

The Deaf Society of NSW



Strategic Plan 2010 – 2013



1 Introduction

The Deaf Society of NSW (DSNSW) has been in operation since 1913 and is the largest provider of services to the Deaf Community in New South Wales. Following a sustained period of growth and change the Board of Directors identified the need to develop a Strategic Plan to ensure the DSNSW's long term viability and increase the value that the Deaf Community derive from the organisation's activities.

The organisation has engaged Matrix on Board (Matrix) to work with them to develop this new Strategic Plan, which will guide the DSNSW's operations from July 2010 to June 2013.

1.1. Background

The DSNSW is incorporated as a company limited by guarantee and, as such, is governed by a Board of Directors elected by the organisation's membership. The majority of the DSNSW's members are Deaf people who use Auslan.

The DSNSW provides core services in the traditional areas of need, such as welfare and counselling, community development, information, interpreting provision, advocacy, education and training and employment and workplace support. Services are provided through the main office in Parramatta, six regional offices and a number of outreach services.

Recent achievements include an increase in the number of deaf staff in management positions, gaining Registered Training Organisation (RTO) status, professionalising the interpreting service and continuing to deliver high quality services across the state even where there are severe funding pressures.

The environment that the DSNSW operates within has undergone significant changes in recent years. These changes have given rise to a number of key issues that are addressed within this plan. Questions that have been considered include the role of deaf people in leading the DSNSW, the continued shift away from a welfare model of service provision, the organisation's advocacy responsibility and the provision of services to hard of hearing individuals.

1.2. Methodology

In preparation for developing this Strategic Plan, Matrix consultants conducted a thorough research and mapping process. This included reviewing various documentation and reports and conducting in-depth interviews with various staff, Board members and stakeholders. A workshop with staff was held in October 2009 to develop strategic responses to two recently published reports (the Demand Project Report and the Seniors Report).

In addition, Matrix supported the DSNSW in conducting an extensive community consultation process. This consultation process consisted of an online survey and a series of community events. The online survey had all questions in both written English (text) and Auslan (videos). Ten community consultation events were held in January and February in locations around the state. All consultations were conducted in Auslan with voicing where required. A total of 371 surveys were completed and a separate report 'Community Consultation Report' has been produced.

In March 2010 a planning workshop was held with DSNSW Board Members and senior management team. A clear consensus was reached on the strategic approach of the organisation. The mission and vision were revised and direction was given on how to address the key issues facing the organisation at this time. The community consultation report, stakeholder interviews and staff suggestions were all used to inform the planning process.

The senior management team have led a number of meetings and workshops that have seen a lot of DSNSW staff participating in the planning process. The Board would like to thank all staff for their valuable contribution. The Board would also like to thank the Deaf Community and our

partner organisations for their feedback through the community consultations and the online survey.

2. Who we are and who we work with

The mission and vision are the aspirations of an organisation. They are essential because they define what the DSNSW will (and will not) do. These core aspirations form the basis for strategy, defining the organisation's overall approach and setting priorities for action. Aspirations drive everything the organisation does and define its identity.

It is important to be clear about the community served by, and engaged with, the organisation. This clarity ensures that resources are appropriately allocated, services are best targeted and the most suitable growth opportunities are followed.

2.1. Vision

Equity for deaf people

2.2. Mission

We work in partnership with the Deaf Community to enhance the quality of life of deaf people, strengthen the community and advocate for changes that will ensure fundamental rights and freedoms.

2.3. Who we work with

Deaf adults who use Auslan have always been the main focus of the DSNSW and this continues to be the case. We also work with individuals and groups in the wider Deaf Community, including, but not limited to:

- Deaf children and deaf young people
- Hard of hearing people of all ages
- People with cochlear implants
- Deafblind people
- Deaf and hard of hearing people with disabilities
- Hearing parents and hearing children of deaf people
- Friends and families of deaf people

Other groups and organisations that work with deaf and hard of hearing people
(The order of this list does not imply importance of people to the organisation)

