



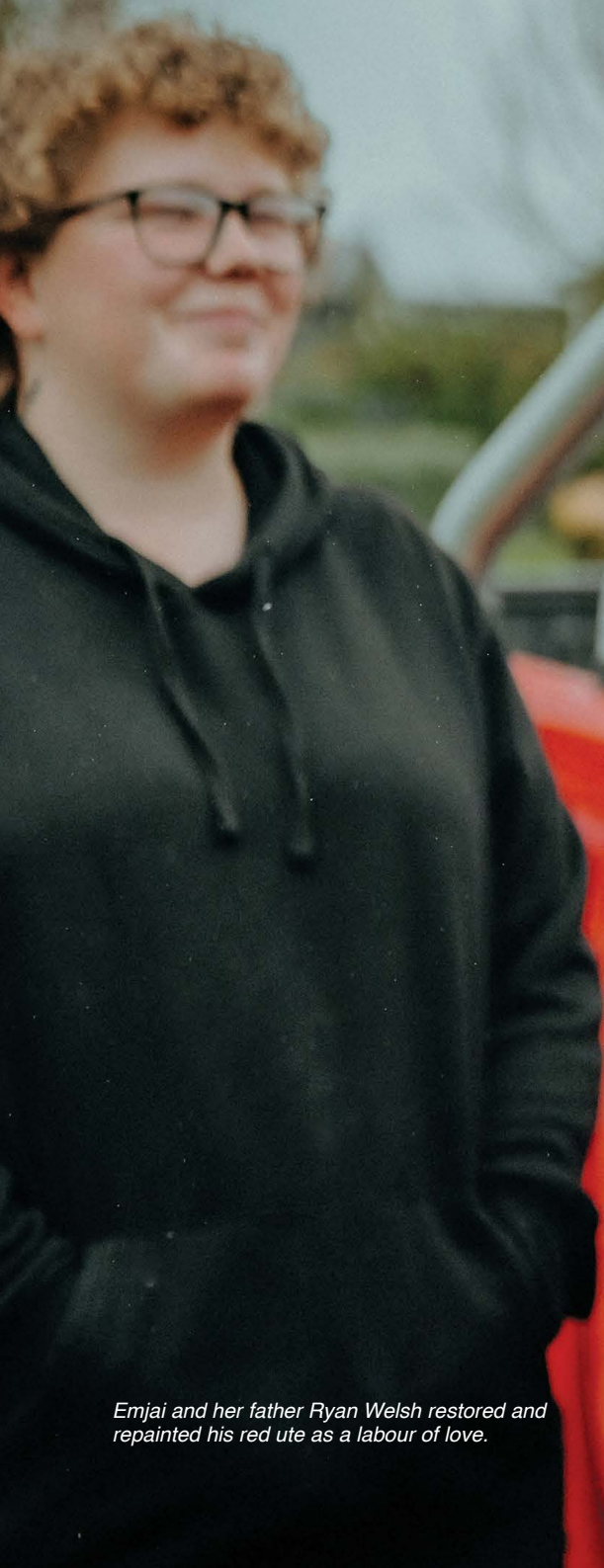
Hear things
differently

Annual Report
2024 – 2025

Southern
 Cochlear
Implant
Programme

"I wouldn't be in
the role I'm in
now if I didn't
have the cochlear
implant. I know
that for a fact."

Ryan Welsh



Emjai and her father Ryan Welsh restored and repainted his red ute as a labour of love.

LIZ ROBSON – DISTANT SEA

The journey of a family united by sound

When Ryan Welsh was 18, he declined the opportunity to receive a cochlear implant.

His wariness about the surgery meant he wasn't ready to take the step.

He's managed well enough with hearing aids and lip reading throughout his life in Oamaru, navigating school and building a career.

But 20 years later, watching his three-year-old daughter Emjai receive her first cochlear implant changed everything – not just for her, but eventually for Ryan himself.

Born four weeks premature, Emjai was tiny but alert. The first warning sign of her hearing loss came in the neonatal unit when a nurse dropped a steel tray – every other baby startled while Emjai slept on peacefully.

Ryan and his partner Nicki suspected something was wrong, but their concerns were initially dismissed. It wasn't until Emjai was two and a half that re-testing and re-evaluation revealed significant hearing loss.

Ryan was the first person in his family to be born deaf and his genetic heritage meant Emjai is also deaf, though her younger sister Peyton is not.

When Emjai received her first cochlear implant, the decision was philosophical as much as practical for Ryan and Nicki.

He was reassured as the technology had evolved dramatically since his teenage years with minimal invasiveness.

The implant gives options, Ryan says. "You can choose to engage with the hearing world, but at the end of the day, we're still deaf."

When the processor was switched on, Emjai heard her mother's voice clearly for the first time. She turned toward Nicki and cried.

Her older sister Katie became a wonderful ally in her rehabilitation, constantly talking to Emjai, helping her speech develop rapidly. By



Ryan with his dog.

the time Emjai started school, her progress exceeded all expectations.

The family's fundraising efforts for Emjai's second implant demonstrated the power of community support. In just four months, the Oamaru community raised \$50,000.

Watching Emjai thrive, Nicki suggested Ryan reconsider getting a cochlear implant himself.

At 34, he took the leap.

The impact was immediate and profound. "The first couple of weeks, when I was sitting at home watching TV and I could hear this noise driving me nuts," Ryan laughs. "It was a bird whistling outside the window. I'd never heard it before."

More significantly, the implant opened professional doors.

