

## MEDIA RELEASE

### #Talkwithme Mildura during Speech Pathology Week

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Mildura, it's that time again: *Speech Pathology Week (23-29 August, 2015)* and this year's theme is *Talk with me*.

Every day more than 1.1 million Australians have difficulty communicating, says local speech pathologist Jacinta Curley, who is raising awareness during *Speech Pathology Week* in the Mildura Region. Jacinta is one of four speech pathologists working at SCHS; other team members include, Rochelle Calderwood, Kathy Stidwill and Emma Douglas.

A recent Senate Inquiry highlighted that communication disorders are more prevalent or on-par with the number of people with diabetes and three times the number of those with dementia. Both of these conditions are national health priorities and attract significant attention and resourcing. Communication disorders, however, are largely invisible.

Communication is a basic human right. Each year Speech Pathology Australia hosts *Speech Pathology Week* to make Australians more aware of those in our community who have a speech or swallowing difficulty.

It is concerning to see the extent of communication disorders in our community. Such disorders contribute to poor educational outcomes, reduced employment opportunities and an increased likelihood of social, emotional and mental health issues.

Three in every 1,000 newborns have hearing loss, which without intervention can affect their speech, language and literacy.

Around 13,000 Australians use electronic communication aids to get their message across, while 20 per cent of four year olds have difficulty understanding or using language.

But speech disorders don't just affect the young. At least 30 per cent of people post-stroke suffer loss of language, with 85 per cent of those with Parkinson's disease having voice, speech and/or swallowing difficulties.

These are the challenges that confront speech pathologists every day.



Speech pathologists are specialists in all forms of communication and work with people to maximise their ability to communicate in a way that best meets their needs and abilities.

Speech pathologists work with people who have difficulty communicating because of developmental delays, stroke, brain injuries, learning disability, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy and hearing loss, as well as other problems that can affect speech, language and communication.

Speech pathologists work in a wide range of settings – schools, hospitals, nursing homes, universities, kindergartens, rehabilitation centres, community health centres, private practice and mental health services.

This *Speech Pathology Week*, give a voice to those with a communication disorder and help end their silence #SPweek #Talkwithme

For more information about Speech Pathology Week visit [www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

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Photo opportunities for Speech Week are available on request. Please contact Jacinta or Hodi Beauliv, Business Development Officer on 5022 5444 to arrange an appropriate time.

[Speech Pathology Australia](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au) is the national peak body representing more than 6,500 speech pathologists. The Association supports and regulates the ethical, clinical and professional standards of its members, as well as lobbying and advocating for access to services that benefit people with communication and swallowing difficulties.