ANNUAL REPORT 2024

TINNITUSFREE FOUNDATION



The TinnitusFree Foundation is a campaigning and fundraising institute that aims to increase Tinnitus awareness and prevention, and the search for a cure. The exact cause of tinnitus is currently unknown. There is no known cure – but there are hundreds of deceptive claims.

OUR AMBITION IS TO FIND A CURE FOR TINNITUS. FAST.

Tinnitus is best viewed as a **“phantom noise”**. It is the medical term for “hearing” a continuous sound in the ears when there is no external source for that sound. Tinnitus can come in many forms, such as ringing, squeaking, whistling, hissing, buzzing or white noise. It can appear to originate from one or both ears, from within the head, or even externally.

It was originally assumed that the cause of tinnitus lay in the auditory organ itself. However, recent research shows that the brain is responsible. Hyperactivity in the auditory cortex in the brain causes the emission of continuous signals when there is no sound present, hence the term, “phantom noise”

1. NEW BOARD MEMBER ANNE DE JONG.

Anne de Jong has joined as board member. Anne is an experienced music industry executive and is managing director of the NVPI, is the trade association of film distributors and music producers in the Netherlands.

Anne will work towards getting tinnitus on the agenda of the music industry.

2. ADOPTION OF WAR ON TINNITUS MEDICAL RESEARCH PROJECT AS MAIN OBJECT FOR FUNDRAISING.

'War On Tinnitus' by Prof. Dirk De Ridder & Divya Adhia, Brai3n Clinic, Gent, Belgium & Research Unit University of Otago, New Zealand.

Research objective: this proposal is a high risk, high gain approach to finding a solution for tinnitus on a short time frame, i.e., 3 to 5 years, consisting of 14 groundbreaking medial research projects. The goal is to reduce and ideally abolish the sound in contrast to most tinnitus studies that attempt to reduce the suffering associated with the tinnitus. All proposals are easy to roll out in tinnitus clinics if proven successful.

Professor de Ridder emphasizes that fundraising is difficult because large funds and governments only finance risk-averse research. Tinnitus research must be experimental and groundbreaking – with a chance of failure. And then move forward to the next.

We need to move towards silence and not just learn to live with it, is the underlying theme of the War On Tinnitus.

TinnitusFree has been pioneering new paths for fundraising for 'war On Tinnitus' in 2024.

3. CONTINUATION OF ‘23 MEDIA CAMPAIGN.

In 2023, TinnitusFree launched a very successful campaign to drive awareness for tinnitus as a disease that needs financial support, via striking content on social media channels and clickbait newsflashes.

Parallel to this campaign, the TinnitusFree Foundation was a main participant in a traditional press and publicity campaign in the Netherlands to enhance the visibility of the disease and the fundraising purpose. Tinnitus became visible on the radar of news media and politicians.

TinnitusFree continued this campaign in 2024, striking a more international tone, targeting countries outside of the Netherlands and with fundraising as priority.

We added 1.000> new followers on Instagram and LinkedIn. Facebook is a notable exception with no extra followers and very little engagement.

70% of the new followers were international i.e., from outside the Netherlands. Their engagement is high.

4. TARGETING THE MUSIC SECTOR.

TinnitusFree has created a pitch document for the music industry. It requests financial support for three studies: (a) War On Tinnitus, (b) the Neuromodulator project and (c) the Tinnitus Music Creator Research.

Board member Anne de Jong and manager Frank van Hoorn started to actively approach the music industry in the second half of 2024. The pitch makes an appeal to the social responsibility of the industry, in which tinnitus is a problem for both the makers and the music consumer.

Since 2024, the CSR-D is in place: a new Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive, formulated by the European Union. In the coming years, the CSR/ESG accountability of (medium to large) organizations will need to increase to meet the new European standards. For the music industry, a moral, strategic and proactive approach to tinnitus as part of CSR policy is obvious, because this can be directly linked to the music product. Investors and other stakeholders are also demanding a better CSR from these organizations.

TARGETING THE MUSIC SECTOR/CONT'.

TinnitusFree has launched a study to determine the scale and impact of tinnitus amongst music creators.

The findings of this research can help shape advocacy of this problem and support for musicians and other music industry related jobs, from music rights organizations, musician unions, sound companies, governments, the medical profession and insurance and health care industry.

5. THE NEUROMODULATOR RESEARCH.

The prototype is ready. Size: lunchbox.

The prototype is currently in its clinical testing stage at the university of Otago, New Zealand, led by Prof. Dirk de Ridder, neurosurgeon. TU is supervising the technical aspects.

If the tests are positive, research will be conducted into how the technical concept can be miniaturized (so it becomes a wearable consumer product) and made suitable for production.
Led by Prof. Dirk de Ridder, neurosurgeon. TU will join to see if it works well in a technical sense.

So, outcome of these real-life tests will determine next steps towards application / use case/ product development and implementation:

a. The device does not work. Back to the drawing board.
b. It works. Question: does this then become a product exclusively for use in a specialized clinic.
c. Or will it become a consumer product, at which point JBL can then join in on.

TinnitusFree is looking at 'productized solutions', meaning that the results from research are developed into a medical or consumer product. Potential targets are audio companies (Harman) and medical device companies such as Massimo.

SUMMARY.

2024 was a year of preparation.

We focused on network building, engaging key players in different industries, and supporting the growing awareness of the great personal suffering and impact on society of tinnitus.

With this in place and clinical studies making good progress, we aim in 2025 for greater exposure and substantial fundraising amounts.

THANK YOU.

TINNITUSFREE FOUNDATION BOARD

Wiebo Vaartjes (formerly Executive Vice President and CEO at Philips Lifestyle Entertainment), **Chairman.**

Gerrit te Spenke (formerly Tax Attorney at KPMG) **Executive Secretary.**

Prof. Dirk de Ridder (MD PhD, Neurological Foundation Chair in Neurosurgery, Dunedin School of Medicine, New Zealand), **Board Member.**

Ben Giezenaar (formerly partner Mojo Concerts), **Treasurer.**

Anne de Jong (Managing Director of NVPI - Dutch Association of Producers and Importers of Image – and Sound carriers), **Board Member.**

MANAGEMENT

Frank van Hoorn / Van Hoorn Company.

TINNITUSFREE.EU