

***Making  
an inclusive  
Australia for  
deaf people***

**Annual Report  
2017 -2018**



## **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.



### **Deaf Australia Incorporated**

PO Box 1348  
Blackburn North, Victoria 3130

ABN: 65 174 780 885

For the year ended 30 June 2018

This Annual Report is subjected to copyright. It may be reproduced in whole or in part for the study or training purposes subject to inclusion of acknowledgement of the source. It may not be reproduced for commercial usage or sale. Reproduction for purpose other than those indicated above requires written permission from Deaf Australia.

© Deaf Australia Incorporated (2018)

Further copies of this document can be obtained from Deaf Australia's Website:  
[deafaustalia.org.au/about-2/about-deaf-australia/](http://deafaustalia.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 Guiding Principles:

### Language:

Deaf Australia believes it is a human right for every deaf and hard of hearing person to acquire and express themselves in Auslan and English.

### Perception:

Deaf Australia must work to change the perception of deaf and hard of hearing people who use Auslan to recognise ourselves as a unique community with our own language and culture, and that a 'one size fits all' approach is not an effective solution.

### Self-Determination:

Deaf Australia believes that our society must accept our organisation as an integral part in any decision-making process that affect deaf and hard of hearing people. Deaf Australia believes and adheres to the philosophy; "**nothing about us without us**".

### Management:

Deaf Australia is committed to achieving our objectives through effective management of our people and resources, and through collaborative work with 'like-mind' organisations.

# CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

(Auslan: <https://vimeo.com/deaaustralia/TW2018>)

I feel incredibly honoured that Deaf Australia was able to host the first Deaf History International conference held in the Southern Hemisphere in 2018. This conference was the result of a small group of dedicated volunteers led by co-chairs Breda Carty and Darlene Thornton who worked tirelessly over two years to make this a reality, and the conference would not have been made possible without the generous support of our conference sponsors:

- Deaf Society
- Deaf Services
- Auslan Services
- AI Media
- Ian Potter Foundation
- Sweeney Interpreting
- Conexu Foundation
- Creative Minds
- University of Technology Sydney
- Deaf Children Australia
- Gallaudet University
- Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC)

Overall the conference was an incredible success, attracting nearly 200 conference attendees and being positively acknowledged by the Deaf History International Committee. Deaf Australia was very proud to be given this opportunity particularly because we see that preserving the cultural identity and history of the deaf community to be of paramount importance.

Unfortunately, we did not receive funding assistance from the government to cover the costs of conference interpreters, and we had to bear the burden of covering these costs which were not able to be fully covered with the support of our generous sponsors. This is very concerning and troubling and reflects a general trend I have been observing over the past few years.

With the advent of the National Disability Insurance Scheme, people with disabilities in Australia has been given an incredible opportunity to gain greater participation in the wider community. However there has been a growing misperception by many that the NDIS is the “magical bullet” or solution for all the issues and barriers experienced by people with disabilities, and deaf and hard of hearing people. The reality is that not everyone can be included and provided support through the NDIS, and this initiative has shifted the focus on the individual.

We still have significant need for systematic change which will benefit the wider community in Australia – such as the need for a 24/7 National Relay Service, full access to information on television and internet media, and access to critical services such as health and legal services particularly for those who cannot receive the NDIS. This is why we need the support of the grassroots in our community to support organisations such as Deaf Australia – without you and your support, Deaf Australia will not be possible to continue. As members, you own the organisation, to make sure that we continue to support your needs.

We need to ensure that there is continued funding for your representation at all levels of government and all aspects in Australia. Without an united organisation, our ability to speak up about our needs at the community level will become fragmented and ineffective. It is important that we all work together to ensure that we can continue ***making an inclusive Australia for deaf people.***

Next year we will focus on the next iteration of our strategy and will be seeking input from the community particularly our valued state branch members and key stakeholders, as well as our members and the deaf community. Of significant focus will be on recurring funding to ensure that Deaf Australia can continue to represent our collective interests.

As Chairperson of Deaf Australia, I would like to note my appreciation of the Board – Debbie Kennewell, Adrian Doyle and Rodney Adams, as well as Miranda Reardon who was co-opted earlier in the year for a short period. As volunteers, their time and contribution to Deaf Australia is greatly appreciated and valued.

And on behalf of the Board, I would like to note our utmost appreciation for Kyle Miers as our Chief Executive. Despite the uncertainty in the Not For Profit – For Purpose sector, Kyle has continued to demonstrate his loyalty and support for Deaf Australia, the Board Directors and members, and the Australian deaf community. And I would like to recognise all our key partners, stakeholders, government organisations, volunteers and many other people who also support Kyle's position and Deaf Australia.

