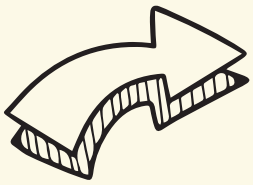
STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2025

Deaf Children Australia.



A message from the chair

Deaf Children Australia (DCA) is built on the spirit, hard work and dedication of families with a deaf child. In 1859, Sarah Lewis wrote a letter to the Melbourne 'Argus' expressing her frustration that there was nowhere her deaf daughter could go to school. Upon reading this letter, it was a deaf man, FJ Rose, who decided this was not good enough. So, he started a school and Sarah's daughter Lucy was the very first student.

Over the years, DCA has been guided by a huge number of inspiring pioneers and advocates who have fought for change, tackled discrimination, and worked tirelessly to make things better. While there have been many positive changes, deaf children and their families still face challenges, barriers, and discrimination. DCA continues to work alongside these children and families - offering the very best advice, support, and services we can.

In 2021, we conducted a comprehensive survey of parents of deaf children to find out what they needed. This Strategic Plan is based squarely on those results. There are still challenges to overcome but everyone at DCA is committed to getting it done with the same courage, conviction and strength of our forebears and our clients.



Dr Kerry Ferguson
CHAIR

* When we refer to deaf children throughout the Strategic Plan, we are referring to deaf and hard of hearing children and young people.



OUR MISSION

To provide the support, advice, options, and unbiased information families need to raise engaged, connected, and resilient deaf and hard of hearing young Australians.

OUR VISION

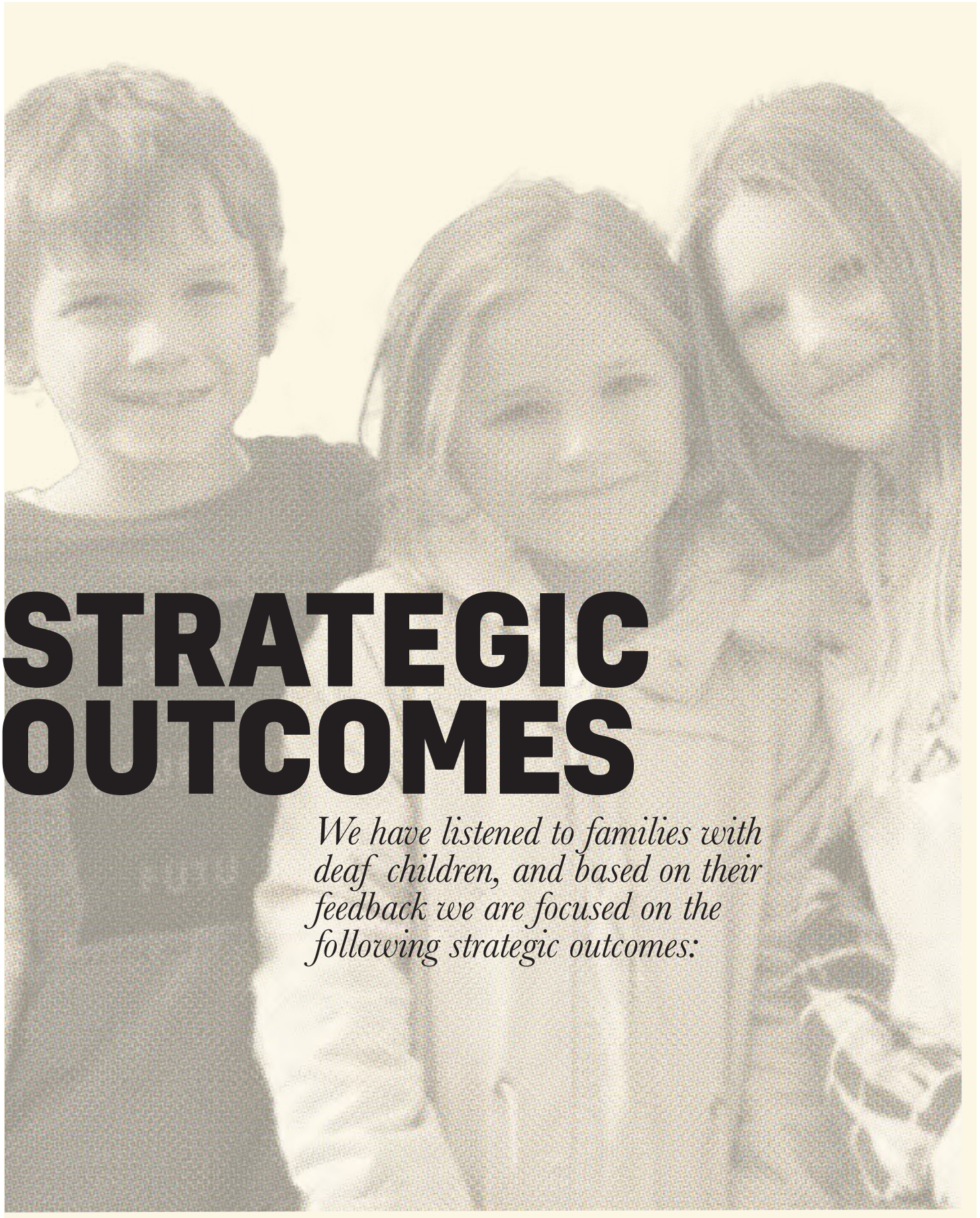
To create a world where children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing have every opportunity to reach their full potential.

