

Deaf Children Australia

Strategy 2030

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1.Executive Summary

This paper presents Strategy 2030 for Deaf Children Australia (DCA), setting a clear and focused direction for the organisation over the next four years.

The strategy has been developed through a structured process of engagement and analysis, including a full-day Board and Executive workshop in February 2026, supported by stakeholder input, sector insights and review of organisational data. The workshop brought together Directors and the Executive Team to consider DCA's long-term aspiration, where it can have the greatest impact, and what capabilities and systems are required to deliver on that ambition.

A consistent theme emerging from this process was the need for greater focus and discipline. While DCA is highly valued across the community, the organisation cannot and must not try to do everything at once. Strategy 2030 therefore reflects deliberate choices about where DCA will lead and how it will deliver impact in a sustainable way.

The strategy centres on three key insights:

- Early engagement matters: there is a real opportunity for DCA to strengthen its role as a trusted point of connection for families in the early years.
- Employment participation is central: through programs such as Sign for Work, DCA already plays a significant role in supporting Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals into employment, and this remains a core strategic priority.
- Sustainability and discipline are essential: stronger financial visibility, data capability and organisational focus are required to ensure long-term impact.

In response, Strategy 2030 is structured around four strategic priority areas:

- Early Years
- Employment and economic participation
- Community participation and connection
- Sustainable and accountable foundations

These priority areas provide a clear framework for decision-making, investment and organisational focus.

Importantly, Strategy 2030 is designed to be practical and deliverable. It is not intended as a broad statement of intent, but as a tool to guide real decisions including how resources are allocated, how programs are prioritised, and how performance is measured.

Following Board consideration, the next phase will focus on implementation. The CEO and Executive Team will translate the strategy into operational plans, with an emphasis on sequencing priorities, aligning resources and establishing clear performance measures.

The Board will play an active role in oversight of the Plan, with quarterly reporting aligned to the strategic priorities and an annual review of progress.

Strategy 2030 represents a disciplined and confident next step for DCA, building on its strengths, responding to its operating environment, and positioning the organisation to deliver meaningful impact for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community over the coming years.

The below are our answers to the following key strategic questions:

2.Who We Are

Deaf Children Australia (DCA) is a national organisation dedicated to supporting Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH) children, young people, their families and the wider DHH community. We exist to ensure that no family navigates the journey alone. Grounded in lived experience, leadership and strong governance, we provide connection, mentoring, community, and transition support at the moments that matter most.

Strategy 2030 sets our direction for the next four years. It sharpens our focus, clarifies where we will lead and ensures our work is sustainable, measurable, and impactful. We will concentrate on being outstanding in early years support and in enabling confident transitions to employment, while strengthening the community, cultural and organisational foundations that enable long-term success.

This strategy reflects the disciplined choices we are making.

3.Our Vision

Our Vision describes the future DCA is working towards for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community:

To be the trusted "go to" organisation for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, their families and carers, young people and the wider DHH community providing connection, confidence and continuity across their life stages.

4.Our Mission

Our Mission describes DCA's core role and how we support the community every day:

To support Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, young people and their families to connect, participate and thrive at every stage of life.

5. Focus across the life stages

Deaf Children Australia's work is grounded in the lived experience of Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and young people as they grow, develop and transition into adulthood. Strategy 2030 recognises three distinct life stages where needs, risks and opportunities differ, therefore DCA's role must be clear.

Early Years (0–5)

This is the period of diagnosis, early intervention, and family adjustment. Families are often navigating new information, complex systems and important decisions about communication and education. DCA's role at this stage is to provide trusted guidance, lived experience mentoring and early connection to community.

School Years (5–school leaver)

As children move through primary and secondary education, the focus shifts to confidence, peer connection, and ongoing navigation of mainstream and specialist supports. DCA's role during these years is to maintain connection, strengthen belonging and ensure continuity of support across key transition stages.

Transition to Employment (school leaver onwards)

The transition to employment is a critical period involving independence and long-term participation. DCA's role is to ensure DHH individuals transition confidently into employment through structured support and sustained community connection.

There when needed most

What ties all three segments together is a single person, the deaf or hard of hearing individual, at different stages of their journey. Deaf Children Australia's strategy is to walk alongside that person and their family at the moments when they need it most.

6. Our Strategic Priorities

1. Lead the journey

Be the trusted early point of contact for families of DHH children, particularly in the early years, and build long-term connection from the start.

2. Confident transitions to employment

Ensure DHH individuals transition confidently into meaningful employment.