I am optimistic we will find a way forward as an organisation, with support from the whole deaf community.



Thank you all  
**Todd Wright**  
Chairperson



# CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

(Auslan: <https://vimeo.com/deaaustralia/KM2018>)

Deaf Australia, as an organisation, has continued providing information and advice to range of government to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing Australian are equal members of the Australian society, which reflect our vision – ***making an Inclusive Australia for deaf people.***

After advocacy and information funding was cut in 2015, Deaf Australia has gained back some formal recognition through Department of Social Services' Disability Representative Organisations (DRO) through a consortium with Australian Federation of Disability Organisations for 2017/20. However, the fund received is insufficient for Deaf Australia to operate on a full capacity in advocacy and information activity. In the next 2.5 years, Deaf Australia will be focusing on 2 key areas:

- National Relay Service
- Revision of the Disability Discrimination Act (Article 9.1.c)

The National Relay Service is currently up for tender and Deaf Australia has continued expressing concerns with the reduction of service deliverables with the new tender, introduction of mainstream technologies and lack of outreach program. The new National Relay Service contract will begin on 1 February 2019 and we aim to ensure that the National Relay Service retains current level of access to services and that video relay service operates on a 24/7.

A section of the Disability Discrimination Act has a definition of support, aid and/ or assistance and interpreter is listed under this section of the Act. Deaf Australia believe that the definition for interpreter needs to be improved to ensure that interpreters are appropriately qualified, trained and accredited in same manners as assistance animal is defined in the Act. We believe the current legislation has profound effect in provisioning of interpreting support across all areas including education, employment, health and more.

Deaf Australia believe that the opportunity to amend the Disability Discrimination Act will improve by an adaption of the International Standards for provisioning of interpreting. Deaf Australia is currently a member of the working group under Standards Australia to review the standards to suit the Australian's environment. It is expected that by Christmas 2018, the standards would have been approved by the Australian Standards.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has continued to play an important role in creating opportunities for people with disability to make choice and control and continue to challenge the traditional approach in the provisioning of services. Deaf Australia welcomes the social reform; however, we believe lots of work are needed to ensure that gaps will not widen and that everyone have the choices. Significant work has been done over the year in areas of Early Childhood / Early Intervention, interpreting, eligibilities, Cultural and Linguistic Diverse, Auslan programs and services and more.

Since Deaf Australia receives minimal grants, we have become reliant on small project funds and fundraising activities to sustain the organisation throughout the year. The undertaking of mystery shopper activities, preparing a fact sheet for NDIS, minimal website redevelopment, assisting with the development of information and training packages for NDIS are some of the activities we have undertaken. The opportunity for funding through philanthropic organisations has also become difficult as many other organisations who are similarly affected are competing for the same funds.

Deaf Australia are involved in several advisory roles to improve accessibility to services and programs and or to raise issues to initiate systemic change to improve our members' opportunities and participation. These roles are with the following organisations:

- Australian Banking Association;
- Australian Bureau of Statistics;
- Australian Communication Consumers Action Network;
- Australian Electoral Commission;

- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations;
- Australian Standards;
- Australian Subscription Television and Radio Association;
- Consumers Consultative Forum (under Australian Communications and Media Authority)
- Deaf Curriculum (Tafe South Australia)
- Department of Health (Commonwealth) – Hearing Sector;
- National Relay Service;
- National Disability Insurance Agency (several focus groups);
- Hearing Sector;

It is important to note that many of these advisory roles do not compensate for time involved and is voluntary. Deaf Australia believe many of these advisory roles are important for us to effect change so that deaf Australians can enjoy equal and full participation in Australian society.

**Several highlights for 2017/18:**

- Over 100 primary and secondary schools throughout Australia are providing Auslan as Language other than English (LOTE) program. Which means between 1,000 – 2,500 students are learning Auslan;
- There are 11,682 sign language users in Australia (Census 2016) which represents a 20% growth from previous Census;
- Free-TV agreed to amend its policy to include interpreter in the screen during its entirety when interpreter is available;
- Recognition of an International Day of Sign Language;
- Hosting of the Deaf History International.

Operationally, Deaf Australia would like to express thanks to Felicity Evans who has been our website manager for 7 years. She has been responsible for our websites and mainstreaming our communication using social media. Our presence on Facebook has been steadily growing and is expected to reach 5,000 likes before Christmas 2018.

Deaf Australia wish to also express appreciation and thanks to Australian Federation of Disability Organisations for its support in these trying times.

Looking forward to 2018/19, Deaf Australia expects new opportunities that will arise as result of recent years and the prominence of Deaf Australia as a true consumer organisation. We thank you for your ongoing support as your issues are being heard and we work with you to make a better Australia for deaf and hard of hearing people.



