



37th Annual Report

Advocacy and
Information
Organisation Report
for 2022-2023





First Nations Acknowledgement

Deaf Australia acknowledges that sovereignty was never ceded, and we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the many nations of Australia, and their strong connection to land, water and community.

Deaf Australia respects elders past and current, and extends this respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Deaf Australia acknowledges and respects Indigenous Sign Languages as a vital contribution to the rich diversity of languages all over Australia and supports its revitalisation.



Deaf Acknowledgement

Deaf Australia celebrates Auslan and recognise all Deaf leaders in Australia who have advocated for Deaf, Deafblind, and hard of hearing communities. We are proud of everyone's contribution, whether big or small, in preserving our language, community and culture.



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Deaf Australia Incorporated
PO Box 31, Northcote Victoria, 3070
ABN: 65 174 780 885

For the year ended 30 June 2023

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Table of Contents

| | PAGES |
|----------------------------------|-------|
| About Us | 03 |
| Chairperson's Report | 05 |
| Chief Executive's Report | 07 |
| Deaf Youth Australia's Report | 10 |
| Financial Report | 12 |
| Source Income 2022-2023 | 12 |
| Expenditure 2022-2023 | 13 |
| Social Media Facts | 14 |
| Board of Directors | 15 |
| Staff | 15 |
| Honorary Life Members | 15 |
| Past Board Members / Memberships | 16 |

ABOUT US

Our Organisation

Deaf Australia is the Deaf-led peak organisation representing Deaf, Deafblind, and hard of hearing people in Australia who use Auslan. 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 UN (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

The principles and objectives of the 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 an 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 Principles

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.





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Chairperson's Report

Debra Swann

As we approach the end of my final year as the Chairperson of Deaf Australia, I reflect upon the remarkable journey we have undertaken together as a board, steering our organisation through a year of significant developments and challenges. It is my privilege to share with you some of the notable highlights from the past 12 months, which have shaped Deaf Australia in profound ways.

1. World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) Congress in South Korea

I had the honour of representing Deaf Australia at the World Federation of the Deaf Congress and General Assembly held in South Korea, under the theme "Securing Human Rights in Times of Crisis." This global event allowed us to advocate for the rights and well-being of the deaf community on an international stage.

2. National Week of Deaf People

We organised the National Week of Deaf People, a series of webinars and events, including a Parliament breakfast. In partnership with Deaf Connect, in where we were able to bring people together in Canberra for the Parliament breakfast. It was heartening to witness 11 youth representatives from across Australia engaging with Members of Parliament, discussing the challenges facing our community and exploring pathways to resolution. The presence of Auslan at Parliament House marks a significant step towards greater inclusivity.

3. Disability Royal Commission (DRC)

Deaf Australia played a pivotal role in the Disability Royal Commission. The release of the final report, which includes narratives from over 15,000 people with disabilities, underscores our commitment to advocating for the rights and dignity of those we serve.

4. Voice Referendum

In collaboration with Deaf Connect, we have been working diligently to ensure that the deaf community understands and participates in the Voice Referendum, scheduled for October 14th. Our efforts aim to empower our community to make informed choices in this critical democratic process.

5. NDIS Review

Deaf Australia actively participated in the NDIS Review, further demonstrating our dedication to shaping policies and systems that benefit our community. We thank the Deaf Community around Australia for taking part of this important review.

6. Crossing Board Youth Camp

April 2023 saw the Crossing Board Youth Camp, designed for 13 to 17-year-olds in Queensland, offering them unique opportunities for growth and connection within our community.

While we have achieved much in the past year, it is imperative that we do not overly rely on grant funding. We must explore new partnerships with businesses to secure our financial sustainability. Our partnerships with Deaf Connect and Expression Australia have been invaluable, and we look forward to nurturing such collaborations in the future.

Looking ahead, Deaf Australia will be developing a new strategic plan. It is crucial for us to consider the intersectional diversity within our deaf community. We must ensure full inclusivity for all members of the Australian Deaf Community to represent our community as a whole and enable every deaf individual to achieve their full potential.

