

2024

IMPACT REPORT



Deaf
Children
Australia.

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Acknowledgement of Country Deaf Children Australia would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the Country where we work and provide service. We would also like to acknowledge all indigenous peoples, whose wisdom and knowledge offered great opportunities for humanity to learn how to be more respectful of the land we inhabit. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers should be aware this publication may contain images or names of people who have since passed away.



Having recently accepted the position of Chair in April 2024, I have been working together with the new Board and Leadership Team to deliver on Deaf Children Australia's (DCA's) mission to champion the growth and social inclusion of deaf and hard of hearing children and young people.

The Board has reappointed David Wilson as CEO, based on his extensive experience in leadership roles and deep understanding of the Deaf and hard of hearing community. David has a strong background in service delivery, business development and leadership, and brings a collaborative approach to working with key stakeholders to navigate an ever-changing environment.

This financial year presented significant challenges for many not-for-profit organisations including DCA. It was imperative that the Board embedded strategy in every facet of the organisation to adapt to the changing environment and recognise opportunities to build capacity and capital. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is the largest source of government funding for the sector, and given DCA is not currently an NDIS provider, the Board and the Leadership Team needed to explore future funding opportunities. Significant changes are underway with extensive preliminary work being conducted to source recurrent operational funding.

One of my key priorities as Chair is to build a strong culture of respect in the workplace, and this is in recognition that DCA's most valuable asset are its employees. I established a Respect at Work Committee led by our Head of People and Culture to enhance our policy framework to reflect a culture and workplace free from harassment, discrimination and exclusion. This commitment to equality and social justice is now fully reflected in the policies that guide our governance and operations.

As the Chair, I value the opportunity to work collaboratively with my colleagues on the Board to bring a wealth of knowledge, skills and networks that will help build a positive future for DCA and support the best outcomes for deaf and hard-of-hearing children, their parents, families, and carers.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Janet Collins', is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Janet Collins
CHAIR



In the 2024 financial year, Deaf Children Australia embraced a period of change, adapting our programs and services to better meet the evolving needs of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children, young people, and their families. Guided by a commitment to resilience, we have taken decisive steps to ensure the continued delivery of impactful, community-centred programs, even amidst economic challenges and shifting societal demands.

Over the past decade, governance standards for not-for-profit (NFP) organisations in Australia have evolved and strengthened, responding to the sector's growing complexity and rising expectations. This progress reflects a coordinated effort to enhance governance practices within Australia's NFP sector, ensuring organisations operate effectively and maintain public confidence. Our Board's commitment to reinforcing these standards has been central in enabling DCA to meet compliance requirements while consistently upholding our mission.

Additionally, recent data breaches within the charity sector have highlighted the vulnerabilities associated with third-party data handling, underscoring the importance of cybersecurity. In response, we have prioritised protective measures to safeguard the personal information of our community members and donors, enhancing both our digital resilience and our ability to maintain public trust.



Another significant milestone was the end of the 30-year peppercorn lease with the Department of Education for The Victorian College for the Deaf (VCD) in May 2024. As ongoing negotiations have been complex, the department has entered a lease extension to ensure continuity for VCD. Together with Ernst & Young and Alcaston Partners, I am actively working with the department to conclude these negotiations, aiming to secure a new long-term lease by December 2024, thereby ensuring stability for VCD and its future on our heritage site.

Our specialist Sign for Work program for DHH job seekers is highly valued, making a profound impact by creating pathways for economic inclusion. Looking ahead, DCA is preparing for the opportunity to expand Sign for Work's Disability Employment Services business as the current contract concludes on 30 June 2025. With the Department of Social Services launching the new Specialist Disability Employment Program (SDEP) on 1 July 2025, this presents an exciting opportunity not only to continue our successful programs in Victoria and Queensland but also to explore growth in other states. To be well-prepared, I engaged an experienced tender team to assist with this process, with our tender ready for submission later in the year. This proactive approach reflects our dedication to positioning Sign for Work for continued success and expansion under the new SDEP framework.

We are actively refocusing our strategy to build on our strengths and respond to emerging needs. Diversifying our funding sources has become essential to our resilience and sustainability, enabling us to reduce reliance on government grants and create a stable financial foundation for future growth. Our investment in digital transformation will further enhance our capacity to engage with families, schools, and the broader Australian community, ensuring that our services remain accessible and adaptable.

As we move forward into 2025, DCA will continue to build upon these achievements, prioritising sustainability and inclusivity in everything we do. We are deeply grateful to our supporters, partners, government and philanthropic funders, and not least, the children and families who trust us to play a role in their journey. Together, we look forward to another year of supporting, empowering, and celebrating our DCA community.

David Wilson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CREATING SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS

DONNA AND DANTE'S STORY

05.

A powerful example of our service approach is evident in the journey of Donna and her son Dante. This mum-and-son team faced unique challenges following Dante's diagnosis of profound hearing loss.