**Kyle Miers**  
**Chief Executive**



# POPULATION OF SIGN LANGUAGE USERS

(Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics)

Census 1996 – signers not recorded.  
 Census 2001 – **5,306** Signers  
 Census 2006 – **6,944** Signers (increase of 30%)  
 Census 2011 – **9,723** Signers (increase of 40%)  
 Census 2016 – **11,682** Signers (increase of 20%)

A question in Census asked, '**Does the person speak a language other than English at home?**' (Question 16) but does not offer 'Auslan' as one of the languages. Instead, members of the community must write down, 'Auslan' or 'Sign Language' in the 'other options' without any prompts. For this reason, Deaf Australia believe the number recorded in the Census is underestimated.

## MEDIA/ SOCIAL MEDIA

### Media Releases

- Announcement of Equality Marriage on Broadcast Programs
- International Day of Sign Language Formally Adopted by the United Nations and Announcement of the National Week of Deaf People 2018
- Broadcasters Discriminate Against Deaf People
- Deaf Jurors – Yes, we can – But...
- Serious Matters – Review of Deaf Education
- Auslan Interpreters must be shown on Broadcasts (A Public Announcement)

### Social Media

2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	
1,894	2,784	3,700	4,581	DeafAustraliaInc
1,668	2,148	2,570	2,987	@deafaustalia



### Websites:

[www.deafaustalia.org.au](http://www.deafaustalia.org.au) (main) – [auslanshop.deafaustalia.org.au](http://auslanshop.deafaustalia.org.au) (Auslan Shop) – [www.deaf-friendly.org](http://www.deaf-friendly.org)



# DEAF HISTORY INTERNATIONAL

## Sponsors



## Attendees

- Australia – 120
- \*Mongolia – 17
- United States of America – 12
- Philippines – 9
- Finland – 7
- Canada – 6
- United Kingdom – 6
- Belgium – 4
- \*Guinea – 4
- New Zealand – 4
- Germany – 2
- India – 1
- Ireland – 1
- Japan – 1
- Netherlands – 1
- Uganda – 1

**Total 197**

\*did not attend due to visa issue

### Deaf History International Committee:

- Dr Breda Carty / Ms Darlene Thornton – Co-chair
- Mr. Todd Wright – Program and Audio/ Visual Coordinator
- Mr. Brian Johnson - Venue and Accommodation Coordinator
- Ms. Rebecca Ladd – Interpreter Coordinator
- Mr. Andrew Whilshire – Event coordinator
- Mrs. Rachel Miers – Finance and Registration Coordinator
- Mr. Tony Clew – Volunteer Coordinator
- Mr. Kyle Miers – Administration

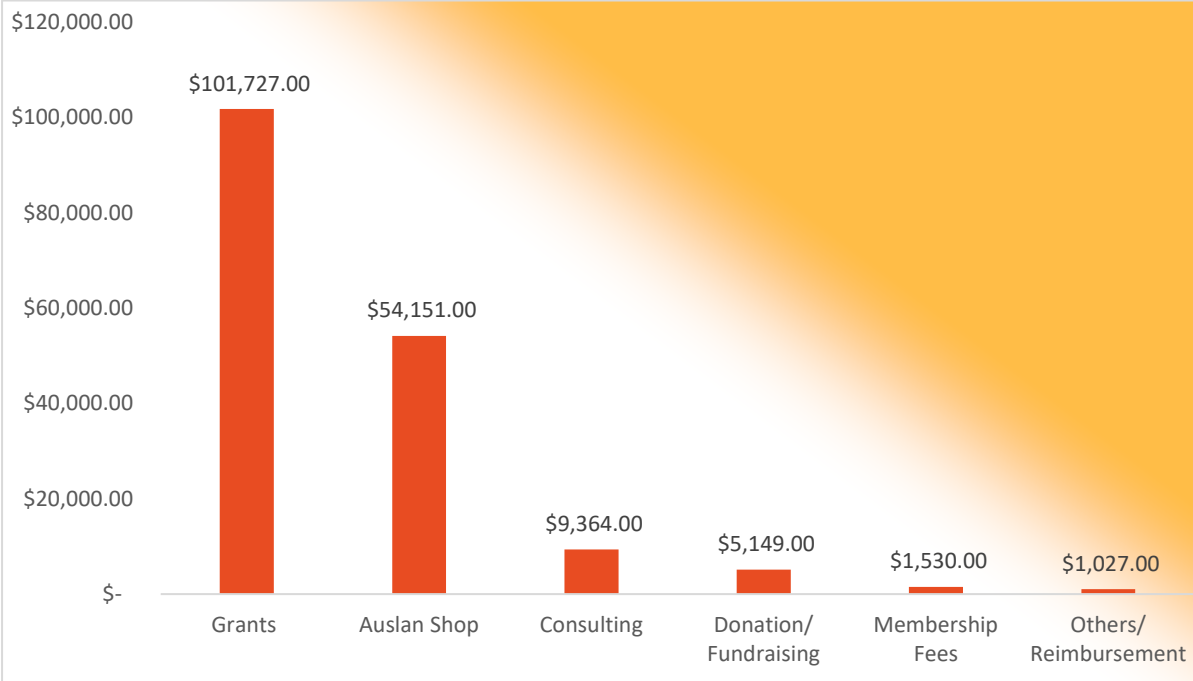
### Volunteers:

