

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – 8 December 2008

MEDIA RELEASE

Deaf Children Australia offers parent to parent support program for parents of deaf children in Brisbane!

Deaf Children Australia has recently established Brisbane's first support program designed to place parents of deaf children in touch with volunteer supporting parents. The program, "Parent to Parent" aims to reduce feelings of isolation and increase connectedness and support for parents raising deaf or hard of hearing children.

More than 90% of deaf and hard of hearing children are born to families with little or no experience with deafness. This program helps parents connect with other parents who have travelled down a similar path with their own children.

Volunteer Support Parent, Isabel Boura says, "I became a Volunteer Supporting Parent because I have personally experienced the benefit of having an "older" parent there to give me encouragement, support and reassurance, especially at some tough times. My family and friends were great, but just knowing that there was someone who genuinely understood my feelings and who could relate to what I was going through helped enormously. I am grateful for having had that support, and it is very rewarding now to be able to give that same support to others, knowing that I am making a difference to that parent and child's life".

Volunteer Supporting Parents are experienced and diverse parents who have children that use differing communication methods. Supporting Parents are matched with similar families to provide supportive and unbiased listening, opportunities to exchange stories and ideas, a connection with other parents and assistance in identifying any local community services and local resources that might be helpful.

Damian Lacey, CEO of Deaf Children Australia says, "Parents who have been through a similar experience are better able to listen, give emotional support and validation, share information and provide positive learning to other parents."

Deaf Children Australia has been providing information, advocacy, support services and educational resources to enrich the lives of deaf and hard of hearing children and young adults for 146 years. Deaf Children Australia represents the needs of 16,000 deaf and hearing impaired children throughout Australia. As a not-for-profit organisation, their service is made possible with the support of volunteers, the community, businesses and government financial grants.

For more information on Deaf Children Australia, please call 1800 645 916 or log on to www.deafchildrenaustralia.org.au. For more information about this press release or to request an interview, please call Julie Postance on 9539 5362 or jpostance@deafchildren.org.au

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