In closing, I would like to express my gratitude to the Deaf Australia Board for their unwavering support and acknowledgment throughout my tenure. On behalf of the entire Board, I extend our heartfelt thanks to our Chief Executive, Jen Blyth, for her unwavering dedication and support over the years.

As we move forward into a new chapter for Deaf Australia, I remain optimistic about the positive impact we will continue to make on the lives of deaf individuals across our nation. Together, we can achieve even greater heights in securing the rights and well-being of the deaf community.

Thank you for your commitment and passion in advancing the mission of Deaf Australia.



Debra Swann
Chairperson





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Chief Executive's Report

Jen Blyth

Trigger Warning: suicide

Hello and welcome, everyone, to the CEO update for 2022-2023. I write this from Wurundjeri land and acknowledge that sovereignty was never ceded. I am sorry that the recent Referendum happened and for the results. I support the fight for Truth and Treaty in Australia.

It has been an exceptional year for Deaf Australia, our dedicated staff, and our vibrant Deaf community. We've achieved remarkable milestones and faced significant challenges throughout the year. Here, I would like to provide a brief overview of the major highlights:

We advocated for a 'Deaf hearing' for the Disability Royal Commission (DRC) and were granted two days during CALD week's of hearing, for Public Hearing 29. The transcripts and videos are available here (<https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/public-hearings/public-hearing-29-experience-violence-against-abuse-neglect-and-exploitation-people-disability-culturally-and-linguistically-diverse-communities>). We collaborated with the DRC to ensure that the hearing for Deaf participants covered a good range of topics and participants. I was honoured to be able to represent the Australian population on this matter, but also spoke to personal experiences. I talked about education, interpreters, and access to everyday life. Recently, the DRC report was published, and it was disappointing to see despite many submissions, our hearing and many perspectives provided by the Deaf community, we were not listened to. We will continue to advocate for better outcomes for our community.



We have had some advocacy wins in the past year:

- Services Australia will now no longer require interpreters to become nominees when contacting Centrelink – instead they will use a better approach, which means that Deaf people who want to contact Services Australia through a variety of methods, such as one-on-one interpreting, use of Convo, or the NRS can do so without the obligation to make the interpreters their nominees.
- After lengthy advocacy, the NDIS has drafted some 'Would we fund it' (WWFI) guidelines that demonstrate Deaf people's rights to access interpreters and deaf children and their families right to access Auslan at home. This will soon be available online for everyone to access.
- We have supported many Deaf individuals and families of deaf children throughout the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) to achieve mostly positive outcomes for people appealing their NDIS decisions in relation to interpreting hours, Auslan in the home, access to preferred assistive devices and Deaf mentoring. In my perspective, these cases should never have gone to the AAT, so this is an area we will continue to advocate in.
- The AAT has also improved their systems to become more accessible and appropriate for Deaf people, such as asking for the Deaf applicant's preferred interpreters' names.
- We have advocated for better inclusion and understanding of Deaf people in suicide prevention and post-vention services, including a presentation at the National Suicide Prevention Conference – which has led to more awareness and work in this space.

We have also achieved a few significant things this past year as well:

- Supported by Deaf Connect we revived the Crossing Borders Youth Camp, hosted in Brisbane. We employed a young person to coordinate the camp, which was a brilliant success with 45 campers between 12-17 years of age to develop their self-esteem, interpersonal and leadership skills as well as expanding their friendship networks.
- After the success of last year's 'Our Deaf Ways' with SBS, we were funded to make a second season, named 'Deaf Humans of Australia'. These videos showcase people across Australia with a snapshot glimpse into their lives.
- Last year we collaborated with Westfield to provide Auslan Santas in three states across Australia, but we advocated for a wider coverage. This year, there will be more Auslan Santas across the country. We love seeing photos and videos of Deaf kids meeting Deaf Santas and we would like to ask you to send these into our inbox so we can share in the joy of Christmas.

