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MEDIA RELEASE

Going for gold! Deaf young people on the road to the Deaflympics

On Tuesday 29 July, there will a lot of huffing and puffing at the Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre during the Secondary School Deaf Sports Day. In its second year, the sports day has attracted 110 deaf and hard of hearing students from catholic, private and public schools across regional Victoria from Portland to Wodonga as well as metropolitan Melbourne.

Resulting from partnership between Deaf Children Australia and State Sporting Organisations, the day is a multi-discipline sport event involving competitions in Diving, Water Polo, Dance, Touch Football, Basketball, Table Tennis and Squash.

One of the biggest issues that young deaf people face is that they do not often get the opportunity to attend organised youth activities because most mainstream service providers do not offer communication support.

Deaf Children Australia aims to increase the amount of opportunities for young deaf people to take part in these activities. Communication support is provided through interpreters and volunteers and young people are also supported by positive deaf adult role models.

Diving activities are not only exciting and challenging; they also provide an excellent opportunity for deaf children and their families to get to know each other, share common experiences and form friendships. Furthermore, they bring together deaf children and their families from oral, Auslan or signed English backgrounds.

Taking part in adventurous activities with a group of other young deaf people can help them gain self-confidence, improve their ability to work in a team, learn how to problem-solve, take risks safely, and achieve something they can be really proud of.

1 in every 500 babies is born with a hearing impairment. Its consequences can include learning, speech and behavioural problems.

Damian Lacey, CEO of Deaf Children Australia, says: “Deaf kids should be able to have equal access to all activities available to hearing children. Our vision at Deaf Children Australia is that deafness is no barrier.”

Deaf Children Australia has been providing information, advocacy, support services and educational resources to enrich the lives of deaf and hearing impaired children and young adults for over 140 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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