



34th Annual Report
2019-2020

Spotlight on Auslan



Acknowledgement of First Peoples of Australia

Deaf Australia acknowledges the Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our organisation is located and where we conduct our business. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present. Deaf Australia is committed to honouring Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

Acknowledgement of Deaf People and the Community

We acknowledge and respect the members of the deaf community in Australia, who preserve their rich heritage, culture and our language; Auslan (Australian Sign Language). We also acknowledge our custodians of Auslan, promoting awareness, equality and access through our sign language. Through Auslan, we inspire future leaders in our deaf community to continue our legacy and heritage.



Deaf Australia Incorporated
PO Box 1348
Blackburn North, Victoria 3130

ABN: 65 174 780 885

For the year ended 30 June 2020

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Further copies of this document can be obtained from Deaf Australia's Website: deafaustralia.org.au/about-2/about-deaf-australia/

About Us

Our Organisation

Deaf Australia is the deaf-led peak organisation representing deaf and hard of hearing people in Australia.

We promote the advancement of human rights and equality for deaf people by collaborating with our members and stakeholders to influence governments in implementing the United Nations Conventions and the National Disability Strategy.

Our Mission

Work towards realisation of deaf person's linguistic and human rights in partnership with Australian Governments, national organisations, providers and relevant stakeholders.

Our Vision

Deaf people as fully engaged citizens.



Our Beliefs

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to promoting equality in our work. All individuals are to be treated equally and be included in our work regardless of their religion, race, gender, identity, sexual orientation, education, language, culture, age or disability.

Respect and Empowerment

We will consult and work collaboratively with our members, partners and donors in achieving our goals.

Sign Language and Community

Language rights are essential for deaf people's human rights; thus, sign language and deaf communities must be legally recognised and promoted.

Leadership of Deaf People

Deaf organisations must be led by deaf people and decisions which affect deaf people need to be made by deaf people.

Our Guiding Principles

Human Rights Based Approach

- The principles and objectives of the United Nations (UN) Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and other general acts and recommendations of the UN and the Australian Governments will guide Deaf Australia's work.
- Deaf Australia operates in line with the philosophy of "*Leave No One Behind*", meaning equalisation of opportunities and full participation in society for deaf people in the country.

Respect for Linguistic Diversity

- Deaf Australia works on ongoing basis for the recognition of sign languages as part of linguistic diversity and aims to improve the status of Australian sign languages.

Inclusive and Accessible Society

- Deaf Australia believes no deaf person should be denied quality education in their use of Auslan and that parents and providers of education should implement bilingual education for deaf children.
- Deaf Australia works for an accessible society with no barriers where services and information are available in Auslan.

Leadership of Deaf People

- Deaf Australia promotes the principle: "*Nothing about us without us*".
- Deaf Australia is committed to strengthening our capacity that will contribute to the autonomy, expertise and self-determination of deaf communities.

Co-operation and Partnership

- Deaf Australia is committed to achieve our objectives through effective engagement with members, stakeholders, government agencies, donors and universities to successfully undertake its work.

Chairperson's Report

2020 has been an incredible year in many different ways – we experienced droughts, bushfires and now the coronavirus pandemic and associated lockdowns. These events have devastated and impacted many people, especially the deaf community which has been disadvantaged in many ways. This has shown that it is critical for us to have organisations like Deaf Australia to continue advocating and lobbying for better access, inclusion and equality for the deaf community. While we have had unfortunate events, on the flip side we have derived some benefit – especially through the increased public exposure and broader acceptance of Auslan on TV and other mediums as noted in the annual report by our Chief Executive, Kyle Miers.



Going back to our Annual General Meeting last year, I found this was a difficult time for me as I had mixed feelings knowing that I had one more year left in my current term and I was undecided whether I should again stand for election for another term. While thinking this through, I realised at the end of my term I would have been with Deaf Australia for 10 years, 7 years as President/Chairperson, which was a long time. I was aware that it is generally not healthy for an organisation to have the same people on their Board and/or as their leader for extended periods, as it is important to inject new perspectives and ideas, often by bringing in “new blood”. I was also aware that my career and family have had to be put aside while I volunteered my time for Deaf Australia. After careful consideration, I knew it was time for me to step down from my role and hand over the opportunity to lead the organisation to someone else going forward.

Shortly after, I informed the Board of Deaf Australia that I would not be seeking to extend my term after this year. While it was not an easy decision, I knew I had to do this as it was the right thing to do for the organisation. This led to some self-reflection, where I thought about what the organisation and I achieved over the past 10 years.

