



# NEWSBRIEF

The Deaf Society of New South Wales

Autumn 2006

## ANTENNA

There are many factors involved in ensuring that the Deaf Society continues to provide quality life important services for Deaf people and their families.

Some of these issues are strictly housekeeping such as the upgrading and maintenance of equipment and resources. Others involve compliance and corporate governance responsibilities. Most importantly, as a non-profit organisation, we constantly seek new avenues of funding to enable us to expand our vital services.

Positive progress has been made in increasing services this year, including improved support for Deaf people living in regional areas and greater support for families. New family support services include parent peer support groups, parent training for Deaf parents and provision of Auslan in home tutors. These services complement existing programs such as the Auslan Heritage School for Deaf children and their parents.

Of course, these services are made possible by the generous support of our donors and supporters. Your

help enables us to maintain our core business such as welfare support and Auslan (Australian Sign Language) interpreting provision as well expanding our services to fill unmet needs within the Deaf Community.

We do hope we can continue to rely on your assistance.

Rebecca Ladd – Executive Director – Services  
Sharon Everson – Executive Director – Corporate



Rebecca Ladd and Sharon Everson

## IT'S ON AGAIN!!!

The first term of Auslan Heritage School for 2006 commenced on Saturday 6 May with twelve families enrolled. While Deaf children and their hearing siblings learn Auslan (Australian Sign Language) through a mix of fun and language activities their parents attend more formal

lessons offered at both beginner and intermediate levels.

The Auslan Heritage School provides parents with more than just Auslan tuition. Often parents with Deaf children feel isolated and lack contact with others in similar situations. Inadequate Deaf specialist support services and language development opportunities can also place families at risk.

We believe our programs for families encompass a positive holistic approach to parenting by providing a multi-faceted strategy, including information, support and Auslan language acquisition as well as utilising the power of peer support and information sharing.

Please call Rebecca Ladd on (02) 9893-8555 or email her at [rladd@deafsociety.com](mailto:rladd@deafsociety.com) if you would like further details about the Auslan Heritage School.



## Annual General Meeting 2005

President, Peter Brownlee, presented the Deaf Society's 2005 Annual Report at the Society's 92nd Annual General Meeting held on 26 November 2005 at the Burwood RSL Club. Peter spoke to highlights of the past year, including the launch of the Society's Lismore service; production of additional resource material to assist Deaf school students, Deaf clients and Deaf people with Usher Syndrome, as well as a record number of deafness awareness training and community education programs, including a health forum for Deaf women, were held in both metropolitan and regional areas.

In presenting the annual accounts Treasurer Stewart McClay noted that the consolidated operating surplus of \$539,712 was a particularly good outcome, given the many demands on the Society and its resources.

Election of officers saw Peter Brownlee re-elected as President, with George Barbouttis and Alexandra

Hynes re-elected to the Board. Adam Schembri, appointed to fill a casual vacancy during the year was also elected to the Board.

Long time director, Tony Gorringe, had advised he was not able to stand for re-election due to health reasons. The President placed on record the Society's appreciation of Tony's contributions during the past fifteen years, both as a regional representative



of the Deaf Community and as Deputy Chairman. Tony's contributions had been acknowledged by a vote of thanks at the October Board meeting where Tony had been unanimously

elected to Life Membership. A motion to propose a vote of thanks to Tony for his contributions to the work of the Deaf Society on behalf of members was carried with acclamation.

Peter then outlined the proposed amalgamation of the Deaf Society and the Epstein Deafness Foundation to members, including corporate governance and financial benefits.

In closing, the President thanked the many people who contributed to the Society's success, in particular the valuable assistance provided by Tony Houen, Patterson, Houen and Commins, the Society's Honorary Solicitors.

Peter also thanked his Board colleagues for their support, the staff for their dedication and hard work and members of the Deaf Society and the Deaf Community, particularly in working with the Society to achieve the goals in the 2004-2007 strategic plan.

## Sign Language is Cool

Sign Language is Cool – was the message promoted by the participants of the inaugural "Bee Cool Finger Spelling Bee" competition held at Beaumont Hills Public School in Kellyville in June 2005.

The "Bee Cool Finger Spelling Bee", organised by the Deaf Society of NSW, is being promoted to schools as a way of helping students familiarise themselves with the manual sign language alphabet used by Deaf people.