Previously limited to roles where he could minimise phone use, Ryan found himself confidently taking on management positions requiring extensive phone communication with customers.

From production supervisor at Kiwicare to operations coordinator at Transport Rangiora, his career trajectory shifted dramatically.

"I wouldn't be in the role I'm in now if I didn't have the cochlear implant. I know that for a fact."

Now 19, Emjai loves cars and is beginning a career in the automotive industry.

She's studying panel beating and mechanics at Ara, working toward her dream of running her own car restoration business. That ambition is backed by the achievement of being the top student in her Business Studies class at high school.

Emjai was awarded a study grant of \$2,500 by the Southern Hearing Charitable Trust this year in recognition of her hard work.

She prefers older cars to newer ones. Emjai drives a 1990 Honda Integra while her partner Cameron drives a late 1990s Toyota Corolla Levin. Her work experience at a classic car business in Rangiora allows her to combine her passion with practical skills.

"I started watching Formula One races with the family and thought they actually look quite cool to work on," Emjai explains.

"I quite like the engine noise and the noises that come from them, how loud they can get."

She's pragmatic about her hearing: "Most of the time I tell people I'm deaf, just in case I miss hearing them in conversation."

At school, she used Roger Pen technology to hear teachers in large open-plan classrooms.

Emjai has enjoyed playing netball since she was five and is a goal shoot. Interestingly, she says she plays better without her processors.

"I don't have the coach or other players yelling at me to do different things," she notes.

Both Ryan and Emjai are very appreciative of the support they have received from Southern Cochlear Implant Programme staff throughout their journey.

For Ryan, the message to other families considering cochlear implants is unequivocal: "Go for it. I reckon it's the best thing ever."

For Emjai, cochlear implants are simply part of who she is – a tool that helps her but also gives her the choice for peaceful silence when she wants it, something her Dad also relishes.

Chief Executive's report

Welcome to the 2024-25 annual report for the Southern Cochlear Implant Programme.

It has been another very busy and challenging year. Referrals to the programme – especially adults – are at record highs, reflecting growing need. As a result, our waiting list for adults is steadily increasing despite a significant funding increase in 2021.

In response to growing numbers, the Southern Hearing Charitable Trust Board this year committed to 24 additional implants from its investments and will make the same commitment to a further 24 implants in the 2025-26 year. Reconnecting people to the world of sound represents an investment in our community of over \$2.4 million and assists with ensuring the life-changing benefits of a cochlear implant can be attainable for anyone who could benefit from the technology.

This year brought significant changes in the Administration team at our Queens Drive clinic, with the addition of Jenny Newth (Practice Manager) and Charlotte Evason (Receptionist / Administrator) to the team. Both Jenny and Charlotte faced a steep learning curve but were supported by staff from our Christchurch clinic. We also welcomed Niky Pai and Vikki van Zyl as Audiologists to provide for staff parental leave, helping to



Neil Heslop, CEO

maintain consistent care. Both teams approached these challenges with resilience and professionalism.

In this past year we have seen further changes to our funder arrangements. Previously the responsibility of Whaikaha – Ministry of Disabled People, our contract now sits with Disability Support Services (DSS) within the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). Conversations we have had to date with MSD have been very positive.

MSD is at present reviewing cochlear implant services nationally. Our contract is due for renewal in 2026. As part of the review process, we have submitted our vision for the future of cochlear implant care in the next 10 years – services closer to

home, reduced inequity especially for Māori and rural clients, innovative technology to drive improvement and collaboration across the sector to reduce duplication and fragmentation.

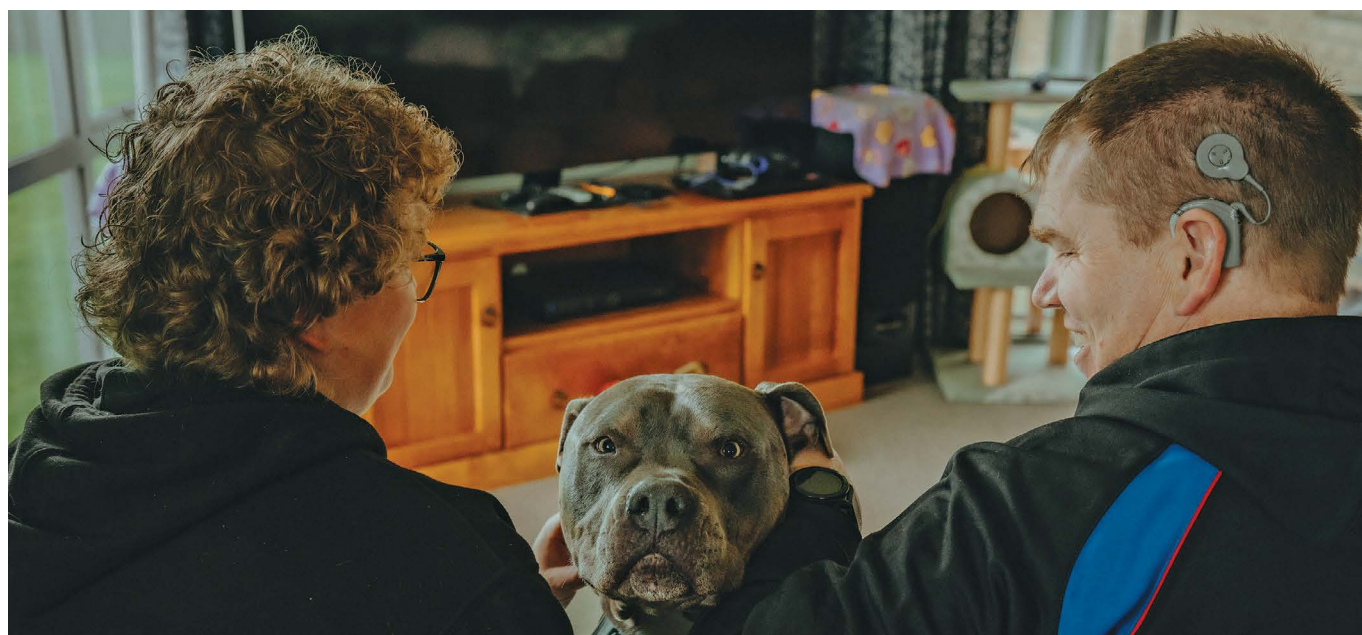
Earlier this year we were delighted to join David Kent and celebrate his investiture as a member of the NZ Order of Merit (MNZM) for his services to the Deaf and hearing-impaired community. David has been a passionate ambassador for our service as our Board chair for more than 20 years and he undertakes other advocacy and governance work in the sector, so his award is well deserved.