When I was elected as the President in late 2013, it was a challenging period as shortly after the government changed how organisations like Deaf Australia would be funded going forward, moving from long term block funding to smaller, multiple short term grant and project applications in which we had to compete against other organisations. This changed how we could plan for our future and develop our strategy – essentially this forced us to move into “survival mode” and focus more on making sure we were viable in the short term. We had to cut down our staffing numbers down to one, only retaining the Chief Executive position.

In that period our Chief Executive at that time, Karen Lloyd, decided to retire from her role, and this meant that we had to find a suitable replacement. We then recruited Kyle Miers as our Chief Executive, and two of us developed a positive, close working relationship. Kyle was instrumental in keeping Deaf Australia viable, and he worked hard to secure funding where we could for our organisation. We are now very much relieved in being successful with securing a large NDIS ILC grant which will ensure that we can continue and grow over the next two years and finally be in the position to start hiring more staff. This year, we have had funding from 8 different sources – showing how difficult it has been to remain viable – however by no longer relying on a single funding source we are now more flexible and resilient, and this has opened up more opportunities for Deaf Australia.

We have moved into this position primarily in thanks to Kyle's hard work and dedication – he should be recognised and highly commended for all the effort he put into many funding applications and project proposals, as well as remaining determined and resilient despite experiencing many setbacks and rejected applications. Kyle did not give up hope and eventually reaped fruits of his hard labour which benefitted our organisation and the deaf community.

Looking back one of my key achievements would have been modernising our constitution, bringing our board structure up to date and more flexible and making our membership base more stable with longer term membership options. This revitalised our Board and I am particularly pleased to see we have increased diversity in our Board (even though we can still improve), and finally having four different states represented in our Board – the first time we have been able to do this since 2008. I am hopeful that we will soon be able to have at least five states represented in our Board.

I feel privileged to have been invited to represent Deaf Australia at the last two World Federation of the Deaf Congresses and General Assemblies in 2015 at Istanbul, Turkey and in 2019 at Paris, France. It was particularly inspiring to be part of the 2019 Congress in Paris, when our proposal for a standard international symbol for sign language was endorsed. I look forward to seeing this symbol all around the world and especially in Australia showing us what is accessible in sign language.

Another achievement over the years was establishing Oceania as a WFD Regional Secretariat to focus on the development of the deaf community in the Pacific region. Many deaf communities in this region is particularly disadvantaged compared to other countries especially with recognition of their sign languages, accessing interpreting support, and sign language in education. We need to do a lot more here.

Deaf Australia also has had the honour of hosting conferences over the past years, including the 2018 Deaf History International conference, where we were privileged to learn from our international peers about our deaf history, reinforcing the importance of preserving and learning from our deaf history in Australia. Additionally, we hosted the inaugural National Auslan Conference in 2016 which was the first opportunity to have a conference focusing on the Deaf community and the interpreting profession at the same time. While it is important for the Deaf community to have a “deaf space” such as summits to meet and share ideas, it is also vital for us to maintain connections with our interpreters and work together as one community. I am hopeful we will see other opportunities to hold these types of conferences together in the future.

Another important achievement has been the establishment of Deaf Youth Australia, which is an important part of the legacy of the Australian deaf community and the future viability of our organisation. Speaking of legacy, last year we launched the inaugural Colin Allen AM Lecture which will preserve an important record of our times in Auslan, reflecting on important topics from each year over the years where we can then reflect back and learn from 30 to 50 years in the future. This is an important new initiative to preserve our legacy.

Over the years I have not worked solely on my own. I have relied on the support of many other voluntary Board Directors I have worked with, and I would like to recognise and note my sincere appreciation of all the Board Directors I have worked with over the years – Ann Darwin, Kim Curtis, Kyle Miers, Danni Wright, Daniel Shanahan, Philip Waters, John Wade, Rachel Miers, Ida Rogers, Debbie Kennewell, Ramas McRae, and now with Adrian Doyle, Rodney Adams, Josie Hodgetts and Debra Swann.

Thinking back, I can say that three people had the biggest influence and impact on me and my development as a Board Director and as a leader of the deaf community – the former and current Chief Executives, Karen Lloyd and Kyle Miers, who taught me so much about politics, funding, structures and government procedures; and last but not the least, the past President Ann Darwin, who was a wonderful leader, always balanced and pragmatic, wanting to focus on what was really important for the wider deaf community instead of focusing on our feelings and emotions. I learned a lot from Ann, Karen and Kyle, and want to note my deepest appreciation of their support over the years.