Like many parents, Donna was initially overwhelmed by her son's diagnosis and unsure of how to best support him to navigate a hearing world. Dante's experience in childcare presented particularly unique challenges. He began removing his hearing aids while struggling to adjust to the noisy environment (and showing signs of frustration).

Donna was referred to our Parent Mentor Program where she connected with Emma, a trained and experienced DCA Parent Mentor who provided practical guidance but also the empathy and understanding that comes only from lived experience.

With Emma's support, Donna collaborated with Dante's childcare centre to introduce small but impactful adjustments like reducing background noise and upskilling staff to use visual cues to gain Dante's attention. Emma also helped Donna understand that embracing Auslan, in addition to speech, would empower Dante to communicate fully.

The family's journey together is a testament to resilience, and today Dante is thriving in both deaf and mainstream educational settings. His speech and sign-language skills have flourished, he enjoys strong peer friendships, and he has grown confident in his ability to connect with others on his own terms.



OUR STRATEGIC
PILLARS

Deaf Children Australia's strategic pillars guide our mission, placing people at the core of our strategy. These pillars drive our focus on aligning people, productivity, and resources to serve our community with greater impact.

CHAMPIONING
COMMUNICATION
AND LIFE SKILLS

01

Through this pillar we will establish and grow a relevant and engaging portfolio of projects and programs with a focus on building a national reach, specifically designed for deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) families and young people.

BETTER
SUPPORT
FAMILIES

02

Through this pillar we will build a respected, proven and trustworthy portfolio of national services and supports for families with a DHH child through our Parent Mentor Program, Community Engagement initiatives and events, our Flying Colours online resource and the Blueprint resource pack and webinar program.

CONNECT
FAMILIES

03

Through this pillar we will build face-to-face connections with key target markets and extend and expand our Youth & Family Programs.

ADVOCATING
FOR
INCLUSIVITY
AND CHANGE

04

Through this pillar we will build the reach, influence, share of voice, and impact of Deaf Children Australia.

ENGAGING AND
DELIVERING

PARENT MENTOR PROGRAM

DCA's parent mentoring program for DHH families provides knowledge, resources and the emotional support that parents need to navigate the unique challenges and opportunities of raising a DHH child.

With four DCA Parent Mentors now located across two States (Victoria and Queensland) we seek to engage and connect with families as quickly as possible following diagnosis. Many families will also reconnect with us on an 'as-needed' basis for example, to traverse a major developmental milestone in their child's life (eg starting school). Or they may reconnect with us at a later stage to gain support for a specific life issue such as managing friendships, puberty, or sexuality.

Each Parent Mentor at DCA undergoes specialised training and has the lived experience of a DHH child in their care. Parents of DHH children tell us of the importance of communicating with someone with lived/living experience of deafness: the fears, concerns, and challenges that present. They also tell us that having someone say "everything will be all right" is critical.

We recently asked parents about their preferred method of mentoring support. The overriding result was a preference for phone calls following a hospital visit or clinic consultation. Parents felt this process allowed them time to digest their child's diagnosis and prepare for a peer conversation.

450 HOURS

TOTAL HOURS OF PARENT MENTOR SUPPORT 2024FY
309 hours phone calls | 49 hours emails | 92 hours face to face

2,207

TOTAL 'OCCASIONS OF SUPPORT' 2024FY

“ I would like to say thank you to our parent mentor for her guidance and support... they provided us real-life experience and advice so you don't feel like you're on your own.

PARENT OF A DEAF CHILD

This support network was honestly the best thing for me as a parent. Our [parent mentor] helped guide me through the steps I needed to take to best support my son.

PARENT OF A DEAF CHILD ”

101

Average families receiving mentoring support per month

We would like to acknowledge the Collier Charitable Fund for funding a Regional Parent Mentor in Regional Victoria this year.

ENGAGING AND DELIVERING

DCA ANNUAL ART COMPETITION & EXHIBITION

Deaf Children Australia's Annual Art Competition supports, promotes, and nurtures deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children and young people by giving them an opportunity to publicly voice and share their experience of deafness. It seeks to improve the visibility of DHH children and young people and showcase their creativity. It recognises and celebrates the visual medium as one area where DHH kids do not lag behind their hearing peers.

15 15 entries received in 2023

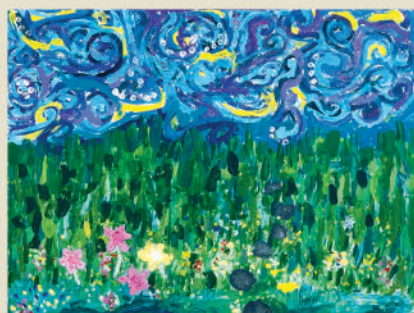
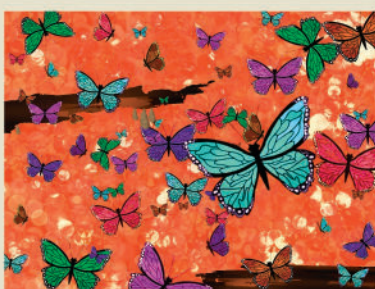
29 29 entries received in 2024

This financial year our art competition took place in May 2024. It kicked off with a gala opening night on Thursday 2 May in Melbourne's Docklands Library and remained open to the public and the Deaf community over the following month.