3. Strengthen community and culture

Deepen belonging, identity and engagement across all life stages, positioning DCA as a cultural and community anchor.

4. Build sustainable and accountable foundations

Ensure DCA is financially strong, data-informed and organisationally capable to deliver long-term impact.

7. Strategic Initiatives

Each strategic priority is supported by key initiatives or deliverables that define the focused actions DCA will take between now and 2030 to deliver meaningful outcomes.

1. Lead the journey

Intent: Be the trusted early point of contact for families of DHH children, particularly in the early years, and build long-term connection from the start.

Key Initiatives

- Scale Parent Mentoring nationally.
- Formalise referral pathways including hospitals and Maternal and Child Health Services.
- Develop a consistent Parent Mentoring training model.
- Embed measurement of carer confidence and engagement continuity.
- Strengthen outreach to regional families.

2. Confident transitions to employment

Intent: Ensure DHH individuals transition confidently into meaningful employment.

Key Initiatives

- Strengthen participant engagement and direct registrations.
- Ensure the financial sustainability and growth of Sign for Work.
- Build employer partnerships nationally.
- Support job retention and career development.
- Strengthen transition pathways from education into employment services.

3. Strengthen community and culture

Intent: Deepen belonging, identity and engagement across all life stages, positioning DCA as a cultural and community anchor.

Key Initiatives

- Develop a Deaf Awareness Training model for independent review. Deliver it face-to-face in Victoria and Tasmania and explore options for online delivery.
- Deliver Auslan Story Time to promote early literacy in both Auslan and English.
- Position the Bluestone as a Deaf icon and host of FJ Rose Day and the DCA Art Exhibition.
- Empower DHH young people through DCA's Youth Grants Program.
- Build a Deaf mentor pool and deliver community events to empower young people to be confident, independent, and resilient.

4. Build sustainable and accountable foundations

Intent: Ensure DCA is financially strong, data-informed and organisationally capable to deliver long-term impact.

Key Initiatives

- Implement program-level financial modelling.
- Diversify revenue streams and strengthen fundraising capability.
- Align budget with strategic priorities.
- Implement longitudinal tracking.
- Develop Board-level dashboard and outcome framework.
- Formalise Corporate Partnership program.

8. Our Values

DCA's values (Respect, Accountability, Partnerships and Service) are set out in the Board Charter and continue to guide how Strategy 2030 will be delivered. These values will underpin our decisions, our relationships and our commitment to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.

9. Next Steps and Implementation

Following Board discussion and endorsement, the focus will shift to translating Strategy 2030 into clear, deliverable actions across the organisation.

(a) Executive Planning (April–May 2026)

We will support the CEO as she works with the Executive Team to operationalise the strategy, including:

- Translating each strategic priority into 12–24 month operational plans
- Identifying clear ownership for each initiative
- Sequencing delivery to ensure focus and avoid over-extension
- Aligning workforce capacity and capability to priorities

(b) Priority Focus for Year 1 (2026–27)

The first 12 months could prioritise:

- Strengthening and stabilising Sign for Work, including participant engagement and employment outcomes
- Establishing a scalable Parent Mentoring model and strengthening early referral pathways
- Defining and implementing a small set of organisation-wide performance measures
- Initiating program-level financial visibility to support informed decision-making

(c) Performance and Reporting

A small set of strategic indicators will be developed and reported to the Board on a regular basis, providing visibility of:

- Early years engagement and reach
- Employment participation and retention outcomes
- Community engagement and participation
- Financial sustainability and program performance

(d) Governance and Review

The Board will need to play an active role in Strategy 2030's oversight through:

- Quarterly progress reporting aligned to the strategic priorities
- Annual review of progress
- Ongoing alignment between strategy, budget and organisational priorities
- Strategy 2030 has to be treated as a living framework by the Board and organisation, guiding decisions, investment and partnerships, and evolving as required to respond to emerging needs and opportunities.

10. Conclusion

Strategy 2030 represents a disciplined and confident next chapter for Deaf Children Australia. It reflects deep engagement with our Board, Executive, staff and community, and balances aspiration with realism. We have chosen to focus where we can make the greatest difference, in the early years and in supporting confident transitions to employment, while strengthening the cultural and organisational foundations that make our impact possible.

Over the next four years, this strategy will guide decision-making, resource allocation, and partnership development. It will be a living framework which is to be reviewed regularly, measured transparently and adjusted thoughtfully as the needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community evolve. Through Strategy 2030, DCA will remain trusted, relevant, and impactful for generations to come.