My involvement with Deaf Australia went beyond than the last 10 years, going back to around 2002-2003 where two key people, Tony Clews and Andy Carmichael, were pivotal and instrumental in encouraging me to be involved in the Deaf TV project under Deaf Australia. Through this project and with the support

of a talented crew, we produced and broadcasted our *SignPost* TV series, and this lit a fire in me, igniting a passion for supporting the Australia deaf community. While it was disappointing this project was ultimately not accepted by mainstream TV channels, at the end of this project I felt I had unfinished business and wanted to continue investing my passion into supporting the deaf community. This was when I decided to nominate myself as a Board Director of Deaf Australia, so that I could continue contributing to the advancement of the Australia deaf community for the next 10 years.

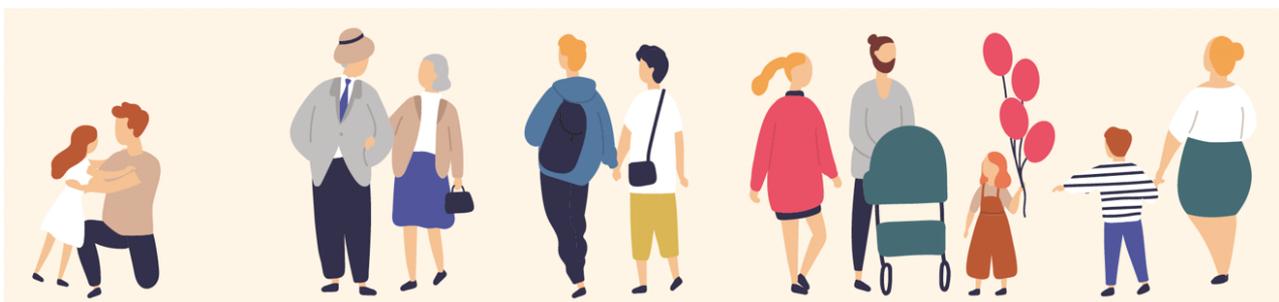
While I now feel bittersweet, sad that I am leaving my Board Director role at Deaf Australia, I am also feeling happy to reflect on what we have been able to achieve over the past 10 years, where we have brought our organisation into a good position with secure funding and new opportunities to add more staff and grow over the next few years under the guidance of a robust Board of Directors. I feel confident and reassured I can now leave my role, knowing that Deaf Australia is in good, capable hands. I want to again thank all the volunteers who have supported Deaf Australia, all the members who have kept faith in Deaf Australia, all the Board Directors for their leadership, and the wider deaf community who have allowed Deaf Australia to represent their best interests and advocated on their behalf.

Lastly and most importantly, I want to recognise and thank my family for their support – for their enduring patience allowing me to volunteer my time and support for Deaf Australia over many years. I will now be able to return the favour and focus more of my time and support and to my family who I love, treasure and cherish.

Thank YOU.



Todd Wright
Chairperson



Chief Executive's Report



Auslan, Auslan and Auslan.

This year has seen a huge increase in public awareness of Auslan in the media, public events, community activities and more.

To begin with a bang, Deaf Australia has been successful with our proposal to the World Federation of the Deaf to adopt the **sign symbol** that recognises the use of sign languages in all countries. We have been involved with this campaign since 2004. Members of the national associations of the deaf supported the motion by a large margin of 72 votes to 8.

This is a legacy that Deaf Australia will leave for years to come.

Through our association with Huawei, we were fortunate to partner with Canberra Raiders in its Charity Match, with the Canberra Raiders wearing a specifically designed game jersey. This charity raised over \$37,000 for Deaf Australia. The match is the largest single fundraising event for Deaf Australia.

I was honoured to be given the opportunity to present, *'Does Listening Help? The Impact of Deaf Children's Literacy'*, at the National Press Club, which was broadcast live nationally on the ABC. History was made, as it was the first time that a presentation was given entirely in Auslan.

This year has seen unprecedented events, with an earlier than usual bushfire season followed by the coronavirus pandemic. In times such as these, access to public information has never been more important for deaf people. After recent findings from Curtin University that live captions in broadcasts are often riddled with errors, we have seen a significant increase in the use of interpreters during information and emergency broadcasts.

Auslan has been thrust into the public domain and Auslan interpreters are seen on screen daily. This non-stop exposure has generated significant interest in, and awareness of, Auslan and deaf people in the media and across many other forums.

Problems with access to communication technologies have been exacerbated in these challenging circumstances, not only for the deaf community but for the wider community. Deaf Australia believes the wider community will now be seeking to address these issues to the benefit of everyone, including deaf people.

