



Talking up a storm for disabled children

IT is amazing what the gift of the gab can get you.

For St Gabriel's School for Hearing Impaired Children, the inaugural Gift of the Gab fundraising luncheon at Oatlands House resulted in more than \$24,500 being raised and NSW Premier Nathan Rees attending.

Principal Kathy Freeman said in a year of economic challenges for individuals and business alike, she is ecstatic with the outcome of the lunch.

"This event was always going to be a challenge as a first-off new event, but we are thrilled at the outcome for the school," Ms Freeman said.

"The generosity of the people in the room is to be commended and we are

very grateful for their support."

The AMP Foundation pledged their support of this event by matching the funds raised up to \$10,000.

MC Andrew Voss was a hit, inviting celebrity guests Phil "Gus" Gould, Melinda Gainsford-Taylor and Matthew Hill to join him on stage seated on the "chilli red" King Furniture lounge.

They got talking about everything from footy to the races, with hilarious stories from on and off the track.

Voss also got Mr Rees on the lounge and he chatted casually about what a day in the life of the premier was like.

People were also given the opportunity to bid on such items as a lounge, an Urban Graze truffle weekend for two

to Orange, several signed footballs, weekend escapes in a Lexus, an advertising package on 2UE and a couple of romantic getaways for two at Loxley on Bellbird Hill.

Ms Freeman also took the opportunity to announce changes to the school's enrolments policy.

As of next year the school will broaden it's student base to include children with a wider range of disabilities, such as intellectual disabilities in the mild to moderate range and autism, as well as maintaining its specialised programs for children with a hearing impairment.



Above right: Phil Gould with St Gabriel's School principal Kathy Freeman at the Gift of the Gab fundraising luncheon. Above: Melinda Gainsford-Taylor.
 Above left: St Gabriel's School marketing manager Georgina Springer with guest MC Andrew Voss.