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**Title:**

Press statement by the Minister for Health: study of communication disorders in children

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PRESS STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, DR D.N. EVERINGHAM

81/74

STUDY OF COMMUNICATION DISORDERS IN CHILDREN

A Health Department officer has been awarded an Australian Government Postgraduate Scholarship to study communication disorders in children.

He is Mr Phillip Dermody, a research psychologist with the Audiology Section of the National Acoustic Laboratories in Sydney.

Mr Dermody has commenced studies at North Western University in Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A. He plans to spend 18 months with the Department of Speech studying for a Master of Arts degree. He already has a Bachelor of Arts degree with first-class honours in psychology from the University of Sydney.

The Minister for Health, Dr D.N. Everingham, said Mr Dermody's study would be directly connected with the work of a new scientific group being established at the National Acoustic Laboratories, which will develop more detailed auditory testing procedures to detect children who have a learning difficulty.

The particular children in whom Mr Dermody is interested generally have normal hearing sensitivity, but are unable to correctly recognise, distinguish or process sound in the usual way.

Testing procedures will be aimed at early detection and diagnosis of these problems so that remedial treatment can be offered sooner, and to a greater number of children, than is possible at present.

It is also anticipated that at least some of the testing procedures, when applied to deaf children seeking assistance under the Australian Government's hearing aid schemes, will provide additional information for hearing aid selection and use.

Canberra, August 27, 1974.