

Vicdeaf  
Annual Report  
2014–15

# Creating Connections.



*"This past year marked significant progress and milestones for Vicdeaf as we celebrated our 130 year anniversary, sold our Albert Street property in East Melbourne and strengthened our partnership with Deaf Children Australia"*



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# Strategic Direction 2010-2015

## Our vision

ACCESS AND EQUITY  
FOR DEAF AND HARD OF  
HEARING PEOPLE.

## Our Priorities

### Our Stakeholders

#### Objectives

- ▶ Our direction will be influenced through consultation
- ▶ We will make decisions in a responsive and transparent manner

#### Outcomes

- ▶ We engage with stakeholders to identify and address needs

### Our Services

#### Objectives

- ▶ We will develop and deliver quality services that respond to current and future needs
- ▶ We will actively increase our capacity to deliver services

#### Outcomes

- ▶ We will provide relevant, responsive and evolving services

### Our People

#### Objectives

- ▶ We will develop and maintain skilled staff who contribute directly to the success of the organisation
- ▶ We will develop and maintain a positive and professional culture of respect

#### Outcomes

- ▶ We will develop and support our most valuable resource, our staff

### Our Resources

#### Objectives

- ▶ We will ensure ongoing diligence for our management systems
- ▶ We will meet our legal obligations

#### Outcomes

- ▶ We will be sustainable and effectively manage and increase our resources as needed

### Our Communication

#### Objectives

- ▶ We will enable language choice for our stakeholders
- ▶ We will use emerging technology to enhance communication

#### Outcomes

- ▶ We will communicate effectively, recognising and respecting cultural and language diversity

## Values

### Integrity

We act fairly, honestly and openly

### Respect

We respect peoples' choices for communication and service delivery

### Excellence

We strive for excellence in everything we do

### Accountability

We accept responsibility for services that are effective, efficient and enabling

### Diversity

We respect diverse perspectives

# Board of Directors



## President

**Mr Robert (Mac) Adam** OAM

- ▶ Mac is an active member of the Deaf community and brings a wealth of skills and experience in areas of governance, property and strategy.
- ▶ In 2012, Mac was awarded an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for service to people who are Deaf or hard of hearing.
- ▶ Mac is also a member of the Planning and Performance Committee, Nominations and Remuneration Committee, Finance and Audit Committee, and Accommodation Taskforce.



## Treasurer

**Mr Garry Fowler** FCA, FAICD

- ▶ Garry is a company director and Chartered Accountant and was a partner and consultant with Ernst & Young until 2005. He brings financial, risk management and business expertise.
- ▶ Garry is the Treasurer of the Board and Chairperson of the Finance and Audit Committee, Investment Sub-Committee and Accommodation Taskforce. He is also a member of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee.



## Director

**Mr Peter Berg** B.Com, Adv. Dip (Financial Planning)

- ▶ Peter's background is in banking and financial services, with senior management roles both in Australia and the United Kingdom. Peter brings a wealth of expertise in treasury, capital and liability management, risk management, audit and financial planning.
- ▶ Peter is a member of the Finance and Audit Committee and Accommodation Taskforce and Chair of the Investments Sub-Committee.



## Director

**Ms Hilary Fisher** MAppComm (Marketing), BA (Politics/ Linguistics), Dip. Creative Arts

- ▶ Hilary has a background in marketing and manages a communications portfolio in a state government department. With experience in government relations and advocacy, Hilary has worked with deaf and interpreting industry communities as part of the Auslan Interpreting Industry Forum Victoria.
- ▶ Hilary is also a member of the Marketing and Development Taskforce.



## Director

**Dr Therese Pierce** Ph.D (Special Educ.Admin.), M.A. (Mental Health Counselling), G.D.S.E. (Deaf Education) Dip.Ed, BAppSc, GDip Deaf Studies (Language)

- ▶ Therese is the Liaison Principal of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and is an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Melbourne. Therese brings research, strategy, education and Deaf community experience to the Board.
- ▶ Therese is also a member of the Marketing and Development Taskforce and the Planning and Performance Committee.