As ever, the benefits we bring to our cochlear implant community could not be achieved without input from all staff whether that be clinical staff working with clients, administration and support staff providing the foundation for day-to-day operations, or the management team trying to balance the books, ensure the programme is properly resourced and meeting the expectations of the funder. Thank you to all staff and the Board who contribute to make a difference for our clients.

Whatever the outcome of the MSD review, we look forward to assisting all our users and potential recipients for some time and meeting the challenges of 2025-26 and beyond.

Ngā mihi nā

NEIL HESLOP
Chief Executive



LIZ ROBSON – DISTANT SEA

Emjai and Ryan Welsh.



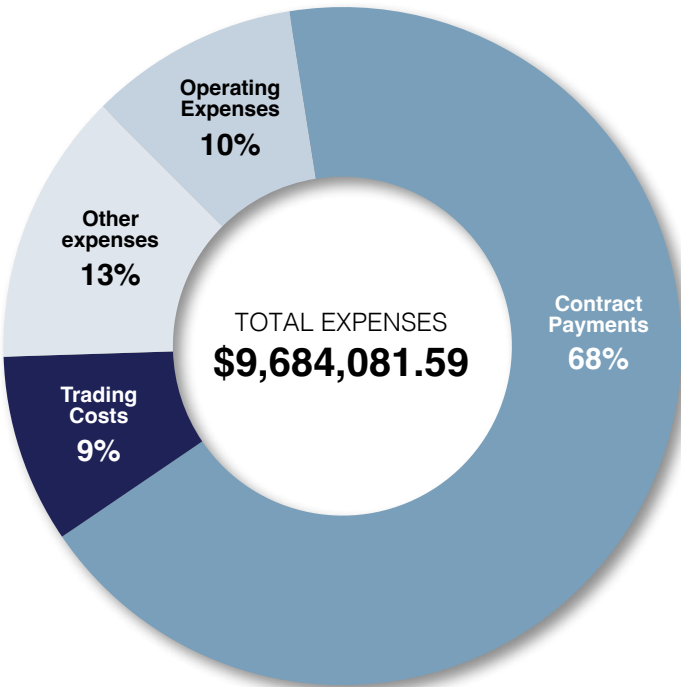
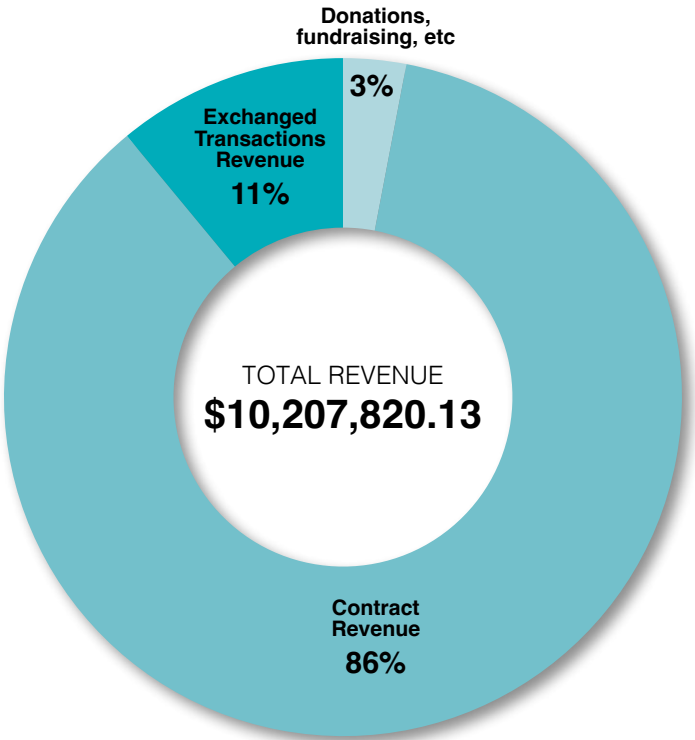
Congratulations to Sam Dannenberg from Christchurch who won the Southern Hearing Charitable Trust scholarship, sponsored by Forsyth Barr. In this photo Sam celebrates with his parents Dave and Clare, his girlfriend Sophie, David Kent (SHCT Board Chair) and Jonathan Davidson (Forsyth Barr).