Deaf Australia has been involved with a number of groups within the Australian government to ensure that issues and concerns are addressed to accommodate deaf people's communication needs and access to services during these crises, such as:

- Telehealth services
- Deaf children's support while homeschooling
- Interpreting support during coronavirus pandemic
- Communication and device support
- Broadcasters
- National Relay Service

Expression Australia has partnered with the ABC to provide Auslan-interpreted news on Sunday evenings on a trial basis.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics confirmed that the census of 2021 will include 'Auslan' as a question prompt in the 'Language other than English' question. This means that every Australian who uses the form will see 'Auslan' when they complete the census.

Throughout the year, Deaf Australia has focused on reviewing our strategic activities, but due to the unprecedented bushfires and coronavirus pandemic, we have experienced difficulty conducting the community consultations necessary for us to adequately perform our activities.

Instead, Deaf Australia relied on social media to impart information, issues, and challenges, which was a significant shift in our community engagement activities. At the same time, there has been a significantly increased social media activity by the deaf community itself, participating in a range of community forums which is proving to be highly engaging.

The challenge remains for Deaf Australia to maintain its engagement with the Australian government and increase its capacity to represent the deaf community at various levels while receiving little or no financial support. Despite this challenge, Deaf Australia continues to be well regarded by Commonwealth, State and Territory governments, as well as major stakeholders, including the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) which continues to seek our expertise and feedback on a range of issues.

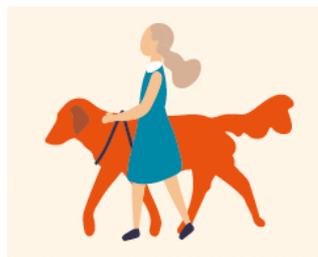
Deaf Australia has been working on developing a new 'roadmap' towards 2025 which provides us with a strategic plan that will achieve our goals of greater recognition and promotion of sign languages, strengthening the voice of deaf Australians, enhancing providers' capacity to effectively and efficiently meet the needs of deaf people so that our vision of **deaf people as fully engaged citizens** can be realised.

Looking forward to 2020-2021, Deaf Australia will play an important role in supporting Deafblind Victoria and the Disability Royal Commission, undertaking workshops and online forums for the deaf community, and will continue to provide expert advice to the government on issues of concern to our constituents. We will continue to seek opportunities to undertake activities to support the roadmap we have developed.

I wish to express sincere appreciation and thanks to the Board of Directors, volunteers, consultants, my family, friends, the deaf community and various stakeholders for continued support.



Kyle Miers
Chief Executive



Activities for the Year

July 2019

- Organisational Capacity Building (NDIS) begins
- World Federation of the Deaf – Deaf Youth Camp and General Assembly
- World Federation of the Deaf – General Meeting and Congress
- World Federation of the Deaf – Oceania General Meeting

August 2019

- National Press Club Presentation
- Charity Game at Canberra Raiders (vs Manly Sea Eagles)
- Launch of StorySign (book 2 and 3)

September 2019

- National Week of Deaf People
- International Day of Sign Languages
- Community consultation – Brisbane Queensland
- Presentation – Deaf Professional Network – Perth Western Australia

October 2019

- Disability Rights Roundtable (Australian Human Rights Commission)
- Deaf Education Review – Adelaide South Australia
- Labor Disability Summit
- Launch of StorySign (book 4 and 5)

November 2019

- NDIS Quality and Safeguard Committee Meeting
- NDIS CEO Forum
- NDIS Workforce Capability Forum
- Correspondence to Minister re: Interpreting bushfire announcement on television

December 2019

- Presentation at Australian Electoral Commission – Canberra ACT

January 2020

- NDIS Quality and Safeguards

February 2020

- Consumer Consultative Committee Forum (Australian Communications and Media Authority)
- Submit Terminology document to NDIS

March 2020

- NDIS Quality and Safeguards Committee Meeting
- Australian Communication and Consumers Action Network (ACCAN) Disability Forum
- Joint Agency Meeting between ASLIA and Interpreter service providers
- Hearing Services and NDIS Consultation – Canberra ACT

April 2020

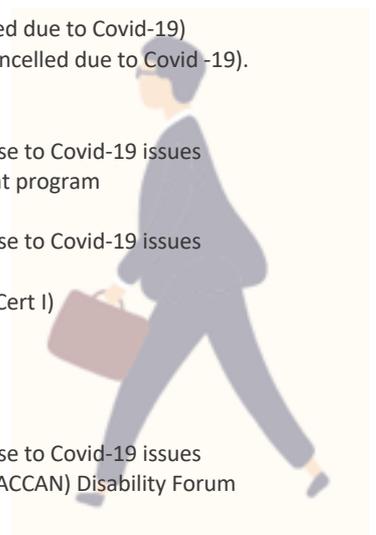
- Community Consultation – Adelaide South Australia (cancelled due to Covid-19)
- Deaf Education Parents forum – Adelaide South Australia (cancelled due to Covid-19).
- Board retreat (via Zoom)
- Submission to WA Government re: Jury Act Amendment
- Disability Supports and Services Committee (DSSC) in response to Covid-19 issues
- Auspice Agreement with Deafblind Victoria for NDIS ILC Grant program

