



Media Release

August 2014

MAKING COLLIE PART OF A NATION FOR COMMUNICATION

Every day more than 1.1 million Australians have difficulty communicating.

Speech Pathology Week runs from 24-30 August. The theme for the week is a 'Nation for Communication'.

Speech pathologists are aiming to make Australia a 'Nation for Communication' by increasing the understanding of communication disorders and how they impact on people's lives.

"It's estimated that one in five people will experience communication difficulties at some point in their lives. This can range from mild to very severe and can impact on the way they participate in family life, the community, education and the workplace."

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.

Three in every 1,000 newborns have hearing loss, which without intervention can affect their speech, language and literacy. Indigenous children have three times more hearing problems than non-Indigenous children.

These are the challenges that confront speech pathologists every day.

"Over 1.1 million Australians have a communication or swallowing disorder that impacts on the quality of their life. That is roughly the same number of Australians who live with diabetes! And three times the number of Australians who suffer from dementia.

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

Recent research highlights the importance of early language stimulation for brain development and later learning.

During Speech Pathology Week parents and carers have the opportunity to meet the local Senior Speech Pathologist from Collie Health Service. Over morning tea, she will discuss the importance of early language development, what is age appropriate language development, ways families can encourage their child/children to talk, and when to contact a health professional if concerned.

Wilson Park Primary School: Thursday August 28th 9.15am-10.30am

Fairview Primary School: Friday August 29th 9.45am-11.00am

Please contact Sandra Robertson on 0467941220 for further information.