Financials

Revenue and expenses as at 30 June 2025*

REVENUE

Donations, fundraising and other similar revenue	\$280,670.97
Contract Revenue	\$8,811,831.71
Revenue from Exchange Transactions	\$1,115,317.45



EXPENSES

Operating Expenses	\$944,624.76
Contract Payments	\$6,565,559.90
Trading Costs	\$911,154.47
Other expenses	\$1,262,742.46

* subject to audit

New Year Honours recognition for David Kent

Congratulations to the Southern Cochlear Implant Programme chair David Kent MNZM for being honoured as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the New Year Honours 2025 for his services to the Deaf and hard of hearing community.

In May it was lovely to celebrate David's honour with the Kent family, the Southern Hearing Charitable Trust (SHCT) Board, the SCIP team and invited guests at a special morning tea at Leinster Chambers in Christchurch.

David is 76 and has been Deaf since his mid-20s. He lives in Kirwee, west of Christchurch.

His life was transformed when hearing was restored to one ear after his first cochlear implant in 1998. He received a second implant in his other ear in 2011.

He is respected due to decades of volunteering advocacy work focused on equality and equity for the Deaf and hard of hearing community.

David is Chair of SHCT, which manages the Southern Cochlear Implant Programme and he has served on the board since 2003.

He is a past Board Member of the National Foundation for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, having completed terms as Chair, Deputy Chair and Council Chair during his 12 years' service.

Since 2017 he has been a Board Member of "ABLE – Making media accessible" and he had been a part of the Captioning Working Group prior to that appointment.

David initially became involved with the SHCT when he himself became a recipient of cochlear implants. He recognised that the funding for this remarkable life-changing technology was extremely limited.

He has made it his life's work to see that this inequity was overcome. Currently, 60 adults per year in SCIP's region are being implanted through Government funding.

"It is wonderful and unexpected, but this recognition is about the hearing sector and not my individual efforts," David says.



David Kent, Board Chair



Above: Jono Cox (SHCT Board), David Tier (MCF Board Chair), David Kent, Clint Barry (MCF CEO) and Neil Heslop (SCIP CEO).

"There are so many people in our community who have hearing difficulties – I urge them to seek help from an audiologist in case this amazing technology can re-introduce them to the hearing world," he says.

David funded bilateral cochlear implants for himself without any contribution from the public cochlear implant programmes and has selflessly dedicated time and energy to the Deaf and hard of hearing community for many years.

His commitment to this sector can be measured by the following achievements:

- Campaigning for greater increase in captioning for free to air television and digital media.
- Involved in the development of a Public Health Programme aimed at driving systematic change in the hearing health sector, with a particular focus on early intervention, healthy aging and reducing inequities that exist for our Māori population and Pacific Peoples.
- Providing regular input and advice on services and programmes to ensure they are fit for purpose.



SCIP Staff from the left – Fiona Hii (Finance Administrator), Katrine Evans (Audiologist), Susan Kinley (Rehabilitationist), Shirley Marshall (Audiologist), Vikki van Zyl (Audiologist), Tracey Enright (Business Services Manager), Debbie Swanson (Receptionist), Pip Wilding (Clinical Manager), David Kent, Joanne Lake (Lead Habilitationist), Belinda van der Monde (Community Relationship Manager) and Neil Heslop (CEO).



Ngaire and David Kent.



Susan Kinley (Rehabilitationist) and Gillian Nicolle (Clinical Coordinator).

Message from the Board Chair

Once again, we take the opportunity to reflect and look back on the past year and the success of both Southern Hearing Charitable Trust (SHCT) and SCIP. As I have said many times, to be part of an organisation which is able to reconnect people to the world of sound and to offer all of them New Sounds – New Opportunities – New Life is a real privilege and one which our Board remains proud of.

As reported in the Chief Executive's section, our numbers continue to grow at rapid rates, however at the same time the list of those waiting continues to grow. The Board is aware of this and during the past 12 months it has released funds from our investments and fundraising activities to implant a number of patients who would otherwise have remained on the wait list. We intend to continue to do this when and while we can make funds available.

Once again, on behalf of the SHCT Board, I wish to take the opportunity to express our sincere thanks to Chief Executive Neil Heslop and to all the staff at SCIP for their commitment and support to the programme. We are indeed fortunate to have such support and without your expertise and dedication we could not function.

I also acknowledge and thank all our surgeons in Christchurch and Wellington – your skills and support are invaluable.

During the year we farewelled one of our trustees Adrienne Paul, who moved to Auckland for employment reasons. The Board chose not to replace this role in the meantime. As Chair, I once again thank my fellow Board members for your guidance and especially your time, commitment and support over the past 12 months.

On a personal note, it was a huge and unexpected honour and privilege to be awarded a Member of New Zealand Order of Merit in the New Year's Honours list.

While this award has my name on it, the honour really belongs to all the wonderful work carried out by the team at SCIP and supported by the SHCT Board – it is support from all of you which has led to this award.

Finally, to all our supporters both corporate and individuals, thank you for your tremendous help – your donations have been warmly welcomed and are hugely valued.

You have helped change people's lives and enabled us to offer them new opportunities – thank you.

Ngā mihi nā

DAVID KENT
Board Chair



The flexibility of university scheduling allows Eve to pace herself, managing the cognitive load that comes with processing sound through her cochlear implants.

LIZ ROBSON – DISTANT SEA

Eve Williamson at the UC library.

University life offers freedom and independence

At 19, Eve Williamson embodies the spirit of determination and independence that comes from navigating life's challenges with grace and resilience.

