

## **MEDIA RELEASE MEDIA RELEASE MEDIA RELEASE MEDIA RELEASE**

In a catchment area that includes families from Asia, India, the Middle East and Africa as well as indigenous Australian families, more than 50% of Morley Primary School's student population has English as a Second Language.

"We're in an area quite close to the city with a transient population," explains Deputy Principal Ms Amanda Box. "We also have an indigenous population of approximately 3% and a number of those children have experienced otitis media."

Morley Primary School emphasises inclusion and uses an Explicit Teaching approach. The adoption of Hear and Learn's audio technology in classrooms from Kindergarten to Year Six is having a positive impact on student learning.

"Ours is very much a community school and we foster our sense of inclusion, unity and family," says Ms Box.

Having previously worked with ESL students as a Language Specialist, Ms Box has witnessed the positive impact Hear and Learn's RedCAT system can provide. "The clarity this system delivers, enabling children to hear language clearly and receive information without distraction, is vital to their understanding of the complexities of their second language," says Ms Box.

With a number of students at the school with auditory processing problems and autism, Ms Box says it is essential that all students are able to differentiate between sounds, no matter where they are in the classroom.

"It's crucial that they hear these sounds correctly so they are then able to pronounce the words and, later, spell them," says Ms Box.

The RedCAT system is a practical support to Morley Primary School's adoption of the Soundwaves Program which explores the phonetic sounds of words and the structure of reading, spelling and writing.

Beginning in the Kindergarten classrooms, over the past five years the RedCATs have been gradually rolled out through the Primary school. Otitis media, or "glue ear", is a middle ear infection where fluid in the middle ear canal impedes hearing. With reduced hearing, learning pronunciation, speech and spelling and even confidence can all be impacted.

As a Year 5 teacher since the beginning of 2017, this is Amanda Box's first year using the RedCATs in the classroom setting and she has noticed that the popularity of the technology doesn't stop at the school gate.

"All our parents are welcomed into our classrooms at any time of day," says Ms Box. "We find they come in particularly at the beginning and end of the day, and many have commented on how wonderful the system is. They comment positively on how clear the audio is from the system as they wait near the classroom doors."

Ms Box uses one microphone in her classroom and shares it with her students as the opportunities arise.

"I have some very softly spoken children in my group," says Ms Box. "It's a great confidence boost for them to be able to hear their own voices as they present to their peers in the classroom."

The RedCAT technology also delivers significant health and safety benefits for teaching staff. Morley Primary's Kindergarten teacher, Ms Michelle Salamone, has experienced first hand the potentially severe impact of "voice overuse" on vocal cords.

"The use of my voice never stops," says Ms Salamone. "It's always being used for speaking to the children or singing songs with them or discussing things with their parents or talking to other staff members."

Feeling the strain on her voice three years ago, Ms Salamone was diagnosed with pin head sized nodules on her vocal chords. Now recovering, Ms Salamone appreciates the vocal nuance Hear and Learn's technology provides. Fearing she would have to change her teaching style, Ms Salamone has found that, with the RedCATs, she can still deliver lessons in her own style to her class: it enables her to whisper, use varying tones and generally a much quieter voice but is still able to be heard clearly by all her Kindergarten students.

"As a teacher, this system enables you to use your voice in the best way possible," says Ms Salamone. "With a microphone clipped to my lapel, I'm free to be animated with the children and get the best out of my voice while delivering clear information to them."

"They can hear the language very clearly and I can get a point across. There's no need to raise your voice, you can speak very slowly and clearly for them, so my voice cuts through any of the normal background classroom noise but in a gentle way."

For some children there are rustling sounds in the room which distract them. Other children can't handle loud noises, so with the clear sound delivered by the Hear and Learn technology they receive crisp audio delivery and can hear clearly, despite any perceived distraction.

"Kids move around all the time in their classroom," says Ms Salamone. "They're supposed to! In a very gentle way, the Hear and Learn RedCAT system is super effective in cutting through any of that noise."

"But it also means we have a very quiet environment because it helps them tone down as well, without overriding them or their enthusiasm."