



# Deaf Australia Inc.

**Media Release**  
**For immediate release**

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## **Historic summit calls for better education for Deaf kids**

Bilingual programs, support services, interpreter qualifications and competence were the big issues being discussed at the Deaf Australia Education Summit today, being held across 29-30 November at ANU in Canberra.

“We believe every deaf child has the right to an effective education, delivered in the way that suits them best, and for many deaf children, this means being bilingual in both English and Auslan,” said Karen Lloyd AM, Executive Officer of Deaf Australia.

“We know that Deaf kids are missing out - through overcrowding in popular specialised Deaf schools, lack of qualified and experienced support staff, and the use of English as a primary education language.”

Parliamentary Secretary for School Education, Senator Jacinta Collins, who addressed the summit today, said the Gillard Government was working with Deaf Australia to ensure students with disability had access to a great education.

“Just yesterday the Government introduced the *Australian Education Bill* into the Parliament which outlined a new funding system for schools,” Senator Collins said.

“This will include better support for students with disability.

“Under our plan students with disability, including those with hearing impairments, will receive a funding loading to help pay for assistive technology and extra teacher support.

“We want to make sure all students have the opportunity to meet their full potential,” Senator Collins said.

Senator Collins said the Government was already providing extra funding to schools to assist students who are deaf.

“As part of our *More Support for Students with Disability* program schools are installing hearing loops, introducing AUSLAN and providing extra teacher assistance.

“We are seeing the value of this investment through improved NAPLAN results in those schools,” Senator Collins said.

Ms Lloyd said the Summit was intended as a vehicle for government, Deaf people, families, educators and parents to discuss identified ongoing issues and develop strategies for effecting real, meaningful, change.

“There is a strong connection between young people learning their native language and achieving a secure acceptance of their own identity and helping them to develop a wider recognition and understanding of their language and culture,” said Ms Lloyd.



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“Many bilingual deaf Australians often identify with Auslan as a native language and find it more effective to communicate and learn using Auslan. This does not exclude the value of English, but further emphasises the need for bilingual learning.”

*Deaf Australia is the national peak organisation for Deaf people in Australia. It represents the views of deaf people who use Auslan and is a true consumer organisation as only deaf people have the right to vote on Deaf Australia business and to be elected to the Board. Deaf Australia’s vision is that deaf people are respected and fully included in the Australian community and the right to use Auslan is legally recognised.*

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**Media Contact**

Amber Venner

Communication Republic

Phone 0402 443 603

[amber@communicationrepublic.com.au](mailto:amber@communicationrepublic.com.au)