Currently in her first year studying psychology at the University of Canterbury (UC), Eve's journey began much earlier than most. She was born in Bangkok, Thailand, at just 24 weeks, a remarkably early start that would shape her path in unexpected ways.

"We don't actually know specifically why I'm Deaf, but we think it's because I was born at such an early age," Eve explains matter-of-factly.

Eve's mother Nikki is Thai and the family returned to New Zealand when Eve was an infant. She received her first cochlear implant at 18 months.

When she was 12, Eve underwent surgery for her second cochlear implant. (While bilateral implants are now standard for children, Eve's journey spanned an era when the approach was different.)

She has spent her life in the hearing world, though when she was young Eve attended preschool programmes at Van Ash Deaf Education Centre (now Ko Taku Reo) and Deaf Games summer camps.

She is passionate about cars.

"It's not something that's so common for girls, but I'm big into cars. I like to go to exhibitions and shows," Eve says with a smile.

Her enthusiasm was sparked by her father Aaron's love of classic Morris Austins, but it was her partner Ben who introduced her to the world of supercars. The couple met at high school in Christchurch.

This automotive passion led Eve to discover another love – photography.

"I started getting into photography when I got interested in cars," she explains.

She's even considering adding a photography paper to her university studies, exploring the avenue of creative expression behind the lens.



Eve Williamson.

The transition from high school to UC has been transformative for Eve.

After spending her later high school years in Kerikeri with her family, she's returned to Christchurch where she grew up. The move also meant living in the same city as Ben again and she is relishing that.

The flexibility of university scheduling allows Eve to pace herself, managing the cognitive load that comes with processing sound through her cochlear implants.

"In high school, having six-hour days was just exhausting – constantly listening to people. Now, having maybe two or three lectures a day with breaks in between is much more manageable for me," Eve reflects.

Significantly, Eve won a Go Waitaha scholarship valued at \$15,000, which has been instrumental in supporting her studies and accommodation at Rochester and Rutherford Hall at UC.

The hall has provided Eve with a supportive community. Initially, she had to explain to new friends that she's profoundly Deaf and relies on cochlear implants to hear.

When describing her situation, Eve has learned to be clear and direct and that helps her fellow students

adapt to communicate effectively with her.

"I had to ask them to please repeat what they were saying and speak clearly, because often they would talk over each other," she recalls.

Eve's choice to study psychology was influenced by Aaron, who studied psychology and worked in social work and counselling.

Initially, she considered law and criminology, inspired perhaps by American television shows, but found the reality quite different. The abundance of legal language and terminology and competitive academic environment did not suit her.

She's considering her future options – perhaps clinical psychology, maybe incorporating photography – but for now, she's focused on the present moment.

"The independent side of university is what I love most," Eve reflects. "Just having more freedom in my choices."

UC's Accessibility Services team has provided crucial support for Eve, particularly the AI transcription tools available for large lecture halls.

"In those big lectures with 200 people, I can feel completely overwhelmed," she admits. "But being able to go back and review transcripts if I've missed anything has been a huge help."

Throughout her journey, audiologist Shirley Marshall from the Southern Cochlear Implant Programme has been a constant presence.

"She's been part of my life for such a long time," Eve says warmly, "always making sure my cochlear implant settings are up to date and that I can hear clearly."

This consistent professional relationship has provided stability and expert care as Eve has grown from a toddler to a confident young adult.

Eve misses her parents and pets in the Bay of Islands and keeps in touch via Facetime.

Her journey continues to unfold, one carefully scheduled lecture, one car show, one photograph at a time – each step taken with the confidence of someone who has learned to navigate the world on her own terms while remaining connected to the support systems that helped shape her path.

LIZ ROBSON – DISTANT SEA

GRANTS & TRUSTS



Proudly administered by



Fundraising report

In 2024-25 SCIP set a record for the number of Cochlear Implant User Group meetings held in a year; 14 in total. First-time meetings were held in Westport and Greymouth and were well attended, proving the need for such events.

SCIP plans to continue these meetings in coming years. Speaking to the recipients is one of the most enjoyable parts of my role.

During the financial year, SCIP was once again fortunate to receive financial support from various organisations and individual donors throughout regions where SCIP delivers services. These totals are outlined on page 11.

Our partnership with Mutual Credit Finance (MCF) is now in its eighth year. MCF continues to support SCIP through an annual donation of \$20,000 and in other non-monetary



*Belinda van der Monde,
Community Relationship Manager*

ways. The Christchurch-based organisation supported the SCIP 20th Anniversary and continues to be an active participant in the annual Loud Shirt Day event.

The SCIP Supporters Database continues to grow – we now stand at a membership total of 867 people. This database is a vehicle for keeping in touch with our CI Users and supporters of SCIP about what is happening with regards to our fundraising and other relevant news or updates.

Running for the last five years, SCIP's 'Financial Assistance Grant' for our patients has granted just under \$50,000 since its inception. We provide financial assistance to individuals with CI on SCIP's programme who are struggling to meet costs to maintain their CI or to attend required appointments. If you would like to know more about the Financial Assistance Grant, please speak to your audiologist.

As always, our vision for our CI Users is new sounds – new experiences – new life!

BELINDA VAN DER MONDE
Community Relationship Manager

CORPORATE SUPPORT



Fundraising acknowledgements

In 2024-25 the Southern Cochlear Implant Programme (SCIP) was supported by organisations and donors who helped us deliver our services to people affected by hearing loss.

Through their generosity, we can continue to assist our patients toward new sounds, new experience, and new life.

