



EXTERNAL STRATEGIC PLAN 2008 – 2013

Organisation Overview

Vision statement

Deaf people are accepted, respected and included in the Australian community.

Mission Statement

Deaf Australia Incorporated is the leading national peak body managed by Deaf people that represents, promotes, preserves, and informs the development of, the Australian Deaf community, its language and cultural heritage.

Values statement

Deaf Australia values:

- Auslan as the language of the Australian Deaf community
- The potential of Deaf people to succeed
- Individual difference
- Dedication to the organisation
- Establishing and enhancing relationships with members and partners
- Open communication
- Honest and positive attitudes
- High quality information and service
- Involvement/contribution of members
- The views of the Deaf community
- Continuous improvement and innovation

VISION 2020

Deaf Australia has a vision of Australia as a more perfect and equal place; not only for Deaf people but also for all people Australia-wide.

Deaf Australia's Vision 2020 is based on the Vision 2020 developed by the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) for their work in the international Deaf community. Deaf Australia is the Australian Ordinary (voting) Member of the WFD.

In 2020:

Deaf People have full human rights through recognised sign language (Australian Sign Language – or Auslan), through quality of education, and quality of life as well as through full access and self-determination in an equal world.

Governments have incorporated and implemented human rights for all, including those who are linguistic minorities and those who are considered vulnerable. The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities is implemented in Australia, along with other UN Human Rights instruments. Technology has advanced significantly, creating more equal 'playing fields'.

Community and language

Deaf people have human rights, self-determination and political strength.

Deaf people are actively involved in all areas of society as equal citizens. There are Deaf people in Parliaments, and in other high decision-making positions. All Deaf people have opportunity for a good social, cultural and family life.

Auslan is respected and accepted as part of the diversity of the Australian community. Auslan in education, provision of services, social interactions and participation in society is taken for granted and guaranteed by legislation. Everybody has the opportunity for natural linguistic development, high quality education and life-long learning.

Research and documentation of Auslan has significantly advanced, and legislation of the rights of people to use Auslan as their native language has been implemented.

Deaf Education is of a High Quality

All deaf education is bi-lingual (Auslan/English) or multi-lingual (Auslan/English/other); and education for Deaf children and Deaf adults is equally important.

Deaf people have full access to all higher education, including university and adult education. Schools that offer education for Deaf children are equal in all ways to schools for hearing children.

Technological Advances Ensure Access

Because of technological advances, ensuring full access to information, Deaf people can do and participate more. This means there is more employment equality and more opportunities for advancement. There are more deaf people in professional jobs e.g., teaching, medicine, psychology, etc.

Deaf people have mastered the use of information and communication technology, and use this technology creatively to improve their quality of life. Access to information and ease of interaction is possible by visual communication, services supplied in Auslan, relay services and other

technologies. The Internet and other information technology allow for communication in Auslan, between two or more individuals anywhere in Australia and the world. The general environment is good for Deaf people, with information that is visual and clear, thus guaranteeing full accessibility.

Access and Interpreting

Living conditions are good for Deaf people and nothing hinders participation. Full participation is enabled because all Deaf people have full access to interpreting services, and interpreters are professionally trained and qualified. Government takes responsibility for financing training programs and interpreting costs. In crisis situations, information, help and advice in Auslan is secured, as well as the availability of Auslan interpreters.

Families

Programs are provided for families of Deaf children to ensure the home environment fosters and protects the needs of the Deaf child as regards communication, development and family interaction. The UN Programs for the Eradication of Poverty have improved the situation and living conditions of Deaf people and they have become equal with hearing families.

Self-Determination and Empowerment are Assumed

Self-determination and empowerment are taken for granted. Partnerships with parents, teachers, doctors and other professionals are strong. All of these groups work together to ensure Deaf people have a good education, and that Deaf people are involved in the education of Deaf children, in policy making and in all decisions that affect them.

Deaf people and their concerns are no longer grouped together with 'generic' disability groups and issues.

Bio-ethicists have worked with Deaf people to ensure that they are accepted as they are, with no attempts to eradicate deafness or Auslan anywhere in Australia.

Deaf people with special needs are included in all areas of life, and their needs are met in full.

Goals:

Deaf Australia's vision for 2020 is that Deaf people will have made significant advancements to equality and quality of life through:

1. Full human rights, self-determination and political strength;
2. Full access to communication, language, information;
3. Quality education, educators who are Deaf and who are proficient Auslan users, access to universities and life-long learning programs;
4. Full respect for and widespread use of Auslan by non-Deaf people;
5. Diverse employment, including, for example, teaching, administration, medicine, psychology, business, law and politics;
6. Full interaction through provision of qualified interpreters and information technologies;
7. Full partnerships with families, educators, health providers, bio-ethicists and policy-makers. "Nothing about us without us" will have become the standard;
8. Auslan is recognised and linguistic rights are realised in practice.

Areas of focus

- Community and language
- Deaf Education
- Technology
- Access and Interpreting
- Families
- Self-Determination and Empowerment

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Full human rights, self-determination and political strength.