### Director

**Dr Richard Kennedy** *MBBS (Melb.), FRACS*

- ▶ Richard is an Ear, Nose, Throat, Head and Neck Surgeon. Richard brings experience in health/disability, business management and the hard of hearing community.
- ▶ Richard is the Chairperson of the Planning and Performance Committee, and a member of the Accommodation Taskforce.



### Director

**Ms Wendy Miller** *LLB (Hons), B. Arts*

- ▶ Wendy has a professional background in law. She has worked extensively with not-for-profit organisations and, as a corporate lawyer, has provided governance related advice to a broad range of organisations. Wendy resigned in March 2015 and brought her experience in legal and regulatory issues, business, risk management and governance to support Vicdeaf.
- ▶ Wendy was a member of the Finance and Audit Committee.



### Director

**Mr Sam Patterson** *LLB/BSc*

- ▶ Sam has a background in law and public relations and brings valuable experience in marketing, stakeholder engagement, risk management and fundraising to the Board. Sam has worked extensively with not-for-profit organisations and is Community Relations Director at MacKillop Family Services.
- ▶ Sam is the chair of the Marketing and Development Taskforce.



### Director

**Ms Catherine Santo**

*BA (Psychology and Political Sociology), BSocWk, Socio-Analytic Fellowship*

- ▶ Catherine is a consultant to government, corporate and not-for-profit organisations. She spent the first decade of her career in the human services field in a non-government agency, and then within the Department of Human Services, developing a strong knowledge of the human services sector.
- ▶ Catherine is also a member of the Planning and Performance Committee and the Nominations and Remuneration Committee.



### Director

**Mr Praveen Reddy** *BEng (Chem), MBA, GAICD*

- ▶ Praveen has broad experience in the public and private sectors in the areas of governance, business case preparation, information technology, human resources, budgetary and financial literacy and public policy development. Praveen is Manager Client Relations for Periscope Corporation and has held senior executive roles in the National Transport Commission and VicRoads.
- ▶ Praveen is a member of the Finance and Audit Committee and was appointed in April 2015.



### Director

**Mr Peter Saunders** *LLB, Grad. Dip. Intellectual Property Law, MScTC*

- ▶ Peter has a background in law and corporate finance with broad experience in commercial and legal advice regarding governance, investment and commercial matters in large listed companies and not-for-profit organisations. Peter brings extensive experience in strategic transition and operational performance and is currently a lawyer with Thomson Geer Lawyers.
- ▶ Peter was appointed in April 2015.



# Senior Management Team

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## OUR VISION 2015-2020

Our clients and our community live in an **accessible, inclusive society** with **equal opportunity** in all areas of life.



**Christine Mathieson**

Chief Executive Officer



**Andrew Lyall**

Director  
Strategy and  
Service Design

- ▶ Strategic Planning
- ▶ Service Design and NDIS Readiness
- ▶ Group and Individual Supports
- ▶ Independent Living Skills
- ▶ Supported Accommodation



**John Donnon**

General Manager  
SensWide  
Employment

- ▶ Employment Support Services
- ▶ Disability Management Services



**Kate Fraser**

General Manager  
People and Culture

- ▶ People and Culture
- ▶ Workplace Health and Safety



**Matthew Grounds**

General Manager  
Hearservice

- ▶ Audiology
- ▶ Rehabilitation
- ▶ Assistive Listening Devices



**Gary Hunt**

General Manager  
Finance and  
Administration

- ▶ Finance
- ▶ Information Technology
- ▶ Administration



**Brent Phillips**

General Manager  
Community and  
Language Services

- ▶ Community Programs and Events
- ▶ Sign Language Video Productions
- ▶ Auslan Connections
- ▶ Sign Language Community Classes



**Gillian Victor**

General Manager  
Marketing and  
Development

- ▶ Marketing and Brand Management
- ▶ Fundraising
- ▶ Public Relations

# President's Report



This past year marked significant progress and milestones for Vicdeaf as we celebrated our 130 year anniversary in 2014, sold our Albert Street property in East Melbourne and consolidated our partnership with Deaf Children Australia (DCA).