GRANTS 2024-25

ORGANISATION	GRANT
NZ Community Trust	\$15,000
NFDHH	\$2,000
Aotearoa Gaming Trust	\$20,000
Jones Foundation	\$5,000
Pub Charity	\$20,000
Kiwi Gaming Foundation	\$10,000
St George's Hospital	\$55,000
The Lion Foundation	\$70,000
Nikau Foundation	\$4,960
Otago Community Trust	\$1,000
Stewart Family Trust – Perpetual Guardian Trust	\$3,000
David Ellison Charitable Trust – Public Trust	\$1,000
Christchurch Casinos Charitable Community Trust	\$750
Rata Foundation	\$15,000
Four Winds	\$10,000
Grand total	\$232,710

DONATIONS

received in the last financial year totalled

\$110,034.50

ONE REQUEST RECEIVED

\$50,000

ANNUAL CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP FOR COMMUNICATIONS

\$20,000



MCF

Mutual Credit Finance

ANNUAL CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP FOR SCHOLARSHIP GRANT

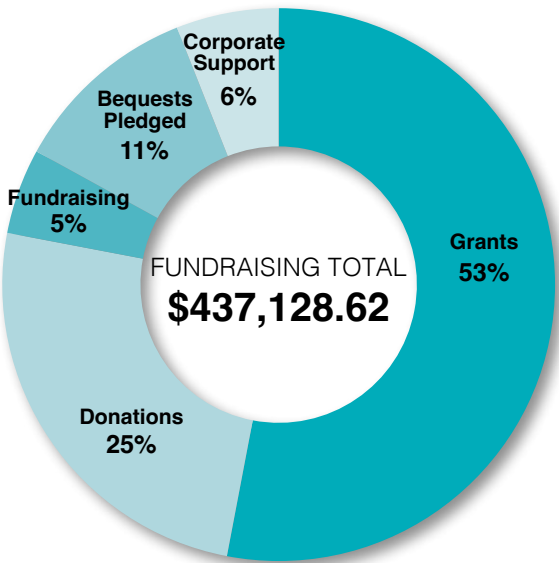
\$5,000



FORSYTH BARR

2024-25 FUNDRAISING SUMMARY

Grants – various	\$232,710.00	(53%)
Donations received in the last financial year	\$110,034.50	(25%)
Loud Shirt Day 2024	\$19,384.12	(5%)
Bequests Pledged – one pledge	\$50,000.00	(11%)
Corporate Support –		
Mutual Credit Finance – Communications	\$20,000.00	(5%)
Forsyth Barr – Scholarship Grant	\$5,000.00	(1%)
Fundraising total	\$437,128.62	



Clinical report

Referrals

Our referrals hit a new milestone this year, with a total of 210 new adult referrals received. We also saw a significant increase in referrals for children, with 31 received.

Recipients

In the past financial year, SCIP provided cochlear implants to a combined total of 117 adults and children. The youngest recipient was aged seven months at the time of surgery, while the age range of children implanted was seven months to 18 years. The oldest recipient was 88 years, with adult ages ranging from 24 to 88 years.

Outcomes for Adults

Outcomes for adult cochlear implant recipients are reviewed 12 months after implantation and compared with baseline data collected during the pre-implant assessment. In 2024-25, results showed:



Pip Wilding SCIP Clinical Manager

- 93% of adults demonstrated improvements on a word repetition task in quiet conditions
- 93% of adults reported improvements on quality-of-life (QoL) measures

One of the common themes the team hears at assessment is that people feel they are “too old” to benefit from a cochlear implant. To address this misconception, our clinical team conducted a review of outcomes for recipients who were implanted at age 85 and older, focusing on speech perception scores and QoL measures. Results showed that all users demonstrated improved sentence and word recognition scores (in quiet) and higher QoL scores at 12 months post implant.

These findings align with current research trends and help to strengthen our counselling of potential recipients in this age group. This information was presented at the New Zealand Audiological Society (NZAS) Conference 2025. The key message that age is not a barrier to implantation was well received – an important factor that will encourage referrals. This is particularly significant in the context of an ageing population.

Outcomes for Children

Our Habilitation team conducts regular spoken language assessments as these are a key part of monitoring children’s progress with cochlear implants.

This year, 90% of pre-lingually implanted children aged between 4 years and 5 years 6 months

demonstrated spoken language skills at or above age-expected levels. This result was achieved after adjusting for factors that can influence language development for all children, such as the presence of additional disabilities or speaking English as a second language.

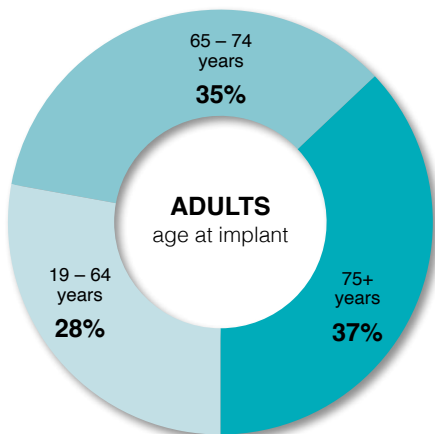
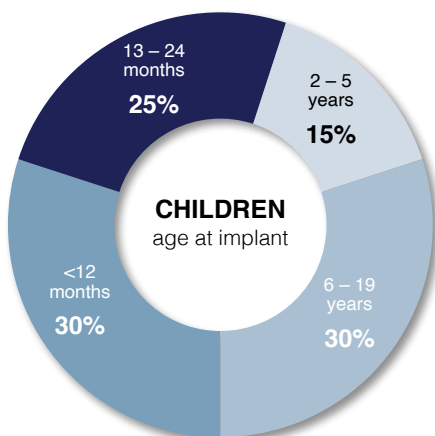
These findings highlight the strong spoken language outcomes achievable with early intervention and ongoing support for our young recipients.