- I travelled across the country over 3 months, meeting with our community for the NDIS Review. We held 20 sessions, two in each state – one for youth where we supported and paid for a Deaf youth to organise and facilitate a NDIS review session with young Deaf people, and one for general participation. We also held several online sessions with key focus groups – 2SGBTIQASB, youth and parents of deaf children. We also held a session in Far North Queensland focusing specifically on Indigenous Deaf people. I learned a lot from these sessions and will use this in our advocacy. Many people shared how they felt the NDIS had a disability-focus that ignored the culturally Deaf aspects of Deaf people lives, and that it was a stressful process to contact the NDIS, to understand their plans and to utilise their plans.
- In collaboration with Deaf Connect, we created videos on the Voice Referendum, and hosted a webinar, facilitated by Deaf Aboriginal and South Sea Islander woman - Jody Barney, where participants talked about the Yes and No perspectives of the Referendum.
- Partnering with Deaf Connect, we hosted a Parliament Breakfast during National Week of Deaf People in 2023, which was postponed after last year's death of the Queen. Although I was unable to attend, it was a great success and the Deaf youth we invited to attend all had an amazing experience.

This year, I also attended the World Federation of the Deaf General Assembly and Congress in Jeju, South Korea. This was a particularly interesting General Assembly and Congress, given UAE won the bid for the next Congress to be held in 2027. People were concerned about queer people's human rights, including presenting on these topics, and many others were concerned ensuring that we finally held a Congress in the Middle East and acknowledging that human rights are breached every day, everywhere.

I want to express my gratitude to the amazing team who work at Deaf Australia and their commitment to ensuring that Deaf Australia works for our community and their constant support of myself; to our community members for rallying us on and holding us accountable; and finally, to our partners for their unwavering support and commitment to our mission. Deaf Australia could not function without all these people. The coming year holds even greater promise as we continue to work tirelessly toward a more inclusive and accessible Australia for Deaf, Deafblind, hard of hearing and Deaf+Disabled people.

Thank you for your trust in Deaf Australia, and we look forward to another year of progress and advocacy for the Deaf community.