OUR CHALLENGE

Deaf children are still falling behind in social and educational outcomes. More support is required to develop confidence, independence, and resilience as they transition through school and into further education, training, and meaningful employment.

We are living in challenging times. As we navigate our way out of the global covid pandemic, we continue to see great social and technological advances, some unexpected, some disruptive. We believe young deaf Australians and their families should equally enjoy the benefits of social progress and live their lives with equality of opportunity.

We will continue to make the world a better and safer place for deaf children and their families. Our strategic plan is designed to make a difference, to keep breaking down barriers, to work towards a better 'deaf aware' world, and create a safer more understanding community for all Australians.



STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

We have listened to families with deaf children, and based on their feedback we are focused on the following strategic outcomes:

1

CHAMPIONING COMMUNICATION AND LIFE SKILLS

Building early language and literacy skills in children is a key driver to tackling inequality in outcomes for deaf children.

We will advocate for and help provide quality language and communication resources needed to support deaf children and their families. We will apply particular focus on the early years. The transition to independence and meaningful employment for young people is also a key focus.

Many parents indicated that existing Auslan education programs were not sufficient to support both parents and children.

"Will my child get a good job?"

FLYING COLOURS SURVEY 2021

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE.

Parents and caregivers of children have ready access to high quality language resources to support their learning of Auslan and English. This will help ensure their children are ready for school.

Young people have the necessary life skills to become independent adults.



2

BETTER SUPPORTING FAMILIES

Parents and families of children who are deaf are faced with some complex decisions soon after a diagnosis of hearing loss. DCA will work to provide the information and support parents and caregivers need to enable them to make the best decisions for their child.

We will continue to build our parent mentor program to reach more families nationally to provide clear, unbiased, and evidence-based information and resources to inform their decisions and support their journey.

> *"Parents need to know all the options – no bias toward any particular therapy or technology or education system. They need to know the pros and cons of every option."*
>
> FLYING COLOURS SURVEY

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE.

Parents and caregivers of children who are deaf can access clear, unbiased evidence-based information, comprehensive resources, and mentoring services nationally, to support informed decision-making.



3

DEEPLY CONNECTING COMMUNITIES

Connection to family and community enriches lives.

We will enhance our programs, expand nationally and move into digital delivery to ensure all deaf children and their families, can make connections and learn from each other.

We will continue to provide camps and other opportunities to bring families with deaf children together. Meeting other deaf children and their families can be life changing.

"We need Deaf and hard of hearing role models and youth groups for deaf children to meet and socialise, while parents have the opportunity to meet as well."

FLYING COLOURS SURVEY

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE.

Deaf children and their families have strong connections to networks with lived experience, deaf mentors, and the deaf community, and have the opportunity to attend community events and camps to help build connections, resilience and confidence.



4

ADVOCATING FOR INCLUSIVITY AND CHANGE

There is considerable work to be done to achieve equal access and inclusivity for deaf children and their families. Changing and enabling the broader community is critical to enduring change.

We will collaborate, create opportunities and advocate for initiatives that improve the way young people access, engage with and experience mainstream life across Australia.

We are committed to boldly deploying our experience, technology, and resources to not only bring this strategy into action and transform DCA, but to drive change that has lasting impact.

"We need greater understanding in sporting clubs and community organisations.

Will his future be limited? Will he be able to be or do everything he wants?"