May 2020

- Disability Supports and Services Committee (DSSC) in response to Covid-19 issues
- Ernst Young (EY) Hackathon event
- TafeSA expert group on Course in Education Sign Language (Cert I)
- AFDO – ILC workshop
- Census 2021 – announcement
- Department of Social Services and NABS

June 2020

- Disability Supports and Services Committee (DSSC) in response to Covid-19 issues
- Australian Communication and Consumers Action Network (ACCAN) Disability Forum
- Deafblind Australia – Centre of Excellence Reference Group
- Interagency Meeting (ASLIA and Deaf Societies)
- Disability Royal Commission
- RightsTech Accessibility Roundtable (with Australian Human Rights Commission)
- NDIS Disability Sector Consultative



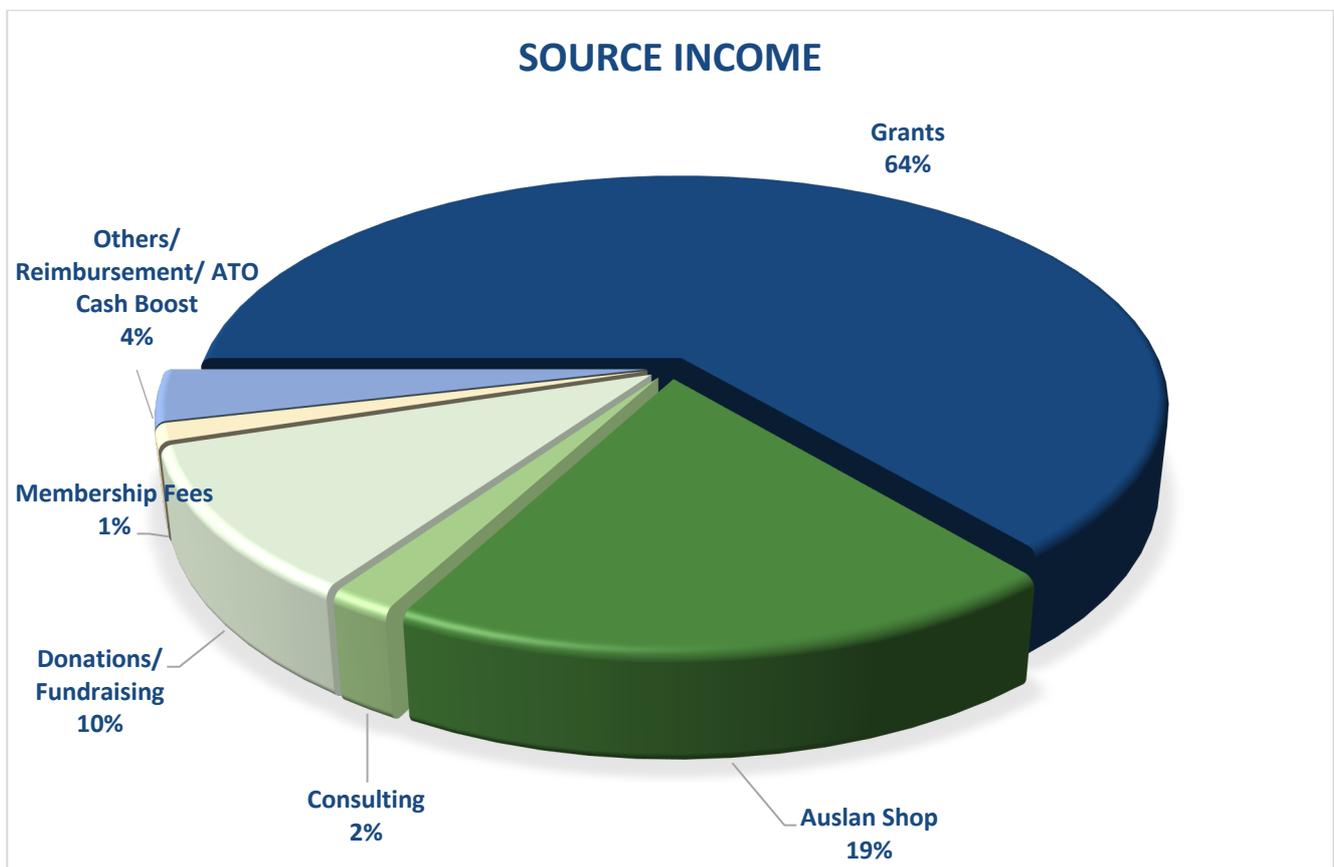
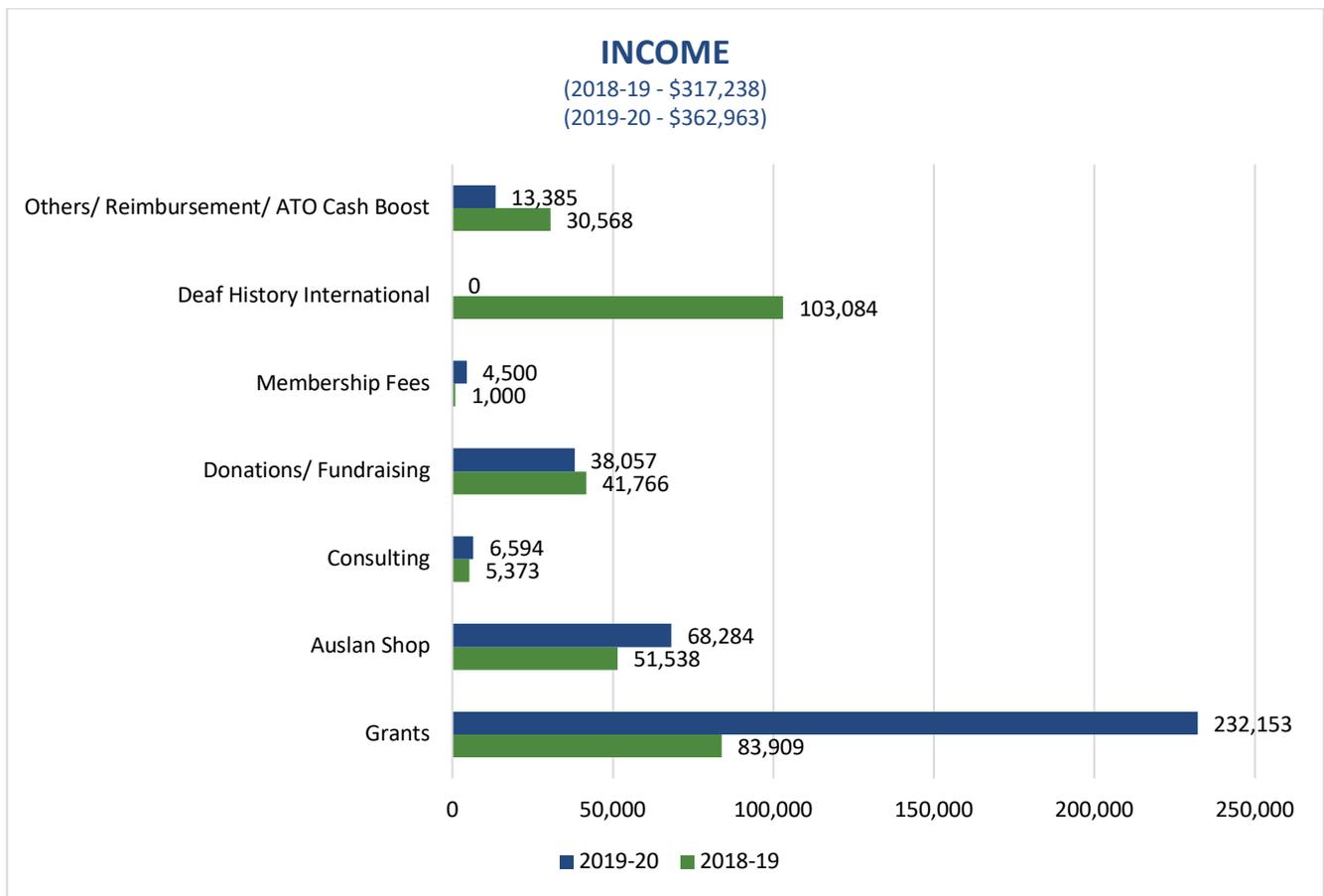
Engagements