Jen Blyth
Chief Executive

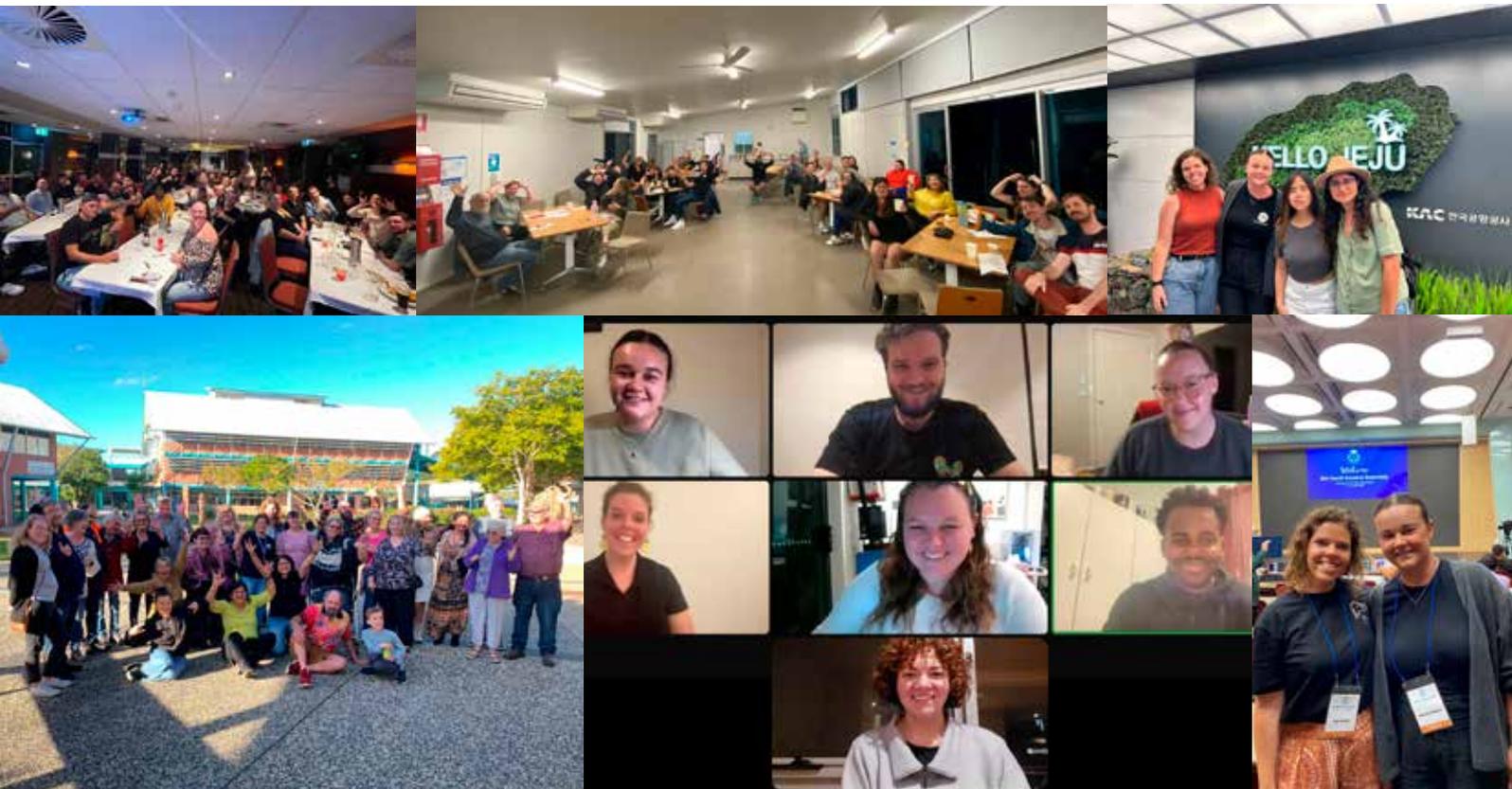




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Deaf Youth Australia's Report

Anabelle Beasley



We have seen resilience, growth and innovation at Deaf Youth Australia (DYA) in 2023. With support from Deaf Australia, we welcomed six new board members, Erin Davies (QLD), Heidi Beasley-Elich (VIC), Chloe Haywood (QLD), Samuel Martin (VIC), Rhiannon Gonglag (NSW/ACT) and Oliad Omar (VIC) in May. I really look forward to working with the board to bring more opportunities for youth activities, events, campaigns and camps across Australia in the next 12 months.

In the last 12 months, we sent four participants to Colonia, Uruguay for the World Federation of the Deaf Youth Section (WFDYS) Children Camp and four participants to Jeju, South Korea for the WFDYS Youth Camp. Myself (Anabelle) and Erin also represented DYA/Australia at the WFDYS Youth General Assembly as Youth Ordinary Members.

Each participant has organised fundraising events across the country, online and in-person to represent DYA and to raise some funds to contribute to their costs for the WFDYS camp. We also want to thank our major financial sponsors for the camp, Deaf Children Australia and Deaf Connect, and we also received overwhelming support from small businesses and individuals in the Deaf Community. Thank you to everyone who made a donation, bought a T-Shirt, attended our events and gave us your well wishes.

We also hosted a series of community consultations with the youth community to gain a better understanding of what the community would like to see from Deaf Youth Australia. In the last 12 months we worked on updating our terms of reference to develop a better understanding of our roles within the board and our relationship with Deaf Australia. We are also due to update our strategy plan for 2023-2025.

In the next 12 months, we hope to develop a working relationship with Deaf Aotorea Youth, to create a strong partnership and eventually work with other countries in the Oceania region. Keep an eye on this space!