Raising Awareness, Reducing Barriers

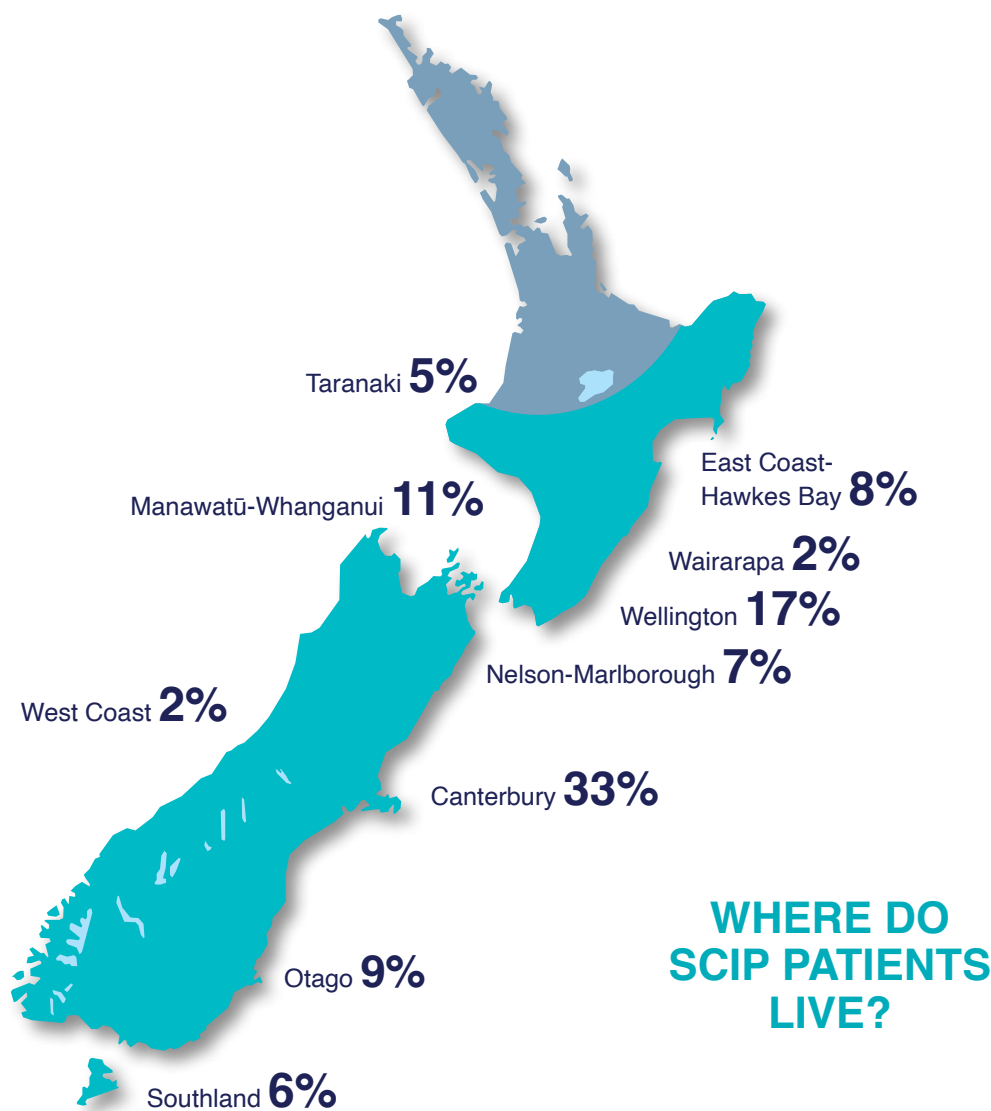
Our clinical team continues to demonstrate a strong commitment to educating hearing health and allied health professionals and the wider community about the benefits of cochlear implants. By addressing stigma and misconceptions, we provide individuals and their whānau with clearer information to make informed decisions around their hearing health. Greater understanding supports improved access and equity, as more people who could benefit from this life-changing technology are identified and referred. Earlier referrals lead to better hearing outcomes and improved QoL for recipients. This also gives us a clearer insight into the unmet need in the community, which reinforces the case for sustainable funding and needs-based service development.

During the past year, SCIP staff have shared their expertise through a wide range of professional education and engagement activities. These included delivering updates and workshops for local audiologists, Teachers of the Deaf and Hearing Therapists. Highlights included hosting an exhibitor stand at the NZAS Conference, where staff shared our mission and services with hearing professionals from across the country. The team also delivered presentations at several national and international conferences, including the NZAS Conference, the Coalition for Global Hearing Health Conference and the Deafblind Foundation Conference. In addition, we provided training for medical and audiology students, further strengthening future workforce knowledge in hearing health and cochlear implantation.

