Speech pathologist help Charters Towers be part of a nation for communication

20 August 2014

Charters Towers Health Service speech pathologists Michelle Petersen and Kylie Winwood will be helping spread Speech Pathology Australia’s important message next week during Speech Pathology Week (24-30 August).

“This year 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,” Mrs Petersen said.

“Every day more than 1.1 million Australians have difficulty communicating, with many people suffering in silence.

“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,” Mrs Petersen said.

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

“Speech disorders don’t just affect the young; we find 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,” Mrs Petersen said.

Mrs Winwood said that speech pathologists were confronting these challenges 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.

“We work with people to maximise their ability to communicate in a way that best meets their needs and abilities,” said Mrs Winwood.
“We 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.”

To celebrate Speech Pathology Week, there will be a display at the Excelsior Library with the Charters Towers Health Service presenting information on normal speech and language development after Baby Bounce and Story time on Wednesday 26 August at 10:45am and 11:30am.

For more information about Speech Pathology Week visit www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au

Ends

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Additional Information

About Speech Pathology Week 2014 ‘Nation for Communication’:
Speech Pathology Week 2014 (24-30 August) celebrates the speech pathology profession and the important role speech pathologists play in helping people acquire and maintain communication skills.

About Speech Pathology Australia
Speech Pathology Australia is the national peak body representing more than 6,000 speech pathologists. The Association supports and regulates the ethical, clinical and professional standards of its members, as well as lobbying and advocating on behalf of all Australians living with communication and swallowing difficulties.