Able Australia	Department of Communications
AccessPlus	Department of Health
APIS Consulting	Department of Social Services
Auslan Media Access	Dipalmas BAS and Bookkeeping
Auslan Services	Disability Discrimination Victoria
Auslan Teacher's Association of Victoria	Disability Royal Commission
Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association	DisabilityGateway
Australian Broadcasting Commission (ABC)	Ernst Young
Australian Communication Consumers Action Network	Expression Australia
Australian Electoral Commission	Fiji Association of the Deaf
Australian Federation of Disability Organisations	FreeTV (Channel 7, 9 and 10)
Australian Human Rights Commission	Heriot-Watt University
Australian Media and Communication Authority	Lightside Consulting
Australian National Geographic	Macquarie University
Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association	MMS Consulting
Bradley Reporting	National Auslan Booking and Payment Services (NABS)
Bytheway Media	National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)
Commonwealth Government Disability Support and Services Committee (Covid-19)	NDIS Quality and Safeguard Commission
Community Consultative Forum	NSW Department of Education
Concentrix	Open Caption Australia
Creative Minds	Pacific Disability Forum
Deaf Aotearoa New Zealand	Parent of Deaf Children
Deaf Association of Samoa	Prime Minister and Cabinet Department
Deaf Can:Do	Royal Institute of Deaf and Blind Children
Deaf Children Australia	South Australia Department of Education
Deaf Culture and Community Queensland	South Australia Department of Justice
Deaf Services	SquareGlow
Deaf Society	Sweeney Interpreting
Deaf Victoria	TafeSA
Deafblind Australia	Victorian Deaf Education Institute
Deafblind Victoria	Western Australian Association of the Deaf
Deafness Forum of Australia	Western Australian Department of Justice
	World Federation of the Deaf
	World Federation of the Deaf – Oceania

Social Media (number of likes)

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
 DeafAustraliaInc	1,894	2,784	3,700	4,581	5,666	6,498
 @deafaustalia	1,668	2,148	2,570	2,987	3,135	3,304