I want to thank Jen and Shirley from DA for their continuous support this year to have DYA back up and running. Thank you to our new board members for joining us on this journey.

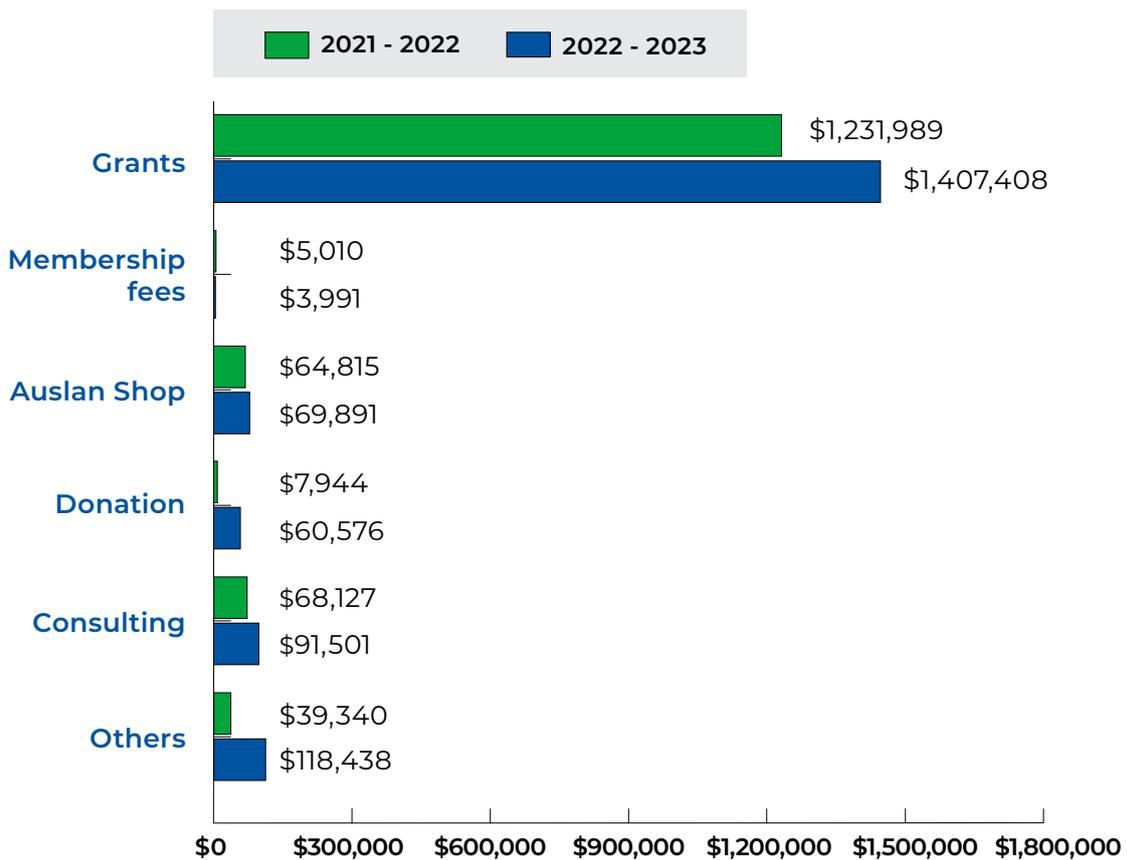
Anabelle Beasley
President



Financial Report

Income

| Overview Financial | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Grants | \$1,231,989 | \$1,407,408 |
| 2. Membership fees | \$5,010 | \$3,991 |
| 3. Auslan Shop | \$64,815 | \$69,891 |
| 4. Donation | \$7,944 | \$60,576 |
| 5. Consulting | \$68,127 | \$91,501 |
| 6. Others | \$39,340 | \$118,438 |