We were delighted to see a 94% increase in the number of artworks submitted. Judges commented on the calibre and quality of works received. With a diverse variety of art submitted, from paintings to digital art forms, the theme of "Everyone is Different" really resounded.

DCA looks forward to growing this annual event.

Live Stream proudly supported by Braille Tactile Signs Australia, & thanks to Greg Noonan for supporting the event last year.



ENGAGING AND DELIVERING

FAMILY CAMP PROGRAM

09.

Our Family Camps are an avenue for the direct, immediate and personal sharing of the lived/living experiences of deafness and hearing loss. Offered in Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania, they are open to DHH children, their parents/carers and siblings.

While camps revolve around a range of fun, age-appropriate indoor and outdoor activities (eg canoeing, archery, bouncing castle, face painting), the overriding purpose is to provide a sense of connection and community. DHH children and families often feel isolated, and parents are commonly overwhelmed with their child's additional medical or psychosocial needs. Family camp is a great opportunity to share these stories and learn from the experiences of other parents and families, as well as the challenges of navigating services.

Each Family Camp can vary in the number of families attending and depends on the camp site and accommodation. In the 2024FY, a total of 58 families and 207 individuals attended our camps. DCA staff and Auslan interpreters were on hand to ensure the camps were safe, accessible, and successful.

Moving forward we will be adding more formal educational and panel sessions to ensure our events are creating the needed and desired personal, familial and sector impact.

We wish to acknowledge CMV Group Foundation and William Angliss Charitable Fund for supporting the camp.

“ Family camp was an amazing experience for our whole family. We were able to meet other families going through a similar journey. A great place to make lifelong friends.

FAMILY CAMP PARENT

Everyone is welcomed into the community with open arms, and the kids get to bond with other kids with similar challenges... it's an inclusive environment where they can be themselves.

FAMILY CAMP PARENT

83 Participants

QLD CAMP | OCT 23
22 FAMILIES
39 ADULTS & 44 KIDS (AGE 0-16)
7 DCA SUPPORT STAFF & INTERPRETERS

72 Participants

VIC CAMP | NOV 23
23 FAMILIES
40 ADULTS & 32 KIDS (AGE 0-16)
14 DCA SUPPORT STAFF & INTERPRETERS

63 Participants

TAS CAMP | FEB 24
13 FAMILIES
41 ADULTS & 21 KIDS (AGE 0-16)
6 DCA SUPPORT STAFF & INTERPRETERS



FAMILY DAYS OUT

Family Days Out help deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children and families feel understood and supported, reducing isolation and strengthening bonds. Outings provide accessible and inclusive recreational opportunities, a challenging area for families because DHH children commonly require interpreters and/or visual aids. In the 2024 financial year, we hosted 15 events bringing together families with DHH children and their siblings from both metro and regional areas. A total of 770 individuals participated, creating memorable experiences and strong community connections. Highlights included orienteering in Darebin (Melbourne), a regional family day in Bendigo, a zoo visit in Tasmania, and an exciting day at Gumbaya World Theme Park which attracted 210 attendees. These events offered families unique opportunities to bond, share experiences, and create lasting memories in a supportive environment.

DEAF AWARENESS TRAINING

A new initiative, Deaf Awareness Training seeks to create more inclusive and accessible workplaces for employees, clients, customers and DHH individuals. Two inaugural events were held in June, facilitated for Maribyrnong Council. Our plan is to extend this program in 2025 to include both face-to-face and virtual sessions.

We are pleased to acknowledge the Collier Charitable Fund for funding events in Regional Victoria this year.

YOUTH GRANTS

This program has been running since 2000. It recognises DHH young people's ideas and achievements, and their contributions to society. This year we received 22 applications for support. We are delighted to have made 18 grants to young people, totalling \$39,000. Grants were made to support young people to commence a business, participate in international and national sporting competitions, attain a driver's licence, purchase photographic equipment needed for university.

BLUESTONE TOURS

For some years now we have been opening the doors of our Bluestone to school groups, historical societies, the Deaf community, and other interested groups. These 'showcasing opportunities' help give context to the history of deafness in Australia. In the past year 250 students from across Victoria undertook a tour of our buildings and gardens.



A new event for our organisation, Rose Day (held on 1 December) celebrated and explored the life and legacy of our founder, Frederick John Rose.

'FJ' as he was colloquially known, is recognised as a great pioneer of education for the deaf within Australia. He raised awareness of the injustices faced by deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children, especially the lack of access to education and equal life opportunities.

Our celebration this year was attended by 255 DHH people across all ages. It included alumni, past clients of our organisation, and Victorian College for the Deaf (VCD) students and their families.