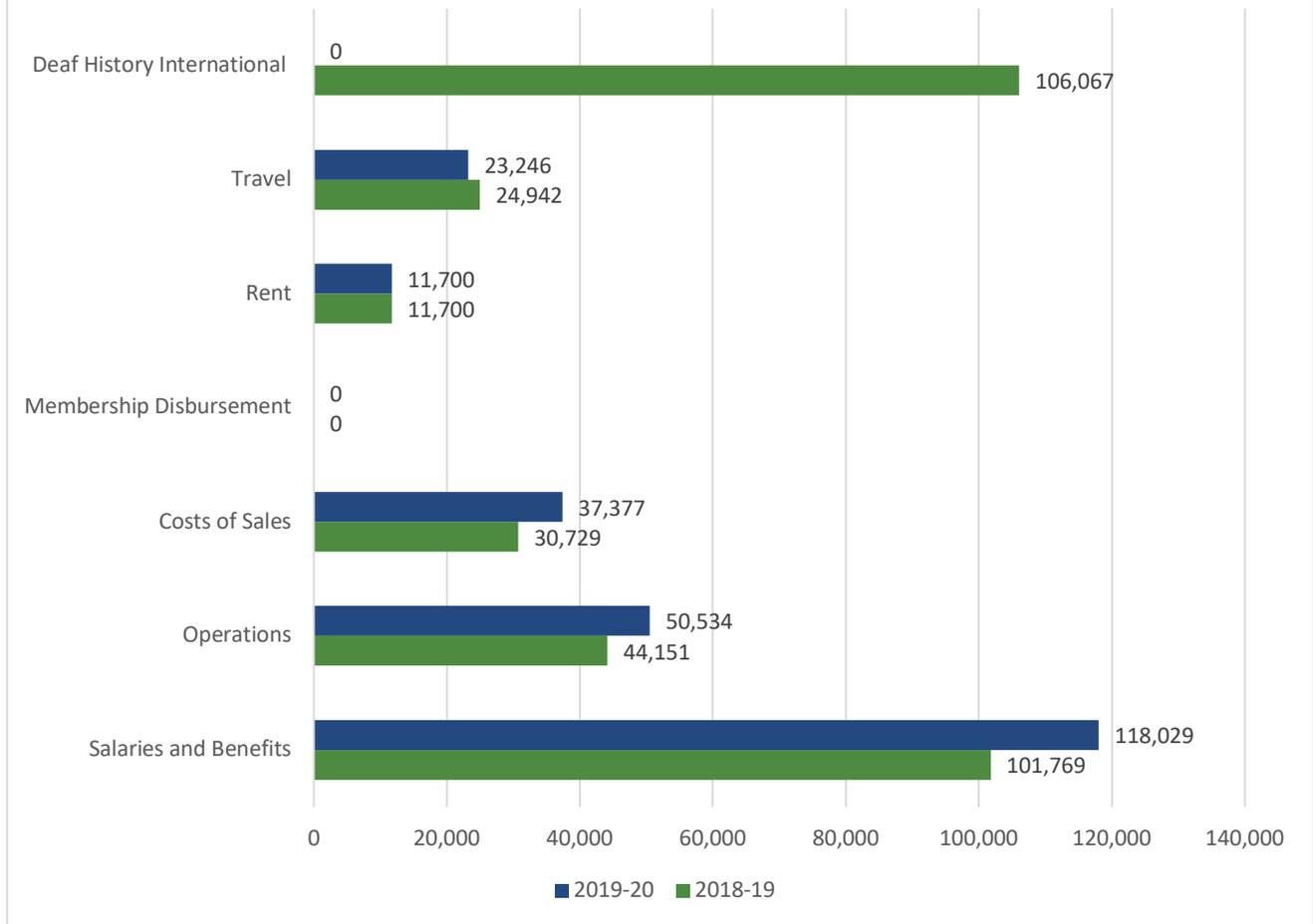
Financial Report



EXPENDITURE

(2018-19 - \$319,358)

(2019-20 - \$240,886)



Projected Income

2020-2021

Disability Representative Grant	\$ 27,500
AFDO/NDIS – ILC Grant	\$ 27,000
Disability Royal Commission	\$ 48,500
Consultation Fees	\$ 45,000
NDIS ILC – Independent Capacity Building	\$ 450,500
Auspice Grant (Deafblind Victoria)	\$ 174,750
Auslan Shop / Membership	\$ 50,000
Liability carried over from 2019-20	\$ 364,150

TOTAL \$ 1,187,400

2021-2022

AFDO/NDIS – ILC Grant	\$ 27,500
Disability Royal Commission	\$ 48,500
NDIS ILC – Independent Capacity Building	\$ 485,650
Auspice Grant (Deafblind Victoria)	\$ 174,750
Auslan Shop / Membership	\$ 50,000

\$ 786,400

Board Directors

Mr. Todd Wright (2010 – 2020) Chairperson (retired)
 Mr. Adrian Doyle (2016 –)
 Mr. Rodney Adams (2018 –)
 Ms. Debra Swann (2019 –)
 Ms. Josie Hodgetts (2019 – 2020)

Staff / Consultants

Mr. Kyle Miers – Chief Executive
 Ms. Alfia Dipalmas – Bookkeeper
 Ms. Margaret Salter – MMS Consulting
 Ms. Felicity Evans – Creative Minds

Honorary Life Members

Dr. Robert Adam
 Mr. Colin Allen, AM
 Dr. Breda Carty
 Dr. Philip Harper
 Ms. Ann Darwin (in memory)
 Ms. Karen Lloyd, AM
 Mr. Kyle Miers
 Ms. Janelle Ravlich

Past Board Members (* denotes President)

Founding Board Member

Breda Carty (2 years)
 Merrill Cook (2 years)
 Ken Donnell (2 years)
 Bruce Muller (3 years)
 *Dorothy Shaw (4 years)

20 Years

*Ann Darwin

15 Years

*Robert Adam

10 Years

*Kyle Miers

9 Years

*Colin Allen

8 Years

**Karen Lloyd

7 Years

*Bobbie Blackson
 Danni Wright

6 Years

Elaine Marcia
 Carole Noonan

5 Years

Elaine Girke
 Kimberly Pickering

4 Years

**Carol-lee Aquiline

**Brett Casey

Debbie Kennewell

Daniel Shanahan

John Wade

Ida Rogers

3 Years

Mac Adam

Anne Bremner

Eleanor Foster

Katrine Lancsaster

Kevin McKenzie

David Morgan

Philip Waters

Amy Watson

2 Years

Paul Bartlett

Kim Curtis

Peter Davies

David Hamilton

Irene Holub

Berna Hutchins

Patricia Levitzke-Gray

Ramas McRae

Rachel Miers

Carol O'Rilley

Brent Phillips

Freda Sandon

Barry Priori

1 Year

Julia Allen

Meg Augman

Peter Bailey

Rod Chapman

Cathy Clark

Margaret Grimes

Stephanie Linder

Gaye Lyons

Alastair McEwin

Natalie Mundy

Miranda Reardon

Gavin Rose-Mundy

Robyn Whitney

Memberships



WORLD FEDERATION OF THE DEAF



WFD-OCEANIA
 World Federation of the Deaf - Regional Secretariat Oceania



Pacific
 Disability
 Forum