AGE AT IMPLANT 2024-25



At a glance



TOTAL NUMBER OF RECIPIENTS



1254
ADULTS



253
CHILDREN

2024-25
IMPLANTS



96
ADULTS

21
CHILDREN
(15 bilateral, 6 unilateral)

WAITING
LIST NUMBERS



80
ADULTS
waiting without funding

NEW REFERRALS



241



210
ADULTS

31
CHILDREN

REPLACEMENT
PROCESSORS



125



74
ADULTS

51
CHILDREN

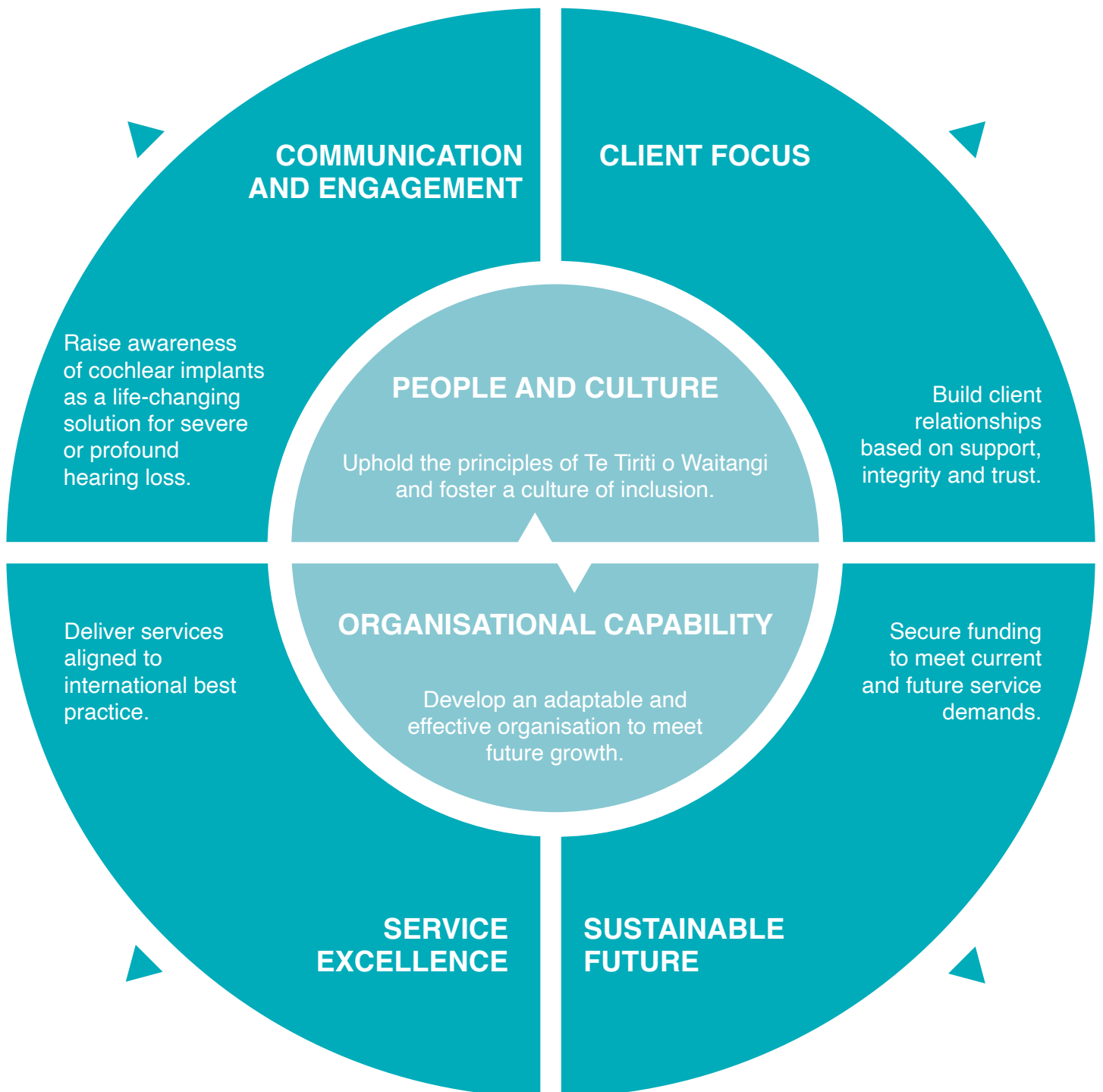
MONEY SPENT
ON CHILDREN'S
REPAIRS

\$238,070



OUR VISION

New Sounds • New Experiences • New Life



OUR MISSION

To provide cochlear implants to those in need so they can fully engage with their whānau and communities.



“The independent
side of university is
what I love most.”

Eve Williamson

Hear our stories – Kia rongo mai i a mātou kōrero

A book celebrating 20 years of SCIP through 20 patient stories was created for the anniversary and describes the remarkable impact this wonderful technology has had on the lives of New Zealanders.

These stories commemorate SCIP's work over two decades. Each of the 20 stories is associated with a year in the life of the programme.

The people featured live in communities around the regions SCIP serves, from across the Central North Island to Wellington and the entire South Island.

Thank you to the lovely people who shared their stories as a special way to thank SCIP and commemorate this occasion.

An electronic copy of the book is on our website – <https://scip.co.nz/hear-our-stories/>

Copies of the book can be purchased at SCIP for \$20. Contact reception@scip.co.nz



Our locations

Christchurch clinic

Milford Chambers
St George's Hospital
249 Papanui Road
Christchurch 8014

Freephone: 0800 500 405
Phone: 03 355 3041
Txt: 027 355 3041
Email: reception@scip.co.nz

Wellington clinic

JAG Legal Building
Level 1
119 Queens Drive
Lower Hutt 5010

Freephone: 0800 504 405
Phone: 04 589 9853
Txt: 027 589 9853
Email: scip.wellington@scip.co.nz

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