*The words **Deaf** and **deaf** are used throughout this document. We use **Deaf** with a capital D, when we talk about the Deaf Community which represents the linguistic minority group that share a language and culture. We use **deaf** with a lower case d when we talk about deaf people in general and deaf organisations when referring to organisations that work with deaf people. Our use of capitalisation is not meant to infer inclusion or exclusion to our community and our organisations.*

*We use the term **hard of hearing** throughout this plan but recognise that some people prefer the term **hearing impaired**. In choosing this term we have followed conventions set by the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and the International Federation of Hard of Hearing People (IFHOH).*

3. Key Directions for 2010-2013

The views of the Deaf Community have been gathered through the community survey and the stakeholder interviews. These views have been a powerful influence on the planning process. The DSNSW Board members described community opinion as “the wind behind our sails”.

A number of key issues were identified in the consultation process and discussed by the Board and senior management team. The table below describes the background for each issue and the direction that has been set for the organisation. This direction underpins many of the goals and strategies in this plan and should also be used in project and service delivery throughout the period.

Background	Direction
Human rights and deaf people	
<p>In 2008 Australia became a party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). This signals a new era for the rights of deaf people, deafblind people and people with disabilities.</p>	<p>The approach to our work should reflect the CRPD. Human rights for deaf people is based on principles such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recognition and use of Auslan and respect for Deaf culture and identity - Bilingual education in Auslan and English - Accessibility to all areas of society and life - Availability of Auslan interpretation
Deaf leadership within the DSNSW	
<p>The Board has had a consistent focus on recruiting more deaf members, but also needs to ensure the required skills are represented. The community and stakeholders have responded very positively to the recent hiring of senior deaf staff. Hiring and then developing capable deaf staff is a way for the DSNSW to develop mentors for deaf people and to support deaf people in pursuing careers beyond the DSNSW.</p>	<p>We believe that the Deaf Community are the moral owners of the DSNSW and that deaf people should play a major role in setting the organisation’s direction. We are committed to recruiting and promoting deaf people with the right skills in leadership positions throughout the organisation. The Board will maintain its emphasis on recruiting deaf members and will also focus on ensuring its meetings and processes are deaf friendly. When employing and promoting staff we will maintain our affirmative action policy of appointing deaf candidates who are suitably qualified for jobs. We wish to ensure that all staff are well supported to develop their careers. We will continue to improve the staff and office culture to ensure that the DSNSW is a deaf friendly place of work.</p>
Current Services	
<p>Previous strategic plans have positioned the DSNSW as a service provider before anything else. Many people in the Deaf Community have benefitted from our services over the last 97 years and we are proud of our legacy.</p>	<p>We will continue to provide a broad range of services that aim to enhance the quality of life of deaf and hard of hearing people and their families.</p>
Community development	
<p>The DSNSW is funded to provide specific services. Historically it has also played a role in strengthening the Deaf Community through the way it has worked to develop organisations and individuals. There is significant community demand for Deaf Community spaces. A consequence of not having a community space is that it is less easy for deaf people to access information.</p>	<p>We want to be explicit in our commitment to community development on community, group and individual levels. We will take an active role in nurturing and supporting social, sports and interest groups that contribute to the Deaf Community. We will make our spaces and technology available for community events and communication. We would assist appropriate individuals or organisations that wish to own or manage community spaces. We do not believe, at this time, that it is an affordable priority for the DSNSW to own or manage spaces. We believe that the Deaf Community needs to be aware of all the services and projects available to them so that they can make the most effective choices for themselves. We will promote appropriate services and projects delivered by other organisations, as well as those that we provide.</p>