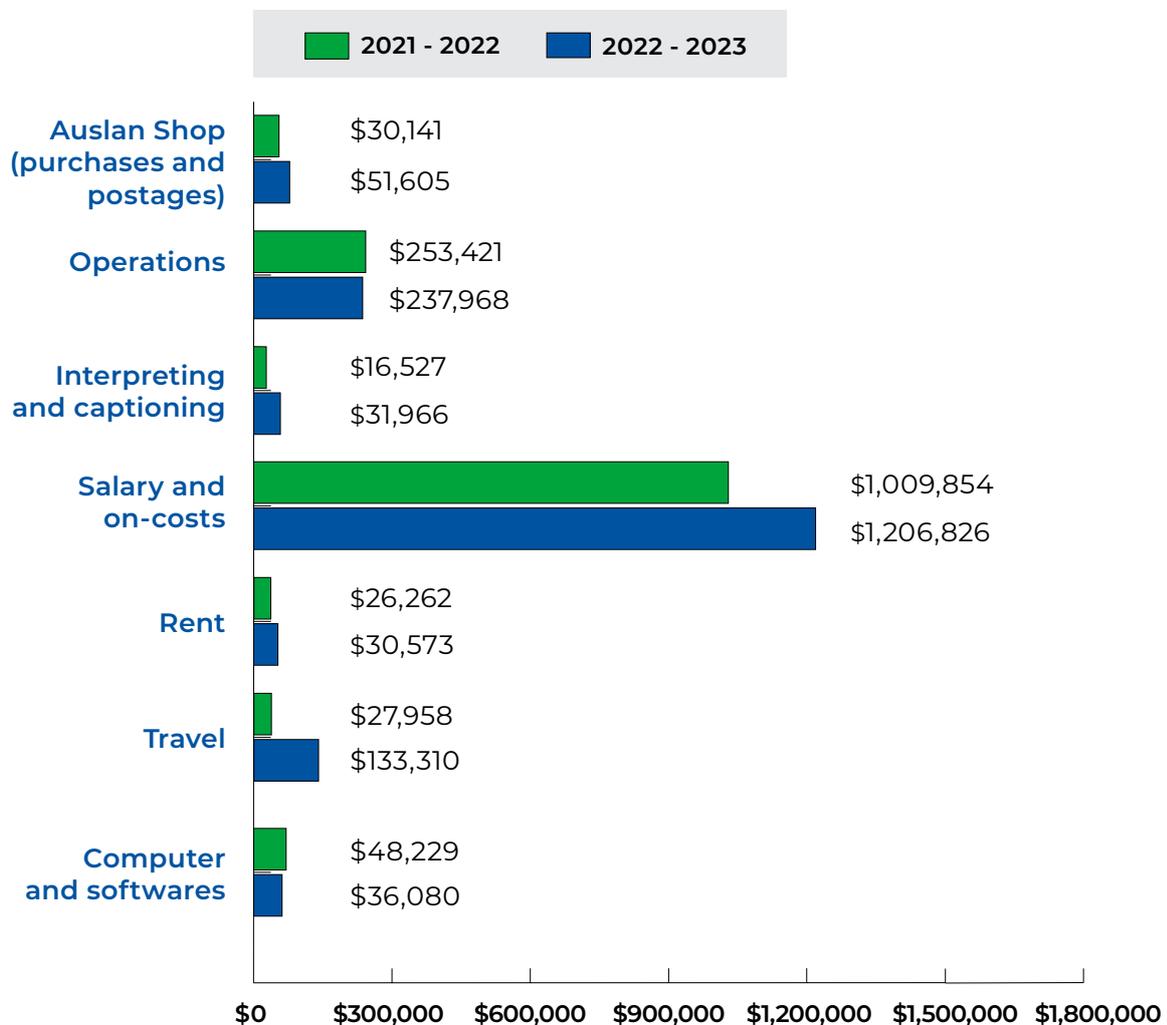


TOTAL
(2021-2022) - \$1,417,710

TOTAL
(2022-2023) - \$1,751,805

Expenditure

| Overview Financial | 2021-2022 | 2022-2023 |
|---|----------------|----------------|
| 1. Auslan Shop (purchases and postages) | \$30,141.00 | \$51,605.00 |
| 2. Operations | \$253,421.00 | \$237,968.00 |
| 3. Interpreting and captioning | \$16,527.00 | \$31,966.00 |
| 4. Salary and on-costs | \$1,009,854.00 | \$1,206,826.00 |
| 5. Rent | \$26,262.00 | \$30,573.00 |
| 6. Travel | \$27,958.00 | \$133,310.00 |
| 7. Computer and softwares | \$48,229.00 | \$36,080.00 |



TOTAL
(2021-2022) - \$1,412,392

TOTAL
(2022-2023) - \$1,728,328

Social Media Facts

Facebook Top 3 Posts



1. Awards Winners



2. Deaf Census Call Out



3. Welcome New Board

Instagram Top 3 Posts



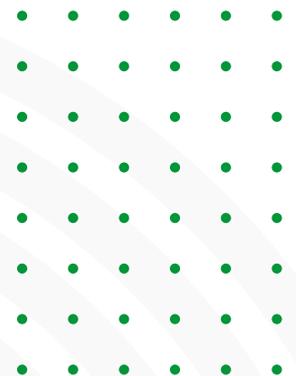
1. CBYC Camp Photos



2. Deaf Festival Sydney



3. Auslan Santa Announcement





Board of Directors

Debra Swann | Chairperson **Brooke Pape** | Board Member

Commenced from February 2023:

Sherrie Beaver | Vice Chairperson **Karthik Vijayanandam** | Board Member

Julie Lyons | Board Member **Susan Bates** | Board Member

Staff

Jen Blyth | Chief Executive **Paula Thornton** | Resource Coordinator

Rosalie Kassulke | Accountant **Catherine Miller** | Policy Officer

Shirley Liu | Community & Youth Advocate **Ipev Cav** | Digital and Content Developer

Darlene Thornton | Resources Developer

Simon Andersson | Project Manager *(ended in November 2022)*