To provide an immersive experience we prepared exhibits of old school uniforms, set up a dormitory to illustrate the early experience of deaf children, showcased historical photographs of students, and displayed students' original notebooks and papers.

Tours of the Bluestone building, led by Deaf Children Australia Board Member, Noel Henderson, were also a massive hit on the day. We were fortunate to be supported with this event by the on-site café, Tradeblock, which provided attendees with delicious food and hot beverages.

The success of this event will see Rose Day become a biennial event. We are exploring ways to strengthen the impact, grow attendance numbers, and improve community connections.



Developed in collaboration with DHH experts and educators, the Platypus Playhouse range of early learning materials is designed to generate awareness of Auslan and build bilingual Auslan/English skills. It incorporates bilingual picture storybooks, flashcards, Auslan posters, alphabet and number fridge magnets, and other educational learning resources.

At the heart of the program are the stories of Pip and Annie, two deaf platypuses, and their loyal dog, Betty, who help children explore the world through relatable adventures. Launched in 2021, The Platypus Playhouse collection has been warmly received by DHH families, early childhood centres, teachers, and librarians.

This year, we celebrated the launch of our latest book during National Week of Deaf People (NWDP). The event took place at the State Library of New South Wales, featuring an Auslan Storytime session led by Australian entertainer Todd McKenney. He was joined by Deaf actor and influencer David Grant, who co-hosted a bilingual reading of Pip and the Party, the sixth book in our debut series. In this story, Pip helps children understand and express their feelings.

Throughout NWDP we held 10 Platypus Playhouse Auslan Storytime sessions across New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland. These sessions brought children and families together, fostering an inclusive and joyful environment for learning and connection.

“...a great way for a whole family to start learning sign language and engaging with hard of hearing and deaf children from a very young age. And it's fun.”

TODD MCKENNEY

There wasn't anything like this when I was growing up. It is great Deaf Children Australia is creating inclusive storytimes that deaf and hearing children can enjoy together. It is important deaf children feel included and they can with activities like this.”

DAVID GRANT



FLYING COLOURS – STAGE 2

Flying Colours is a comprehensive online resource hub for parents of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children. It offers a range of valuable materials, including personal stories from the Deaf community, research articles, parent perspectives, and a service locator – all accessible in one convenient platform.

This year the project was extended to address the unique needs of rural and regional schools. Our Building Bridges survey gathered insights directly from educators, revealing that 79% of teachers and staff had received no formal training in communicating with a deaf child. Additionally, 70% of these schools expressed a strong need for more inclusive resources, highlighting a significant gap in support that Flying Colours aims to fill.

“All students, regardless of their abilities, have the right to fully participate and be understood by their teachers, school staff and peers.

KARLA, MOTHER OF 11-YEAR-OLD OLLIE

Flying Colours is made possible through funding by the Department of Social Services. Grant funding was provided as part of the Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) program.

REACHING OUT TO EARLY CAREER AUDIOLOGISTS

A key strategy for the 2024 financial year was to increase engagement from allied health professionals with the Flying Colours website. With a wealth of resources available for parents of newly diagnosed deaf children, the site serves as an invaluable referral tool for clinicians. Research shows that clinicians who are aware of the psychosocial impact of a diagnosis are better equipped to provide comprehensive support, making Flying Colours an essential resource in their toolkit.

To encourage engagement and support early career audiologists we facilitated a series of face to face Flying Colours Workshops. We connected with six leading Australian universities in hearing studies and were delighted to speak to and support 200 audiology students.

1.03M
People reached

188
Media Stories

BLUEPRINT

Launched in May 2024 Blueprint is an inclusion program designed to help sporting and recreational clubs improve their support of DHH children and young people.

Consisting of online resources and a physical Toolkit, Blueprint resources were designed by our in-house Auslan experts. Importantly, the materials were informed by the lived/living experience of DHH families, and clubs and coaches who have previously supported a DHH child or young person.

At the heart of Blueprint is a series of 12 short videos. These short recordings share the first-hand experiences of DHH young people participating in a range of different sporting and recreational activities, including swimmer Nicholas Layton and dancer Amelia Kroehnert - both of whom identify as hard of hearing.

We are excited about the long-term impact of this program. We believe it will affect sector change, improving opportunities and occasions for DHH young people to take up a sport or participate in recreational activities.

“It doesn’t matter what disability you have. It doesn’t matter what you’re going through. You can still achieve anything you want to.

AMELIA, DANCER

Blueprint is made possible through funding by the Department of Social Services. Grant funding was provided as part of the Information Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) program.

PUGGLES SWIM

Another help-the-helper offering is our Puggles Swim program. This was developed to enhance the capabilities of certified swim teachers. Endorsed by national swim associations, it specifically responds to the communication, psychosocial and safety needs of DHH children in a learn-to-swim environment.

At its core Puggles is an online (e-learning) course. Across eight modules, swim instructors learn a lexicon of swim-relevant Auslan signs. They also learn about different types of deafness and hearing loss, how to include a DHH child in a swim session, how to be Deaf aware, and how to build a DHH child’s swimming confidence.

