

# MEDIA RELEASE

13 JUNE 2018

## SERIOUS MATTERS – REVIEW OF DEAF EDUCATION

Deaf Australia welcomes the Victorian Education Minister's sweeping review of Victorian College of the Deaf (VCD), the state's oldest deaf school. It supports the parents and students of VCD in their efforts to achieve best possible education outcomes in a respectful and supportive bilingual and bicultural environment.

Deaf Australia regrets that a lack of appropriate government oversight has allowed the discriminatory practices at VCD to continue unchecked, and that they have been exposed only as a result of the determination and desperation of school parents.

Unfortunately, this situation is not unique. All over Australia, deaf children's education has been compromised by a lack of quality teachers, resources, interpreters, and curricula.

Deaf Australia has been working to address this national issue for many years and provided relevant reports: ['Early Intervention & Education for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children – Addressing challenges in pursuit of better outcomes'](#) (2013) and ['Policy \(advice\) on the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy \(NAPLAN\) for Deaf People in Australia'](#) (2014).

The World Federation of the Deaf has recently released its [Position Paper on Inclusive Education](#) which highlights limitation of the current model of education for deaf learners and called for systemic changes.

*'The fact that Victoria College of the Deaf has discouraged deaf students from participating VCE is abhorrent and unacceptable, and this highlights the inability of its leadership to ensure successful outcomes for deaf students',* said Mr. Todd Wright, Chairperson of Deaf Australia, *'Inadequate education seriously limits students' career opportunities'.*

According to Mr. Kyle Miers, Chief Executive of Deaf Australia, the lack of resources, quality teachers and appropriate support for deaf children is widespread. Government policy must be strongly enforced to ensure that every deaf child is given every opportunity to succeed. *'A failure to do so amounts to negligence and must be held accountable,'* he added.

A lot has changed in 10 years where Auslan (Australian Sign Language) is gaining stronger merits than it previously did and coupling with revitalization of other minority languages, such as, introduction of Auslan as LOTE in primary and secondary schools and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The last review of deaf education in Victoria was over 10 years ago.

Deaf Australia anticipate that the impending review of VCD by the Victorian Minister for Education will promote discussion of many issues affecting deaf children throughout Australia. We hope that the resolution of those issues through consultation, reviews of proficiency standards for teachers, improved resources and well-considered supports will result in the best possible education outcomes for deaf children.

- End

**Media Contact:**

Kyle Miers, Chief Executive  
0458 256 796 (text only) – info(at)deafaustalia.org.au

**About Deaf Australia:**

Deaf Australia is for all deaf, hard of hearing and non-deaf people and organisations (not-for-profit, for profit or government) that use and/or accept and respect Auslan (Australian Sign Language).

Deaf Australia is the deaf-led peak organisation representing deaf people in Australia. We promote the advancement of human rights and equality for deaf people by collaborating with our members and stakeholders in implementing the United Nations Conventions and the National Disability Strategy.

Deaf Australia is a national representative member to the World Federation of the Deaf ([www.wfdeaf.org](http://www.wfdeaf.org)).

Web: deafaustalia.org.au  
Facebook: DeafAustraliaInc  
Twitter: @deafaustalia