Through the establishment of a steering committee comprising members of both the Vicdeaf and DCA Boards, we have positively progressed joint activities which includes but is not limited to the announcement of co-location and establishment of a Deaf Centre in Victoria. The specifics of this exciting joint venture are currently being worked through and will be determined more fully throughout 2015-16.

The joint steering Committee is led by an independent Chair, Ms Jane Fenton who, on behalf of the Vicdeaf Board, I would like to thank for her outstanding skills and expertise in guiding this process with both our Boards. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the Steering Committee - Garry Fowler and Hilary Fisher from Vicdeaf and Paul Richardson, Rebecca Ladd and Cathy Clark from DCA. Their wisdom, openness and collegiality have been instrumental in setting the direction for this vital partnership.

Clearly a major focus on the last twelve months has related to our property, both the selling of Albert Street and then turning our attention to our future. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding support and expertise provided by Ernst and Young, in particular Marcus Willison and Ben Desmond, for their astute advice and guidance throughout the sale process, and for their efforts above and beyond, through immeasurable pro bono support.

As well as the sustained focus on developing our relationship with DCA throughout the year, the Board paid considerable attention to the development of Vicdeaf's new Strategic Plan 2015-2020. The development of the new Plan and its implementation marks a significant phase of change over the next five years. Vicdeaf's new vision and mission set out our strategic intentions for our clients, community and partners.

The Plan has been developed in a time of change and challenge as we transition to the National Disability Insurance Scheme and position ourselves in an ever increasing competitive environment.

I would like to thank all the clients, community members, the Vicdeaf Community Reference Group, staff and management for their valuable input to our Strategic Plan. Additionally I would like to acknowledge the leadership of our CEO Christine Mathieson and Andrew Lyall, Director Strategy and Service Design, for their energy and vision in guiding the development of our new strategy.

Over the course of the year we welcomed Catherine Santo, Praveen Reddy and Peter Saunders to the Board and farewelled Wendy Miller to take time to travel overseas.

My sincere thanks are extended to all our committed Directors who have worked together to provide the leadership and governance that has helped shape our strategic achievements.

2014-15 presented many challenges but so too, many achievements we can be proud of and I look forward to your support and interest in Vicdeaf in 2015-16.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Mac Adam'.

**Mac Adam**  
**OAM**



# CEO's Report



## Our key area of focus

Against a backdrop of unprecedented change, uncertainty and service reform across Australia, this past year has still been a time of growth, and positive partnering to achieve pleasing results for Vicdeaf, our clients and the community. We have been harnessing our energy on significant planning to secure our future in a rapidly transforming not-for-profit sector.

Vicdeaf is well placed in many ways given that just under half our income is derived from government funding and the vast majority of the remainder is generated through our not-for-profit fee for service areas. As we transition into a more commercialised market place under the NDIS, we are already accustomed to competition and marketing ourselves for a share of the pie.

## Our new Strategic Plan

(See inside back cover.)

A key focus throughout the year was consultation and planning for Vicdeaf's new Strategic Plan 2015-2020. Consultations were held in metropolitan Melbourne and regional Victoria throughout 2014. I would like to thank the many members of the community including clients and family members who attended the sessions. The views and opinions of clients, staff, stakeholders and community members are greatly appreciated and are at the centre of our new strategic framework. Our new Strategic Plan outlines a vision for the future and the six strategic priorities that will guide our work and investment up until 2020.

## Our new Vision:

Our clients and our community live in an **accessible, inclusive society** with **equal opportunity** in all areas of life.

## Our Mission:

We are a progressive, iconic community organisation that:

- ▶ Builds pride in being Deaf
- ▶ Improves social, economic, cultural and civic participation
- ▶ Supports people to communicate and connect to the world, and
- ▶ Advocates and promotes the aspirations of those we service.

## 2014-15 also marked the final year of implementation of the Vicdeaf Strategic Plan 2010-2015.

Building on the many achievements under the strategic plan over its 5 year timeframe, this year was no exception with our continued focus on positive outcomes in employment, audiology, service coordination, life skills and language and communication services.