Puggles showcases our organisation’s ability to respond to community need. That need - for improved access to local sporting and recreational activities - was identified in our organisation’s 2020/2021 Flying Colours Survey.

“Puggles Swim is unique because it makes swimming accessible to deaf and hard of hearing children and gives them the same opportunities I had to enjoy the water.

BRONTE CAMPBELL

Puggles’ success is evident in

500 SWIM SCHOOLS ACROSS AUSTRALIA

1,600 SWIM TEACHERS HAVE ENROLLED IN PUGGLES SWIM

THE WORK EXPERIENCE (WEx) PROJECT

The WEx project builds the capacity of careers teachers in mainstream schools, and host employers, to ensure DHH students are better prepared and resourced for work experience.

In line with our current Strategic Plan, WEx is another help-the-helper offering. By helping the helpers, we create systemic rather than individual change. This approach allows us to scale services in a cost-effective manner, and simultaneously broaden our impact.

While still in progress, the outcome of this project will be production of Professional Development modules accessible via our learning management system. Utilising digital media, WEx will offer training materials in both English and Auslan. It will utilise printed and visual media, accessible through both mobile and desktop devices.

Puggles Swim is funded by DCA and made possible by the generous donations from our donors and supporters. Revenue from course sales helps amplify the reach and impact of this valuable program, enabling it to benefit more individuals and communities.



In this first year of our three-year project:

we have established an expert advisory group;

made connections with partner schools and participating students;

developed early training resources;

done the preparatory work to deliver the first pilot phase (which will support ten DHH students to attend a work experience placement in year two).

Our thanks to the Brian M Davis Charitable Foundation for making this project possible, and The Telematics Trust for their grant to support online course development and associated resources.



**SIGN FOR WORK DISABILITY
EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

Sign for Work is our organisation’s Disability Employment Service (DES). It continues to specialise in supporting deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) participants, as well as individuals with a wide range of injuries, health conditions, and disabilities. Our commitment to this program remains anchored in helping each participant achieve meaningful and sustainable employment.

Throughout the 2024 financial year our skilled and dedicated Sign for Work team provided personalised support to hundreds of participants. We recognise that every individual’s journey is unique, and our team’s tailored approach builds each participant’s confidence, addressing barriers with empathy and expertise. Through one-on-one coaching, practical skill-building, and ongoing encouragement, Sign for Work empowers participants to take ownership of their career path and resiliently embrace new opportunities.

We are proud of our holistic approach which goes beyond employment placement. By fostering long-term career development, we strive to support participants to reach their full potential. From the initial steps of job readiness and training, to securing employment and aiding career progression, we guide participants through every phase of their journey. This approach improves individual outcomes and strengthens workplace inclusion and awareness, creating positive impacts within our communities.

As we move into the final year of our current DES agreements, Sign for Work is preparing for a period of sector transformation with the Specialist Disability Employment Program (SDEP) set to commence on 1 July 2025. This transition marks an exciting opportunity for Sign for Work to capitalise on our achievements, ensuring we continue to deliver high-quality, inclusive services that empower people with disability to thrive in the workforce.

SUPAY’S STORY

When Supay first connected with Sign for Work he faced several challenges. He was a 21-year-old Deaf refugee from Myanmar. He had grown up without access to a standard language. He was using ‘home*’ sign language to communicate.

Within Myanmar resources for the Deaf community are very limited. Similarly, educational opportunities and healthcare services are scarce with few specialised institutions and a shortage of trained audiologists. Many Deaf individuals therefore face significant barriers, including social stigma and limited employment opportunities. For Supay, moving to Australia in 2016 meant adapting to a new culture as well as learning Auslan and English concurrently.

Driven to achieve independence, Supay aspired to obtain his driver’s licence, buy a car, and pursue further studies. His Employment Consultant, Lynda, worked closely with him to build essential skills, from punctuality and workplace etiquette to interview preparation. Together, they secured a position for Supay as a Night Fill Assistant at Woolworths.

This initial role was at a store over an hour from his home. Sign for Work worked with the employer, arranging a transfer to a closer location and reducing Supay’s commute to a manageable 30-minute walk. In this new role Supay quickly adapted, exceeding his weekly benchmark hours by working 25 hours or more. With the support of Sign for Work he has integrated well into his team, become a valued team member, and has created friendships within the Deaf community.

Through perseverance and the support provided by Sign for Work, Supay has overcome immense challenges. He has demonstrated that with the right support individuals can thrive in meaningful employment and build a fulfilling life in their new community.

*Home sign language is language specific to a family or used within a particular home.



NICOLE’S STORY

Nicole’s journey to stable employment has been marked by resilience and determination. As a young Deaf woman with complete hearing loss, she faced significant challenges finding a workplace that could provide the necessary communication supports. Her journey with Sign for Work began through a referral from her mother, who has been a key source of support, helping her navigate each step of the process.