Strategies:

- Strengthen Deaf Australia's organisational capacity to meet members' needs
- Consult with members to ascertain emerging trends
- Work with State Branches to create awareness of human rights and self-determination
- Educate the Deaf community about human rights and self-determination

Goal 2: Full access to communication, language, information.

Strategies:

- Provide information bilingually in Auslan and English
- Lobby for increases in quantity and quality of captioning
- Lobby for sign language programs on electronic media
- Ensure Deaf people have full access to communication

Goal 3: Quality education, educators who are Deaf and who are proficient Auslan users, access to universities and life-long learning programs.

Strategies:

- Encourage early intervention programs to include Deaf people
- Encourage all schools to have a bilingual policy and Auslan as a LOTE for both Deaf and hearing children
- Encourage teacher training programs to include Auslan and bilingual pedagogy

Goal 4: Full respect for and widespread use of Auslan by non-Deaf people.

Strategies:

- Promote and celebrate Deaf culture, language and community through National Week of Deaf People and other events
- Create awareness of Deaf culture, language and community through Deaf Deaf World workshops, Auslan classes and other activities

Goal 5: Diverse employment, including, for example, teaching, administration, medicine, psychology, business, law and politics.

Strategies:

- Collaborate with employment service providers to share information on issues regarding Deaf people in employment
- Produce and distribute information kit on employment of Deaf people
- Empower Deaf people to succeed in employment
- Obtain data and statistics on Deaf people in employment for research and lobbying purposes

Goal 6: Full interaction through provision of qualified interpreters and information technologies.

Strategies:

- Ensure technology is accessible to Deaf people
- Lead national taskforce on interpreting issues

Goal 7: Full partnerships with families, educators, health providers, bio-ethicists and policy-makers. "Nothing about us without us" will have become the standard.

Strategies:

- Work closely with State Branches to inform Deaf Australia's work with other partnerships
- Work with policy makers on issues affecting Deaf people
- Promote knowledge and understanding of Deaf people to other organisations

Goal 8: Auslan is recognised and linguistic rights are realised in practice.

Strategies:

- Continue to investigate the feasibility of recognising Auslan as an official language
- Ensure that linguistic rights are included in the domestic implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Organisation Description

Deaf Australia Inc. was established in 1986, as Australian Association of the Deaf, by members of the Deaf community at a national deafness conference in Adelaide. Its first meeting was on 1st June 1986.

For its first six years Deaf Australia was wholly a voluntary organisation, funded only by membership fees, fundraising efforts and some assistance from the Australian Federation of Deaf Societies. In 1992 Deaf Australia began receiving funding from the Australian Government to operate an “advocacy and information” service. In 2001, the funding base changed. Deaf Australia is now funded as a national peak disability organisation.

In 2001 Deaf Australia also began receiving a small additional Australian Government funding grant for its advocacy work in the area of telecommunications.

Deaf Australia’s members are:

- Deaf people who use Auslan (voting members)
- Non-deaf people who support Deaf Australia’s goals (non-voting members)
- Of all ages

Deaf Australia’s potential membership is much larger than the current membership. There are an estimated 15,000 Deaf people in Australia and another 15,000 non-deaf people who use Auslan.

Many deaf people do not learn Auslan until later in their lives. Deaf Australia welcomes all deaf people as members, whether or not they currently use Auslan and encourages them to learn Auslan.

State branches

Deaf Australia’s members are members of both Deaf Australia and their State association of the Deaf.

State branches provide support at the state and local level.

Deaf Australia’s place in the International Deaf community

Deaf Australia is the Australian Ordinary (voting) Member of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). Each country can have only one Ordinary Member of the WFD.

The WFD has 130 Ordinary Members. It has category B membership of the United Nations and is regularly consulted by the United Nations on matters to do with Deaf people. WFD’s Secretariat is in Finland.

Deaf Australia is also a member of the WFD’s Asia/Pacific Region. In July 2008 Deaf Australia, Deaf Association of New Zealand and Fiji Association of the Deaf signed an agreement to establish a new region of the WFD – Oceania. The WFD Board will meet in September 2008 and will decide then on whether to ratify Oceania as a new WFD Region.

Deaf Australia nominates people to serve the WFD in various ways, e.g., as members of its board and expert groups and sends delegates to WFD meetings and other events.

Our partners

Deaf Australia is funded by the Australian Government, and strives to work in partnership with governments to improve the lives of people who are Deaf.

In order to achieve its goals, Deaf Australia also works in partnership with a range of organisations including:

- Australian Human Rights Commission
- Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO)
- Media Access Australia
- Australian Federation of Deaf Societies (AFDS)
- National Auslan Interpreter Booking and Payment Service (NABS)
- Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association (ASLIA)
- Deaf Children Australia (DCA)
- Universities and TAFE colleges
- Australian Communication Exchange (ACE)
- Telstra, Optus and other telecommunication companies
- Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)
- Consumer Telecommunications Network
- TEDICORE
- Kids Help Line and other relevant service providers
- Deafness Forum