We recognise that the external environment is rapidly changing and that we need to adapt to continue our role as the primary provider of support and services to the deaf community and people who are hard of hearing. Our important partnership with Deaf Children Australia signified our desire to strengthen services, especially to young people as they transition to adulthood.

## 10 Our partnerships

Another key feature of the past year has been the growing number of valued partnerships which were either established or consolidated over the course of the year. Most significantly is our strengthened relationship with Deaf Children Australia and the announcement of co-location and creation of a Deaf Centre, as well as our involvement with Melbourne Polytechnic and Latrobe University through the Victorian Auslan Training Consortium. We also created an exciting joint venture with Deaf Services Queensland to establish Auslan Connections. We recognise that to achieve better outcomes for our clients and community we need to strategically partner to increase our impact and connect with individuals, our community, organisations and government. We deeply appreciate our partners and the benefits we gain from our relationships with them.

## Thank You

And finally, organisations like ours cannot achieve the outcomes we do for our clients and community without a dedicated and skilled workforce. I would like to thank all our staff at the individual and team level for their commitment and focus on working towards achieving our vision. Enormous thanks are also extended to the small but engaged donor and supporter base we have, our philanthropic partners, volunteers and broader valued stakeholders. My personal thanks are also extended to our President and Board of Directors for their strategic guidance, support and advice throughout the year and finally to Vicdeaf's Senior Management Team for their energy, talent and leadership in a very challenging external environment.

In summary, we achieved many significant outcomes during 2014-15 with much to be proud of against a backdrop of change and uncertainty. I look forward to working together to address these challenges as well as the exciting opportunities around our new premises, co-location and creation of a Deaf Centre.



**Christine Mathieson**  
Chief Executive Officer

*"Our Strategic Plan outlines a new vision for the future and the six strategic priorities that will guide our work and investment through to 2020"*  
(See inside back cover.)

# Our Stakeholders

## VICDEAF WORKS WITH A VARIETY OF GROUPS AND PARTNERS TO PROVIDE RESPONSIVE SERVICES TO OUR CLIENTS.


We would like to thank our industry partners, financial contributors, government funders and most of all our community and clients for their support and input over the past year. Vicdeaf is privileged to work with our industry and affiliated partners, which enable us to deliver better outcomes for our clients and communities.

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In October 2014, Vicdeaf celebrated its 130 year anniversary at Deakin Edge, Federation Square. The celebration was attended by 150 people including key government and other notable representatives, including the **Honourable Andrea Coote**, former Parliamentary Secretary for Families and Community Services; supporters; community partners; Deaf community members and Vicdeaf clients. A panel of community representatives presented their thoughts on a range of topics. Key messages included the increasing need to collaborate, innovate and decentralise services to better meet clients' needs; the need to expand our supports across the life of a deaf person; increase awareness in the broader community; and also to embrace technology and its potential. Another key discussion was around the need for a Deaf Centre for the community, something we aim to realise in the medium term.



Vicdeaf celebrates 130 years of service.

- Consulting with the community about our services and the future is a priority for Vicdeaf. A number of community forums were held to gain a greater understanding of the issues facing our clients. The forums were held in Geelong, Ballarat, Morwell, Shepparton and Melbourne. This valuable feedback has shaped the Vicdeaf Strategic Plan for 2015-2020. In addition Vicdeaf started a new Vicdeaf Community Reference Group comprising deaf and hard of hearing individuals. The group contributes a wealth of knowledge and experience and has proven invaluable to Vicdeaf's planning.
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We recognize the continued support of our most significant funder, the **State Government of Victoria**.
- In particular, the **Department of Health and Human Services** which funds many of our programs including case management, independent living skills training (ILS), the Video Remote Interpreting service (VRI), our supported accommodation and our many information programs. The Federal **Department of Social Services** funds our employment service, Senswide Employment. In addition the support of a number of philanthropic organisations and funders enable existing and new programs to flourish.
- Vicdeaf acknowledges that our funding comes from a range of sources that includes our fee for services programs such as Auslan Connections, community Auslan classes and other services such as those offered by **Hearservice**. Our work however is vast and as a not-for-profit charity we are indebted to the many grants and financial donations presented by our supporters.



Graduates of the Auslan for Deaf Migrants program.