With the dedicated support of her Employment Consultant, Fiona, Nicole secured a position within the logistics team at David Jones. Her role involves security tagging merchandise and managing online orders. This role is well-suited to her strengths and preferences. It involves minimal customer interaction, allowing her to focus on tasks without the added challenge of frequent customer communication. For the first time, Nicole has a stable work environment and feels valued.



Sign for Work’s comprehensive support has been vital in Nicole’s success. All communication was conducted in Auslan, her primary language, with face-to-face and video interactions ensuring she could fully understand responsibilities and workplace requirements. Sign for Work also provided ongoing assistance with written communication, helping her craft emails and texts in English to ensure clear understanding with colleagues and managers. This bridging support facilitated Nicole’s integration into the workplace and empowered her to communicate confidently within a hearing environment.

Nicole is now approaching her 52-week employment milestone, a testament to the power of persistence and the provision of tailored support. Nicole’s journey demonstrates the profound impact of continuous, individualised assistance in empowering Deaf individuals to thrive in meaningful, long-term employment.

PRINCIPLES
OF OUR WORK

01.

**EMPOWERMENT THROUGH
EMPLOYMENT**

We empower individuals with disabilities by providing the tools, resources and support needed to secure and succeed in meaningful jobs. We believe in every person’s right to contribute their skills to the workforce.

02.

**INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE
SUPPORT**

Our services are inclusive and accessible, ensuring equal employment opportunities for all. We collaborate with employers to create supportive workplaces and tailor our services to each job seeker’s needs.

03.

**COLLABORATIVE
PARTNERSHIPS**

We build strong partnerships with employers, community organisations, and government agencies to create a supportive ecosystem for disability employment. Together, we advocate for lasting inclusivity in the workforce.

FUNDRAISING AND PHILANTHROPY

We remain grateful that so many people continue to give generously to deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children, and their families, so they can access the opportunities that help them to thrive.

We also received four generous Gifts in Wills this year. These individuals have left a legacy that continues their commitment to DHH children into the future.

Giving more people the opportunity to make a difference, we launched two new fundraising programs this year:

CONNECTED TO CONFIDENCE

As we strive to ensure children and families can access our services wherever they live, we invited key supporters to invest in our growth through our new Connected to Confidence program this year. Our twenty inaugural program members pledged a life-changing \$1,000, \$2,000 or \$5,000 donation to lift the expectations, experience, and self-determination of a deaf child. We hope to expand the program in 2025 opening the opportunity to the wider community.

STEP UP FOR DEAF KIDS

In November 2023, we held Deaf Children Australia's very first community fundraising challenge – Step Up for Deaf Kids. Over 300 people across Australia Stepped Up by completing 300,000 steps in November and raising \$83,477 to support our work here at Deaf Children Australia.



STANLEY'S STEPPERS

One incredible team taking on the Step Up for Deaf Kids challenge, Stanley's Steppers, raised \$2,225 as they stepped up to support deaf and hard of hearing kids like their beloved 3-year-old Stan (pictured).

At only four months old, Stan was diagnosed with bilateral moderate hearing loss, and received his first set of hearing aids. For Stan's family, Stepping Up was an opportunity to raise awareness for other deaf and hard of hearing kids just like Stan, as well as the perfect way to come together and keep fit!

Stanley's Steppers surpassed their original target of \$300, and the team of 6 did a fantastic job championing the cause within their community, inspiring Stan's childcare to host a dress up day to support the challenge.

Stan's Mum Stephanie said "we loved to see how our friends and family got behind the cause... I think other people should take on the challenge to make a difference in the lives of deaf and hard of hearing kids!"

We are so proud of our incredible community and extend our most heartfelt gratitude to all those that Stepped Up or donated in support of those completing the challenge.

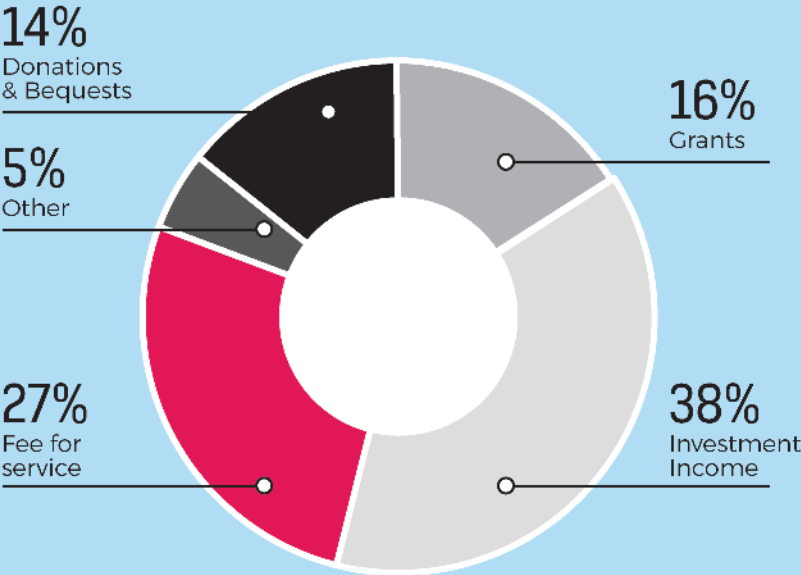
We look forward to another terrific challenge as we take on 300,000 steps again in November 2024.