- Julia Allen
- Lise Clew
- Cameron Davie
- Tamara Doyle
- Cindy Lu Fitzpatrick
- Marcia Girke
- Margaret Johnston
- Eva Kent
- Donovan Mulligan
- David Parker
- Janelle Ravlich
- Jackie Stein

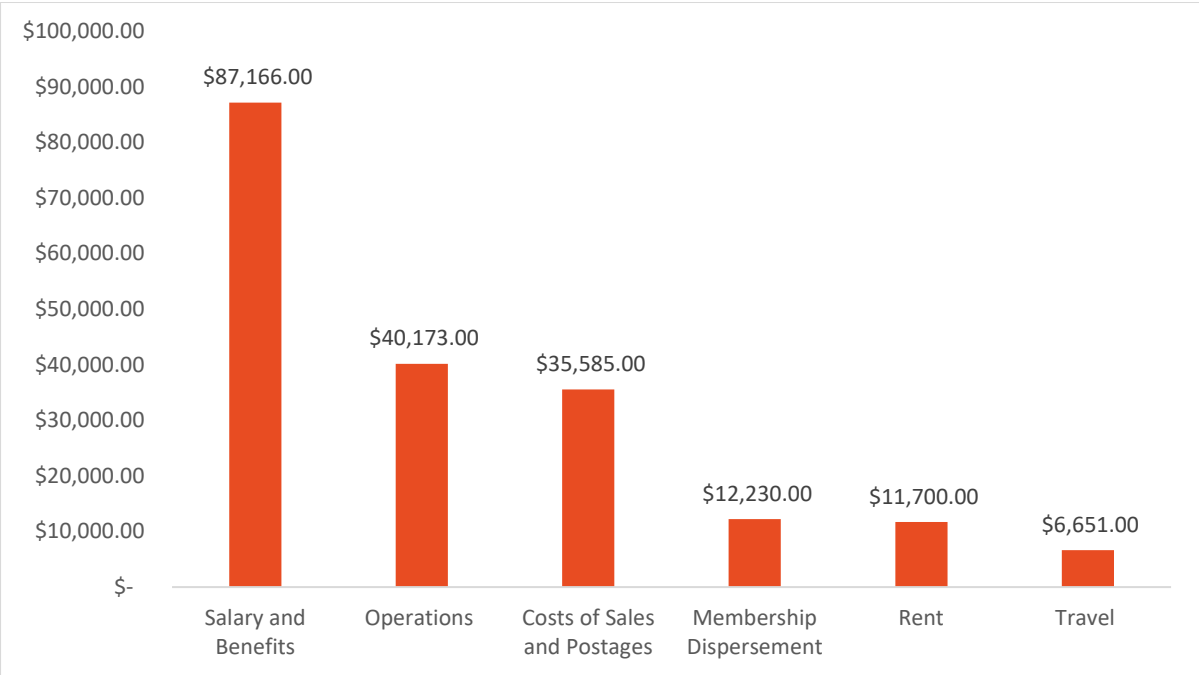


# FINANCIAL REPORT

## Income: \$172,948



## Expenses: \$193,505



## Board Directors

**Todd Wright** (2009 - ) – Chairperson  
**Debbie Kennewell** (2015 - )  
**Adrian Doyle** (2016 - )  
**\*Rodney Adams** (2018 - )  
**\*\*Miranda Reardon** (2018 – resigned)

**\*Appointed as Co-opt Board of Director**  
**\*\*Appointed as Co-opt Board of Director but resigned**

## Staff

**Kyle Miers** – Chief Executive  
**Felicity Evans** – Communications  
(contractor)  
**Alfia Dipalma** – Book Keeper  
**Margaret Salter** – Auditor

## Honorary Members

**Robert Adam**  
**Colin Allen**  
**Breda Carty**  
**Phil Harper**  
**Ann Darwin**  
**Janelle Ravlich**  
**Kyle Miers**  
**Karen Lloyd**

## 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  
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  
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  
Alastair McEwin

