AuD) in Audiology and a Graduate Certificate in Business Management. Lara was previously Manager of Clinical Support WA & NT for the Department of Health & Ageing's Office of Hearing Services and before joining Earbus was responsible for running the newborn hearing screening program in WA's private hospital sector. She also managed private audiology services and cochlear implant programs for children. Dr Shur's career began in South Africa, where she reached the position of Senior Audiologist & Speech Therapist at a large public hospital in Soweto.

Specialty Areas of Expertise: Health, Evaluation and Research, Clinical Governance and Training, Regional Services

BOARD MEMBER

Mr Paul Higginbotham is originally a Teacher of the Deaf, working in the field of hearing impairment since 1982. Paul holds multiple education degrees, has held senior leadership roles since 1991 and in 2012 was the recipient of the Harry Blackmore Award for outstanding leadership in the field of childhood hearing impairment. After 15 years successfully transforming a Perth-based NGO into a centre of excellence, he co-founded Earbus Foundation in April 2013 and was Board Chair until April 2015. Paul is the inaugural Chief Executive Officer of Earbus Foundation.

Special areas of expertise: Education, Hearing Loss and Special Needs, NGO/NFP Funding and Fundraising, Journalism, Government Relations

BOARD MEMBER

Mr Greg Narrier has had a long career working in the area of Aboriginal issues including work with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission that took him to Canberra in the 1990s. He has spent recent years teaching young Indigenous offenders to drive and gain their driving licences in order to support their rehabilitation and reengagement. Returning to his Noongar roots, Greg joined the Earbus Foundation board as soon as he took up WA residence again in July 2020.

Specialty Areas of Expertise: Aboriginal Culture, History and Communities, Governance, Education and Training



Dr Karen Moller (GP) and Dr Rachel Meddings (Audiologist) on a regional trip

EARBUS TEAM, CONSULTANTS & VOLUNTEERS

Earbus acknowledges the dedication and commitment of our board, leadership team, staff, volunteers, interns and consultants in working towards our mission of reducing the incidence and impact of Otitis media (OM) in Aboriginal and at-risk children in Western Australia to achieve parity with non-Indigenous children, particularly given the challenges faced by us all in 2020 and 2021.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ms Sue Beath Chair
Dr Julie Owen Deputy-Chair
Dr Lara Shur
Mr Steve Shur Treasurer
Mr Paul Higginbotham
Mr Greg Narrier

STAFF

LEADERSHIP

Jessica Bennett-Hullin Program Manager, Outreach
Gabriela Budilova Business Manager
Suzie Costello Manager, Paediatric Hearing Services
Dr Carol Dowling Director of Research
Karen Hickling Partnerships Manager
Paul Higginbotham Chief Executive Officer and Co-Founder
Megumi Hiraka Finance Manager
Daniel Larranaga Stakeholder Relations Manager & Cultural Mentor
Konrad Mills IT and Data Management

Dr Lara Shur Director, Clinical Services and Co-Founder
Glenda Spain-Dixon Program Manager, Newborn Hearing Screening & Paediatric Hearing Clinic

ADMINISTRATION

Amelia Brshaw Administration Officer, Outreach
Jenna Cooper, Administration Officer, Outreach
Rachel Fisher Accounts Clerk
Chontae Hayden Co-ordinator, Alcoa Earbus Program
Kassy Hayden Co-ordinator, Office Systems & Logistics
Scott Higginbotham Marketing Design
Annetta Italiano Administration Officer, Kimberley
James Mapaye Administration Officer, Accounts
Lucy Muir Co-ordinator, Outreach
Silvana Principe Administration Officer, Equipment
Shirley South Administration Officer, Hear Today
Marijana Taras Administration Officer, Travel Bookings
Giovanni Torre PR & Media Officer
Leonie Wilkes Administration Officer, Outreach
Calvin Williams Co-ordinator, Perth Metro

SCREENING & TREATMENT

Michelle Andrew Registered Nurse, Pilbara
Lauren Costello NBHS Screener
Sarah Cummins Screener, Goldfields
Lucinda Cross Enrolled Nurse & Research Officer
Amanda Del Dosso NBHS Screener
Alison Dimer Screener, Goldfields
Kelsey Farrer Screener, Kimberley
Deb Howe NBHS Screener
Symone Ishak NBHS Screener
Jose Jimena NBHS Screener
Ludmila Kosheleva Nurse Practitioner
Ros Lander NBHS Screener
Deirdre Louw Nurse Practitioner
Robin Macale NBHS Screener
Shohreh Meshgin NBHS Screener
Sally Morgan Screener, Kimberley

Dee Parker Training & Quality Standards and Co-Founder
Charlotte Radford Registered Nurse, Kimberley
Lauren Sabatini NBHS Screener
Anja Sloan NBHS Screener
Janine Tassicker NBHS Screener
Kelly Trow NBHS Screener
Jammima West Screener, Southwest
Carol Yarran Screener, Goldfields
Catherine Zeevaarder Registered Nurse, South Pilbara
Christopher Zhao NBHS Screener

AUDIOLOGY

Adelina Duncan Graduate Audiologist
Tim Kop Paediatric Audiologist & Co-ordinator, Alcoa Earbus Program and Southwest
Kate Lau Audiologist
Rachel Meddings Audiologist
Lucy Mitchell Paediatric Audiologist
Belinda Porte Garcia Audiologist
Stephen Wong Graduate Audiologist

CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Joan Garaffolo Cleaning Services
Stephen Kane Maintenance and Repairs
Simply Green Salary Packaging Provider
The Travel Authority

VOLUNTEERS

de Rene Clark Volunteer
Wendy Gidney Volunteer
Mary Kavanagh Volunteer
David Lim Volunteer
Andrea Panton Volunteer

INTERNS

Mary Tran Intern

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St Mary Magdalene Church Friendship Group
Stronger Communities
The Knowledge Society
Torre Butchers
United Way
WA Country Health Service
Woolworths

PARTNERS



AWARDS & RECOGNITION

2016

Prime Super WA Community Group of the Year Award

2017

AIM WA West Business Pinnacle Awards - Emerging Business Excellence

2018

Telstra Business Awards - Social Change Maker (WA) Award

2019

Impact100 WA Major Grant Award Winner
Impact100 Fremantle Major Grant Award Winner

2020

Sunsuper Dreams of a Better World National Winner
Australian Charity Awards - Outstanding Achievement Winner

2021

HESTA Excellence Awards -
Outstanding Organisation in Allied Health
Australian Charity Awards - Outstanding Achievement Winner



**Earbus Foundation
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to book your appointment contact us at
T: (08) 9328 4574

www.heartoday.org.au

www.earbus.org.au

Earbus Foundation acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands on which we work.
We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.