KEY SUPPORTERS

Atkinson Pontifex
Mr Darren Bartlett
Amy Bastings Estate
Best Price Butcher & Seafood, Dandenong
The Beverley Briese Foundation Pty Ltd
Beyond the Pages
Mr Panayot Boyaci
Braille Tactile Signs Aust.
Brian M Davis Charitable Foundation
Lady Sandy Cane
Ms Carolyn E Cate
Charles Wright Trust
CMV Group Foundation
Crema Constructions
Department of Health Tasmania
Estate of Pamela McAuliffe Errington
Fire Concepts Pty Ltd
FireFighters Charity Fund
Foam International
Ford RS Owners Club Victoria
Gambling Community Benefit Fund (Queensland)
Mrs Jennie Gray
Mr Graham Gunn
Guardian Fencing Pty Ltd
Hearing Loop Australia
Holmes Family Foundation
J D Brook Trust Fund
Jacobus Pty Ltd
Anna Kasalo
Il Gusto Restaurant
Lane Transport
Learning With Technologies Pty Ltd
Estate of William & Bessie Lennox
Helen Livsey

Mrs Rosemary Lloyd
M & M's Rug Shop
Mr Angus Mattiske
Mr Ron McNeilly
Rosemary & the late Douglas Meagher
Melbourne Industrial Plumbing Pty Ltd
Merri Merri Christmas Tree Co.
Mrs Emma Miller
Estate of Bruce James Missen
Mrs Irene Morgan
Mr Greg Noonan
Paradigm Principle Investments Pty Ltd
Lily Maude Payne Charitable Trust
Mr Ian Penney
Mr Brett Phillips
Mr Bill Pye
The late Nan Rodd
Roycroft Medical Centre
Sandringham Primary School
The Schiavello Group Charitable Foundation
Yvonne Shen
Mrs Alison Shillington
Mrs Maureen Stevenson
Sun Health Foods Pty Ltd
Telematics Course Development Fund
Mr Kevin Thomson
The Allen & Cecilia Tye Fund
Urquhart Charitable Fund
Victorian Clothing Exporters PTY LTD
Mr Steve Walters
Westcoast Windows Pty Ltd
Estate of Henry Herbert Yoffa

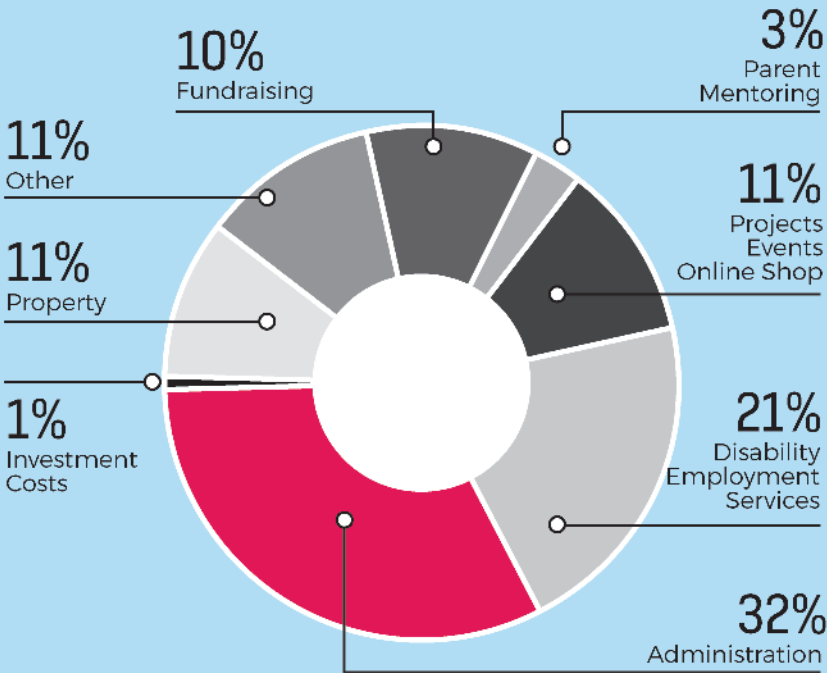
WHERE
THE
FUNDING
CAME
FROM



INCOME
Operating income for the year was **\$4.90m**. This represents a decrease of **\$1.65m** compared to the previous financial year. This is predominantly due to a decrease in Bequests and Investment Income. Deaf Children Australia (DCA) continues to explore ways to generate more income and structure itself accordingly to ensure a positive legacy for the next generation of deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) children.