City of Melbourne Councillor Mr Ken Ong, Chair of the Disability Advisory Committee, congratulates graduates.



Graduates of the Auslan for Deaf Migrants program celebrate.

- ▶ In this past year Vicdeaf developed and launched its regular donor program, *Friends of Vicdeaf*. This allows supporters to provide a regular gift allowing us to plan our work accordingly. This is a valuable program which we aim to grow as more people share our vision and commitment.
- ▶ Vicdeaf has a strong commitment to newly arrived refugees, migrants and asylum seekers who are deaf and are often ineligible for a range of government services. Our *Auslan for Deaf Migrants* program continues to welcome clients from diverse backgrounds, with students from over twenty countries being involved since its inception. Vicdeaf is grateful for the support of the **BB and A Miller Fund**, a Sub-fund of the Australian Communities Foundation which has shown a generous commitment to the program. Our partnership with the **City of Melbourne** ensured funding for a wonderful celebration of International Day of People with Disability [IDPWD], incorporating the *Auslan for Deaf Migrants* graduation ceremony. City of Melbourne Councillor Ken Ong, Chair of the Disability Advisory Committee, awarded certificates to our many participants.

- ▶  With a further grant from the **Mary MacKillop Foundation**, **Hearservice** was able to provide audiological support to deaf people from other countries ineligible for government services. Senswide Employment was able to provide job seeker assistance to 12 individuals in the same situation.

- ▶  Provided in conjunction with **Mission Australia**, the 'Changing Gears' Learner driver program, builds independence for our deaf participants by providing pathways for people who are deaf to secure a Learners permit through VicRoads.



- Vicdeaf collaborated with Museums Australia (Victoria) to produce two important videos – *Deafhood* and *In a Hearing World*. The videos highlight the experience of deaf people in our community and the importance of their language, the uniqueness of the Deaf Community and the strength and place of Deaf Culture.
- Vicdeaf is committed to ensuring that deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing people are prepared for emergencies and are able to access information in Auslan. Thanks to funding from **Regional Development Victoria**, online video resources have been developed in Auslan. These resources are also in English and downloadable. They were prepared in consultation with Emergency Management Victoria, the Country Fire Authority and State Emergency Services.



Over the past three years the **RE Ross Trust** has generously supported Vicdeaf's public awareness program about hearing health, called *Don't Lose the Music*. The program aims to prevent hearing loss and promote healthy listening behaviours among young people who are particularly at risk because of using in-ear devices at unsafe levels. The program works across Victoria at university and TAFE campuses as well as public events, festivals and expos. For her outstanding work delivering *Don't Lose the Music*, Kathleen Webster, was nominated for the **Community Contribution Award** by SLAM (Student Life and Media) at Melbourne Polytechnic.



Museums Victoria's film *Deafhood* tells the story of Deaf Culture.



Vicdeaf leads the way in creating Deaf accessible information on community emergency preparedness.



As part of the Don't Lose the Music program, Hearservice uses "Max" - an interactive tool to measure personal listening behaviours.





Vicdeaf CEO, Christine Mathieson, recognising the importance of the National Disability Awards.



Vicdeaf Heroes show their support at the Run Melbourne 2015 event.

#### ▶ THE Business AGE RUN MELBOURNE

As part of Vicdeaf's commitment to strengthen our connection with the wider community, Vicdeaf joined with **Run Melbourne** as a charity partner. Fifteen supporters ran for Vicdeaf including board members, clients, staff members and members of the public. Thanks to the fantastic effort made by our supporters, considerable funds were raised to support many of the unfunded services Vicdeaf offers. It was a great opportunity to connect with the wider community and share information about the work we do and the services we offer.

- ▶ Scott Prosser of **HBF Finance** has supported Vicdeaf continuously through his business and by completing the Lorne Adventure Race with Vicdeaf as his nominated fundraising beneficiary. Scott's participation and support has provided an opportunity for Vicdeaf to engage with the wider community.

- ▶ Philip Webb of **Philip Webb Real Estate** completed the Camino Trail with Vicdeaf as his nominated charity. Through Philip's inspirational efforts, walking over 900 kilometers across France and Spain, Philip and his supporters raised both awareness about Vicdeaf's work, and a total of \$26,000.