Background	Direction
<p>The Deaf Community sees a clear role for the DSNSW in systemic advocacy and lobbying in NSW. Other Deaf organisations have a greater advocacy mandate than does the DSNSW, but they may be more effective if they can team with better-resourced organisations such as the DSNSW.</p>	<p>Systemic advocacy</p> <p>We plan to increase investment in our role in influencing government policy and advocating for the rights of deaf people in NSW.</p> <p>We believe a partnership approach is the most effective way of achieving change. Wherever possible we will undertake advocacy and policy work in collaboration with Deaf Australia (NSW), the Australian Federation of Deaf Societies and other key agencies.</p> <p>The implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is the key driver for our approach to advocacy.</p> <p>The areas that have been prioritised for a new DSNSW advocacy project are: education, employment and access to interpreters.</p>
<p>The DSNSW has a potential role in providing leadership and mentoring programs for deaf people. The community consultations gave a clear mandate for the DSNSW to engage in this work.</p>	<p>Leadership and mentoring</p> <p>We consider leadership and mentoring a crucial aspect of our work. We are committed to providing targeted programs to develop deaf people's leadership skills, with a particular focus on young people. We will also support the Deaf Community more broadly to allow mentoring to happen naturally (the way it does in wider society).</p> <p>Our commitment to Deaf leadership in the DSNSW is a key mechanism for promoting role models and mentors.</p>
<p>It has been identified that the quality of the different services is not consistent at the DSNSW. It is clear that the community are unaware of a number of services and programs that could be of benefit to them.</p>	<p>Service quality</p> <p>We want to provide high quality services to the Deaf Community throughout NSW and to learn from our successes.</p> <p>We will continue to gather feedback data and conduct rigorous reviews of all services. We will also review our administration, finance and human resource systems and processes to ensure that they produce the best outcomes for our staff and clients.</p> <p>We will promote our services more widely available in both Auslan and English.</p>
<p>Deaf people in regional and rural areas are often extremely isolated and derive great benefit from local services. Regional services are not seen as meeting the needs of the community. The DSNSW is not funded to provide services across the state. Services are more costly to deliver per head in regional and rural areas.</p>	<p>Regional Services</p> <p>Without securing additional, specific funding we are unable to increase our investment in regional services.</p> <p>It is highly unlikely that we will secure sufficient funding to offer the same range and quality of services in regional areas as we can in Sydney.</p> <p>We will seek further government funding to maintain and improve regional services.</p> <p>We will review our regional service provision to ensure that we are spending the funds in a way that has the greatest impact on the quality of life deaf people across NSW.</p> <p>We will aim to balance two priorities. We are aware that these priorities may sometimes compete:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Offer services that are taken up by more people - Offer services that have the most impact on the individuals that use them
<p>New technologies are changing rapidly. Deaf people have more options to communicate and interact with information, each other and the wider community. There will often be potential for the DSNSW to provide demonstrations and trials of new technology, and initiate their use in service provisions and community support.</p>	<p>New technology</p> <p>We are keen to embrace new technology and will continue to keep abreast of new developments and support individuals and groups as they explore their usage.</p> <p>We will ensure that our staff have access to technology and hardware that will increase their ability to communicate with clients and stakeholders.</p>