An added benefit of the Finger Spelling Bee is the improvement in spelling of all the children who are participating in the competition.

"We have noticed a significant improvement in overall spelling by the students taking part in the Finger

Spelling Bee", said Deputy Principal Caron Dodd, whose group of 10-12 year olds eagerly competed in the finger spelling finals.

Organiser of the Finger Spelling Bee, Annette Lüders, hopes that this inaugural competition will lead to more schools becoming interested in taking up the project in the future. "It is great to see how motivated and keen the children are at this age. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could give all school children the opportunity to learn about Deafness and appreciate and value sign language while at the same time enhance their spelling?"

Please call Annette on

(02) 9893 8555 or email her at [aluders@deafsociety.com](mailto:aluders@deafsociety.com) if you would like any further information about organising a finger spelling bee for your school or social group.



**Practice makes perfect – Stephen Nicholson encourages a young Finger Spelling Bee participant.**

# NATIONAL WEEK OF DEAF PEOPLE

## Celebrating Deafness

### 2005 Deaf Expo and Deaf Community Barbecue

Over 150 Deaf people, their families, friends and supporters celebrated National Week of Deaf People at the 2005 Deaf Expo and Community Barbecue. This annual event, hosted by the Deaf Society of NSW and the NSW Association of the Deaf, was held on 9 October 2005 at Woodstock Community Centre, Burwood and provided a great opportunity for Deaf people and their families to come together to catch up with friends plus take the opportunity to learn more about the Deaf Society's services and programs.

Information stalls provided information from a number of Deaf interest and advocacy groups, including the Deaf Education Network, the Australian Association of the Deaf and Deafness Resources Australia. Julia Haraksin from the Attorney General's Department provided information about her Department's work in supporting people with disabilities. The Expo also included an exhibition of art work by Deaf women participants of the recent ArtStart project and an interpreted yoga exhibition.

Certificates of appreciation were presented to a number of volunteers, including Andrew McCredie, Mel Ainsworth and Karan Monkhouse as well as to organisations that provided accessible services to Deaf people, including the University of Sydney, the Australian Taxation Office, Cumberland Women's Health Centre and the Australian National Maritime Museum.

### Parramatta Open Day

Many visitors, both Deaf and hearing, attended an Open Day at the Society's head office at Parramatta on 12 October, 2005. The Open Day, held during NWDP, provided the opportunity for visitors to tour the office and learn more about our services. We were particularly pleased to welcome a group of Deaf school students who took the opportunity to talk about future careers with the Society's Deaf staff members.

Other visitors included Deaf residents of Mullauna Aged Care Village, Auslan students and parents and friends of Deaf people.

**Right: John Murphy, Federal Member for Lowe met with Deaf constituents at the Expo.**



**Above: Residents of Mullauna Aged Care Village visit the Society's headquarters during NWDP.**



**Right: Parramatta Lord Mayor, David Berger, was delighted to receive a Certificate of Appreciation when he attended the Open Day.**



## Tribute to Anthony Gorringe

Rebecca Ladd and Sandra Carroll travelled to Orange on 25 February 2006 to make a special presentation to Tony Gorringe in the presence of his family and friends.

Tony was delighted to receive a special certificate of thanks as well as a video resource gift in recognition of his contributions towards the management of the Deaf Society.



### CONGRATULATIONS

to Mina Chiu who received a grant from the Kenneth W Tribe Fellowship Fund under the latest round of funding. Financial assistance from the Fund will help Mina continue her studies to gain a Bachelor of Combined Law.



Left: Local MP Thomas George was awarded a certificate of appreciation at the launch of the Northern Rivers Parents of Deaf Children (PoD) advocacy and support group on 30 August 2005 (l to r Craig Bishop, Regional Services Co-ordinator, Thomas George, Simon Mahony, Deaf Parent and Bill Mahony).

Right: The Deaf Society was delighted to assist a local Coffs Harbour Deaf Group in employing a part-time community worker dedicated to assisting the local Deaf community with access and support issues. A group of local Coffs residents took the opportunity to participate in a tour of the Coffs Harbour City Gallery arranged as part of the International Day of People with Disabilities (l to r Margaret Nell, Tracy McGee, community worker, Marjorie Corbett, Simone Carne, Shellie Kelly (gallery employee), Bernadette Keane and Jo Ring, Auslan interpreter).



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OF NEW SOUTH  
WALES**

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