

For Immediate Release – 23 May 2008

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **PLEA FOR PARENTS OF DEAF CHILDREN TO CREATE SUPPORT GROUP ON GOLD COAST**

Parents on the Gold Coast are sending out an invitation to all parents who have a deaf or hard of hearing child to form a regular parent support group, after the success of similar groups have been organised across Australia.

The parent support groups called PODs (Parents of Deaf), are an initiative started by Deaf Children Australia to provide peer support for parents to help with the difficulties of raising a deaf or hard of hearing child.

Isabel Kennedy, mother of profoundly deaf Jak, nine years old and moderately deaf Madi, 12 years old, has driven up to Brisbane for weekly meetings with Brisbane's POD group, but says there is a need for a group on the Gold Coast.

"The POD groups are a fantastic way for parents to share ideas and experiences about the difficulties we face. It really is about companionship and just knowing that there are others in the same boat," Isabel says.

Damien Lacey, CEO of Deaf Children Australia, says that many parents can feel overwhelmed and isolated when finding out their child is deaf or hard of hearing.

"In Australia, 95% of deaf and hard of hearing children are born to hearing families who have little or no experience of deafness. Our vision at Deaf Children Australia is that deafness is no barrier. This program brings families together so they can talk in a supportive, confidential environment, share experiences and understand that they are not alone," he said.

Deaf Children Australia is a national not-for-profit organisation representing the needs of 16,000 deaf and hard of hearing children and their families across Australia and has been enriching their lives for over 140 years. As a not-for-profit organisation, its service is made possible with the support of volunteers, the community, businesses and government financial grants.

**For more information, please contact Deaf Children Australia's national helpline on 1800 645 956 or visit [www.deafchildreinaustralia.org.au](http://www.deafchildreinaustralia.org.au).**

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