Diversity of experience of deafness	
<p>Medical advances such as cochlear implants are changing the landscape of the Deaf Community and the issues it faces.</p> <p>The vast majority of deaf children are now fitted with cochlear implants.</p> <p>The majority of respondents to the community consultation encouraged the DSNSW to be open to hard of hearing people and those with cochlear implants.</p> <p>A significant minority of deaf respondents are resistant to widening the target of the DSNSW's audience. It is important not to alienate culturally Deaf people who engage with the organisation.</p>	<p>We cannot ignore the changes in the demographics of the Deaf Community. We recognise that the future of the DSNSW and the Deaf Community will involve acceptance of the diversity of experience of deafness.</p> <p>We will be explicit when our services are available to hard of hearing people and will continue to seek funding for services that are appropriate for the wider Deaf Community.</p> <p>Some of our services and projects will be targeted at culturally Deaf people and people who use Auslan. We are aware that this may exclude some hard of hearing individuals.</p> <p>We will increase our engagement in the diagnosis and medical treatment of deaf people. We wish to promote Deaf Community and Deaf culture and to advance the acceptance of bilingualism amongst cochlear implantees.</p> <p>We will explore ways of ensuring our services are appropriate for, and welcoming to, deaf Aboriginal Australians and deaf people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.</p>
Partnerships	
<p>The DSNSW have a small number of effective partnerships and have identified the potential for more.</p> <p>Members of the Deaf Community expressed a desire to see more collaboration between agencies that they engage with.</p>	<p>As the best-resourced organisation for deaf people in NSW, we believe it is our role to show leadership as well as facilitate interagency and partnership work.</p> <p>We consider that increased collaboration will lead to better outcomes for Deaf communities across Australia; we are open to partnerships, inter-agency collaboration and mergers.</p>
Growth	
<p>The focus of this plan is on improving the quality and reach of existing services.</p> <p>We understand that the DSNSW is the only Deaf Registered Training Organisation in the country. There are clear opportunities to offer some services nationally.</p>	<p>The DSNSW does not have an aggressive expansion plan.</p> <p>We will explore ways of offering training for the Deaf Community across Australia.</p> <p>We will explore ways of offering Auslan courses across Australia. Wherever practical we will deliver services in collaboration with other state Deaf societies.</p> <p>We will continue to expand Auslan translation services in NSW and in other states.</p> <p>We will investigate ways in which emerging technologies may facilitate growth.</p>
Government funding	
<p>40% of the DSNSW's income comes from government contracts. There are likely to be some changes in the way services are funded in the coming years.</p>	<p>Our priority for new government funding is for services to regional areas.</p> <p>We will continue to build positive relationships with all the relevant funding bodies and ensure we are in a good position to offer services through any revised models.</p> <p>We will support deaf people to maximise their use of funding opportunities.</p>
Earned income	
<p>Like most not for profit organisations, the DSNSW has a portion of income that is not tied to any government grants or contracts.</p> <p>The Board has discretion about how this money should be invested or spent. Much of this money is currently used to provide regional services.</p> <p>The DSNSW has historically been granted significant sums of money through legacies.</p>	<p>In setting the direction in this plan, we have prioritised community development projects and advocacy for investment of earned income. We do not want to erode the services to the regional areas of NSW and will seek additional funding for those services in order to free up money for the new priorities.</p> <p>We will invest in a fundraising strategy with a focus on major donors and legacies. Our focus is not on community fundraising.</p>

4. Strategic Plan Overview

This diagram summarises the strategic plan: the vision is the star in the middle; the three key result areas are the hexagons; the twelve goals are the boxes.



Key Result Area 1:

Provision of high quality, flexible and responsive services and programs

Key Result Area 2:

Promotion of Deaf culture and development of Deaf Community

Key Result Area 3:

Leadership by example

KRAs, Goals and Strategies

Goals and priorities have been developed from the views expressed by staff, community and stakeholders during the consultations and strategic planning process. **Key result areas (KRAs)** have been developed to focus these goals into the main areas in which the DSNSW works. This will allow the DSNSW to achieve the results that fulfil its mission.

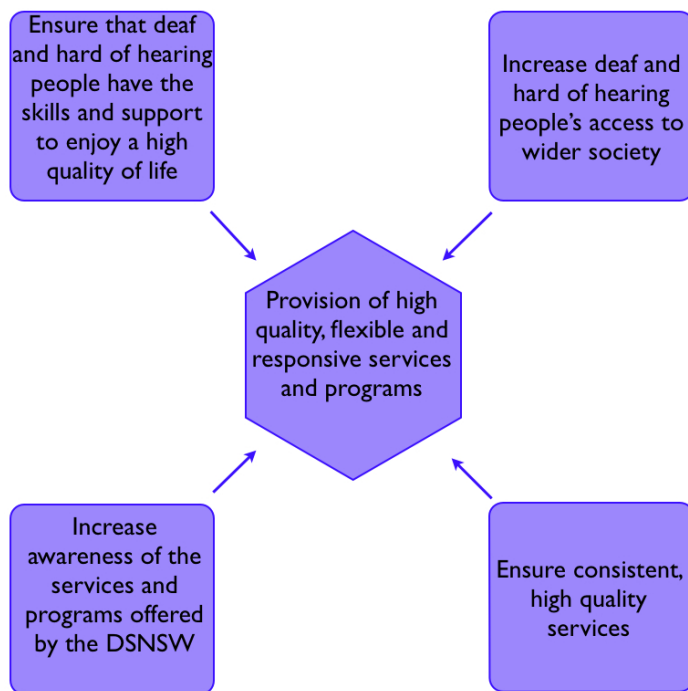
Underneath each KRA are a number of **goals** – these set out the outcomes that the DSNSW wants to achieve.