EXPENDITURE
Operating expenditure for the year was **\$7.75m** which includes \$4.4m of employee expenses, a decrease of **\$0.4m** in employee costs compared to the previous year. DCA has continued to invest in developing current and new projects. The Platypus Playhouse range of language resources has been an ongoing focus in FY24 with the development of our new storybook range as well as our ILC projects Flying Colours and Blueprint.

WHERE
THE
FUNDING
WENT



OVERALL RESULTS
There was an unrealised gain on investments of **\$1.6m** which led to the overall result of a **\$1.18m** deficit for the year ended 30 June 2024.

EQUITY
DCA maintains a solid Balance Sheet with Total Equity of **\$32.6m**. As of June 30, 2024, there was **\$29.1m** invested in a managed investment portfolio.

CHALLENGES
COST PRESSURES
Like most not-for-profits, the economy has provided significant operational challenges over the past year. DCA continues to navigate these challenges and has focused on income generation and cost reduction in an effort to retain its strong financial position.

LEARNINGS
DCA continues to deliver its Strategic Plan and positively impact DHH children and young people in our community. We need to be flexible and agile in order to continue to provide high level services to participants.

QUALITY

At Deaf Children Australia (DCA), our commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement is fundamental to the services we provide. This year, we proudly maintained our Right Fit For Risk accreditation through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), essential for delivering Commonwealth contracts. Our rigorous audits under the National Standards for Disability Services (NSDS) and ISO9001 yielded zero findings, reflecting our robust quality systems and dedication to meeting the high standards expected by our stakeholders.

DCA fosters a culture of continuous learning, always striving not only to meet but to exceed the expectations of the children, families, and communities we serve. Child safety remains our foremost priority. This year, we inducted additional Child Safe Officers across multiple states to ensure compliance with each state's unique Child Safe Standards. All staff, volunteers, and board members are rigorously trained in these standards, creating a safe, inclusive environment for children and young people. Our Child Safe Officers continuously monitor and enforce compliance, providing essential protection and peace of mind for the families we support.

We actively seek feedback from both internal and external stakeholders, which is central to our continuous improvement efforts. Insights from service users, staff, and partners enable us to refine our practices and respond effectively to evolving needs. Through this approach, DCA remains a trusted, responsive provider, delivering consistently excellent, safe services to our community.



EXECUTIVE AND BOARD

Deaf Children Australia is a company limited by guarantee and is governed by a board of directors. Our board meets monthly and maintains two committees to support its governance functions. The Audit and Finance Committee is chaired by the Treasurer Anthony Busuttil, and the Governance, Risk and Quality Committee is chaired by Geoff Manton. Both committees meet quarterly.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

David Wilson
CEO

Lisa Ratcliffe
Chief Financial Officer
& Company Secretary

Noel Henderson
Property and Heritage
Manager

Tamara Trinder-Scacco
Community Engagement
Manager

Nichole Alfreds
Head of Fundraising
and Philanthropy

Rachelle Knoche
Quality and Compliance
Manager

Franky Triolo
Head of People and Culture

Renee Fayad
Head of Marketing



Janet Collins
CHAIR



Noel Henderson
DIRECTOR



Nicola Paroissien
DEPUTY CHAIR



Jacky Clark
DIRECTOR



Anthony Busuttil
TREASURER



Geoff Manton
DIRECTOR



Tamara Trinder-Scacco
DIRECTOR



Irena Farinacci
DIRECTOR

Over the last 12 months cybersecurity became a priority focus. This was driven by sector-specific data breaches, which underscored the vulnerabilities associated with handling, managing, and storing third-party data.

The sector breaches illustrated a critical area of risk for all charities, as digital transformations continue to make data security more complex. To safeguard the personal information of our community members and donors, Deaf Children Australia implemented protective measures that enhance both digital resilience and public trust. These measures included:

- investing in our team's understanding of best practice;
- delivering ongoing training to inform all staff about current cybersecurity threats and safe online practices, and;
- maintaining our Right Fit For Risk accreditation through the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Looking ahead, we are now actively focusing our strategy on building our strengths and responding to emerging needs. We are conscious of, and seek to maintain, our 160-year 'Bluestone' reputation by ensuring implementation of cybersecurity-informed policies and procedures. This will be aided by investment in improved digital capability, which will further enhance our capacity to engage with families, schools, and the broader community.



HOW YOU CAN HELP

LEAVE A LEGACY

A gift in your will.

DONATE

Your donations help change lives.

VOLUNTEER WITH US

We offer a range of volunteer opportunities across our organisation.

WORKPLACE GIVING

Get your work colleagues involved.

FUNDRAISING FOR DCA

Do something amazing big or small, host a community event.

BECOME A REGULAR DONOR

Help DCA support deaf and hard of hearing children, young people and their families.

**Deaf
Children**
Australia.

CONTACT DCA

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ABN 57 108 025 207
DCA is a Not-for-Profit
organisation and
registered with the ATO
with DGR status.