FLYING COLOURS SURVEY

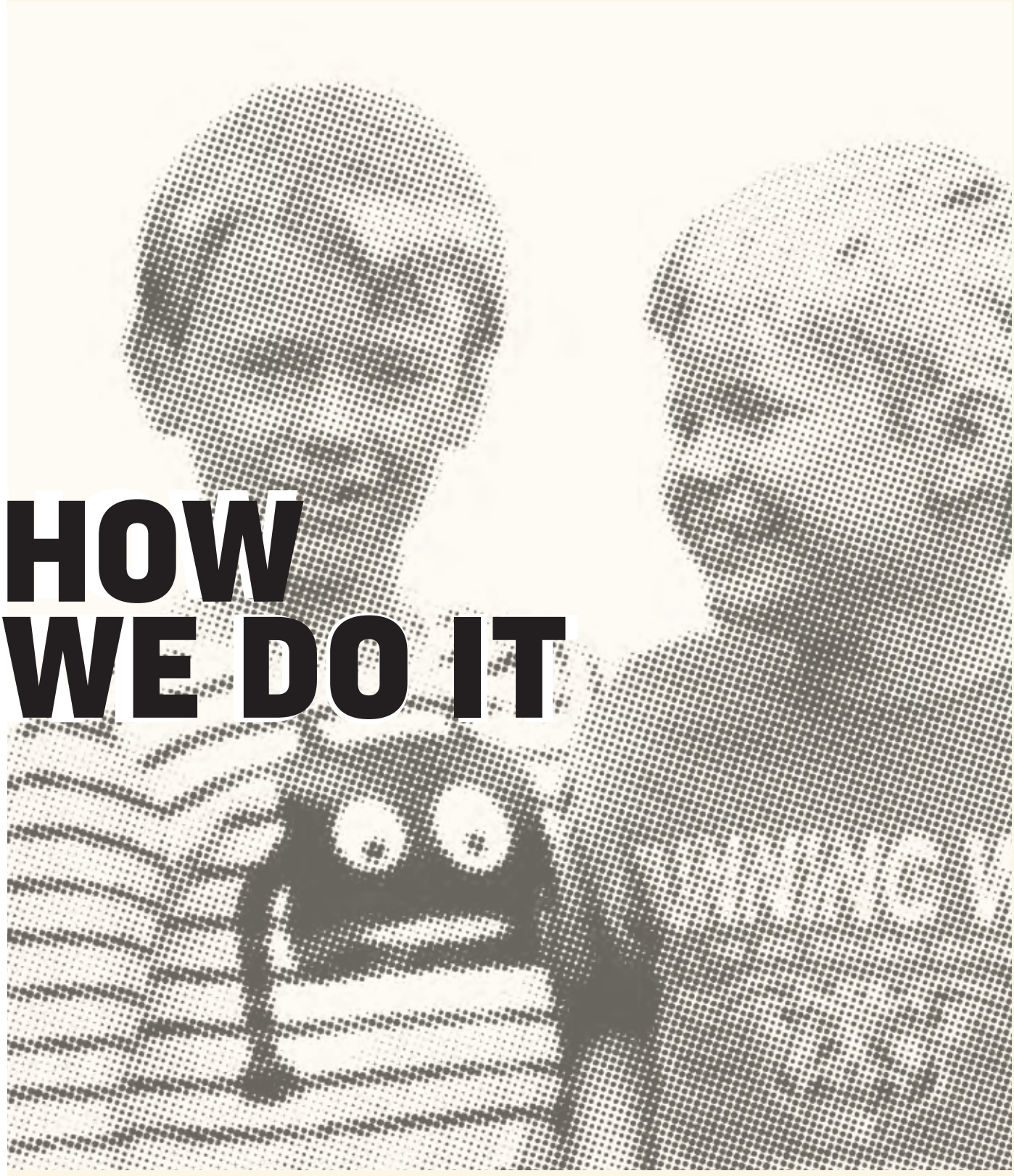
WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE.

Deaf children and their families will feel confident and supported when accessing the ordinary activities and life opportunities easily available to others such as, social settings, sport, education, further training, and employment.

There is better awareness of the impact of hearing loss and how to support inclusiveness in the general community, building confidence in organisations to welcome the involvement of deaf children.



HOW WE DO IT



THIS IS WHAT WE WILL DO TO ACHIEVE OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES:

DATA AND RESEARCH

We will be guided by data and research every step of the way – ensuring our programs, services, and advice meet the needs of our stakeholders. Where we can, DCA will create our own data and contribute to the research agenda.

DCA will continue to be guided by those with lived experience – informing ways we can unlock opportunities and effect change. We will continue to embed lived experience in all we do.

DIGITAL AND NATIONAL

We will use the latest technology to build our national reach. This will allow us to provide our services to a greater number of people, and to better connect young people to DCA, to each other, and to their communities Australia-wide.

This will be a significant investment for DCA and will build the digital infrastructure for connecting families nationally – allowing national reach and deployment of new services, programs, and resources.

INNOVATION AND IMPACT

We will listen and continue to look at new and better ways to support children, their families, and our community. We will do this by identifying gaps in service delivery and developing innovative ways to create impact.

Our innovations will be research inspired and codesigned with lived experience. They will be delivered face to face as well as digitally, national in scope and locally delivered, working with and through partners and experts.

WITH AND THROUGH OTHERS

We understand that it is deaf children and their families who are on the front line. We undertake to work with them, to walk beside them, and be a source of strength and support when It's needed.

It will be a priority to recruit and work with our stakeholders, experts, and partner with key organisations to continue to offer the very best programs, advice, and services nationally.

HERE FOR THE LONG HAUL

We will use our resources wisely – staying sustainable over time so we can continue to invest in families. We will build capability and entrepreneurial activities to ensure we meet the needs of our community for many years to come.



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