Each goal has a number of **strategies** linked to it – these are the actions that the organisation will take to meet the goal. These have defined outcomes and dates and will form the basis of the measuring process.

In order to make the plan accessible to the Deaf Community and other stakeholders the KRAs and goals do not necessarily follow the DSNSW's organisational structure. In this strategic plan there is a strong focus on the outcomes of the work, rather than the ways it is carried out.

4.1. KRA 1: Provision of high quality, flexible and responsive services and programs

KRA1 brings together the service provision at the DSNSW. Services are separated into those that focus on the skills and support of deaf people (traditionally viewed as welfare oriented services) and services that increase deaf people's access to society (including interpreting and Auslan courses for hearing people).



Goal 1 Ensure that deaf and hard of hearing people have the skills and support to enjoy a high quality of life

Goal 2 Increase deaf and hard of hearing people's access to wider society

Goal 3 Increase awareness of the services and programs offered by the DSNSW

Goal 4 Ensure consistent, high quality services

4.2. KRA 2: Promotion of Deaf culture and development of the Deaf Community

KRA2 brings together the new investment in community development and advocacy projects at the DSNSW. Recognising and working with the diversity of the Deaf Community has been included in this plan to make this commitment clear.



Goal 5 Actively develop the strength and capacity of the Deaf Community

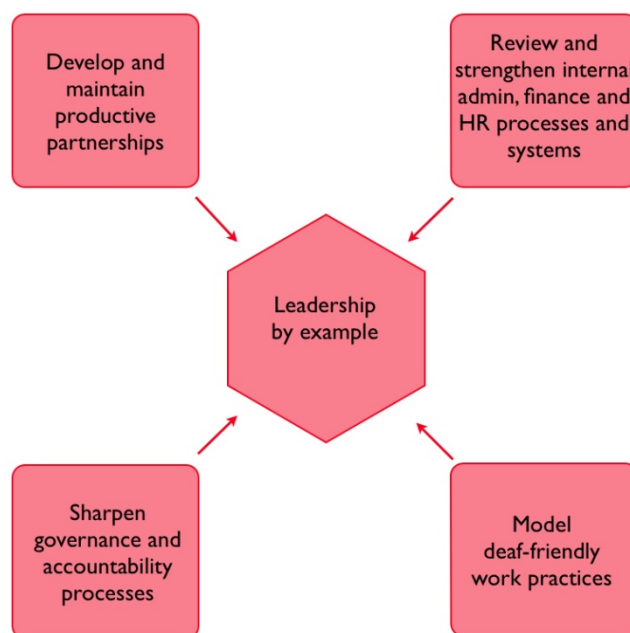
Goal 6 Advocate for the full and equal rights of deaf people

Goal 7 Positively engage with the diversity of the Deaf Community

Goal 8 Celebrate the strengths and resilience of the Deaf Community

4.3. KRA 3: Leadership by example

KRA3 brings together the changes that the DSNSW will make to its organisational structure and functioning. As the best-resourced Deaf organisation in NSW the DSNSW has an important role in promoting best practice in employment of and working with deaf people.



Goal 9 Develop and maintain productive partnerships

Goal 10 Review and strengthen internal administration, financial and HR processes and systems

Goal 11 Sharpen governance and accountability processes

Goal 12 Model deaf-friendly work practices

5. Monitoring the Strategic Plan

Staff will report quarterly to the Chief Executive Officer against the identified strategies, detailing which performance indicators have been met for the relevant period. This data will feed into Matrix's monitoring Dashboard and generate a one-page report to summarise for the Board the DSNSW's progress against each of the identified goals and across all Key Result Areas.

The Strategic Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis; additional strategies and detailed indicators will be developed one year at a time.