Salomon Gerber | Auslan Shop Officer *(ended in December 2022)*

Erin Davies | Camp Coordinator *(ended in May 2023)*

Lauren Stuart | Executive Assistant to CEO *(ended in May 2023)*



Honorary Life Members

Dr. Robert Adam
Dr. Colin Allen, AM
Dr. Breda Carty, AO
Ms. Ann Darwin (in memory)

Dr. Philip Harper
Ms. Karen Lloyd, AM
Mr. Alastair McEwin, AM
Mr. Kyle Miers

Ms. Janelle Ravlich
Mr. Todd Wright

Past Board Members

(*denotes President)

Founding Board Member

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

20 years

*Ann Darwin

15 years

*Robert Adam

10 years

*Kyle Miers

9 years

*Colin Allen, AM
 *Todd Wright

7 years

*Bobbie Blackson
 Danni Wright

6 years

Marcia Girke-Boyle
 Carole Noonan

5 years

Elaine Girke
 Debbie Kennewell
 Kimberly Pickering

4 years

Adrian Doyle
 Ida Rogers
 Daniel Shanahan
 John Wade

3 years

Mac Adam, OAM
 Rodney Adams
 Anne Bremner, AM
 Eleanor Foster
 Katrina Lancaster-Maggs
 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
 Alastair McEwin, AM
 Ramas McRae
 Rachel Miers
 Carol O'Riley
 Brent Phillips
 Barry Priori
 Freda Sandon
 *Debra Swann

1 year

Julia Allen
 Meg Aumann
 Peter Bailey
 Ivan Callaghan
 Rod Chapman
 Cathy Clark
 Margaret Grimes
 Stephanie Linder
 Gaye Lyons
 Lorraine Mulley
 Natalie Sandon-Stanhope
 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





**For public enquiries about
Deaf Australia Annual Report**

Jen Blyth

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