- ▶ Over the past two years Vicdeaf & **Emergency Management Victoria (EMV)** have developed a strong partnership. Both organisations are committed to ensuring that information is accessible for deaf and hard of hearing Victorians in times of emergency. In November 2014 Vicdeaf was announced as a winner at the National Disability Awards, and we have continued to partner with EMV and other organisations including Victoria Police towards the provision of accessible information.

- ▶ SensWide Employment has a partnership arrangement with **CROWN Resorts** to deliver a range of placement opportunities for job seekers. To date twenty unemployed people have started a career at CROWN as part of this partnership across a diverse range of positions including in security, administration, laundry, environmental services and housekeeping. This is just one example of many partnerships SensWide fosters with employers and industry groups.



SensWide Employment Team at the Vicdeaf Gaslight Festival.

• SensWide assisted  
**230**  
new job seekers

Auslan Connections increased its service levels by  
**31%**

# Our Services

## VICDEAF IS COMMITTED TO QUALITY SERVICES FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE.

Central to our mandate is the belief that deaf and hard of hearing people should have every opportunity to participate in and contribute to society. Client Services has continued to offer Case Management and Independent Living Skills Training (ILS). This service provides tailored support for individuals to manage a particular issue or assist with more long term ongoing skill development. Our counseling service continues to provide valuable opportunities to manage and improve the mental health status of clients. **Hearservice** provides critical rehabilitation and audiological services. These services are pivotal for our clients as they adapt to a new hearing loss or manage their lives with the aid of new devices such as baby cry alarms. **Hearservice** is now available at over seven different sites, and shares some of these sites with our employment service, **SensWide**.

Embedded in all of our services is the provision of information. This includes formal information presentations such as Deaf Awareness Training sessions or the information we provide to other

professionals such as the Behavior Change in Audiology conference organised by **Hearservice**.

In addition, Vicdeaf is a starting point for anyone wanting to know more about deafness or services, with our website and social media presence growing steadily. Every year we create more resources in Auslan. These Auslan resources included the production of a series of videos for deaf parents as well as information on the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Family and friends of deaf and hard of hearing people can access valuable information from our website or gain Auslan skills at our community classes.

Demand for interpreting services continues to grow alongside the need for captioning, deaf interpreting and notetaking services. Auslan Connections is committed to supporting the interpreting profession by working closely with industry and providing professional development opportunities for its practitioners.

Also expanding is **SensWide** Employment, providing expert support for job seekers. In addition, **SensWide** provides valuable information for employers, supports existing employees to improve their working experience and offers critical employment support for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex identified people with a disability or mental health condition with the *WorkingOut* program.

Some notable achievements in the 2014-15 year are highlighted here.

- ▶ As a statewide provider of National Disability Insurance Scheme services we are participating in the trial site in the Barwon region. In our second year of servicing this area under the new funding model, the number of people we are now supporting with case management, independent living skills and audiological services has grown by 25%. To assist our clients with the transition to the NDIS, Vicdeaf has introduced a new Service Advisor role in the Barwon region. The purpose of this new role is to guide clients through the NDIS planning process, linking them into appropriate supports, to ensure they are receiving the best support possible.

**606**

students  
completed Auslan  
Community  
classes

**1,357**

people attended  
Deaf Awareness  
Training  
workshops

**9,450+**

hours of case  
management  
were provided  
to clients



The full NDIS program is due to commence across Australia in 2019 and Vicdeaf is busy preparing to provide services to all Victorians.



In May 2014, our language services department, formerly known as Sign Language Communications Victoria (SLC VIC), became *Auslan Connections*. The Launch was a great success and was attended by many, including **Mr Shaun Leane MLC, Parliamentary Secretary to the Special Minister of State and Parliamentary Secretary for Transport**. Auslan Connections is a joint venture between Vicdeaf and Deaf Services Queensland (DSQ). Auslan Connections is the largest not-for-profit interpreting agency in Australia, and all Victorian profits are re-directed back to Vicdeaf to support our work.

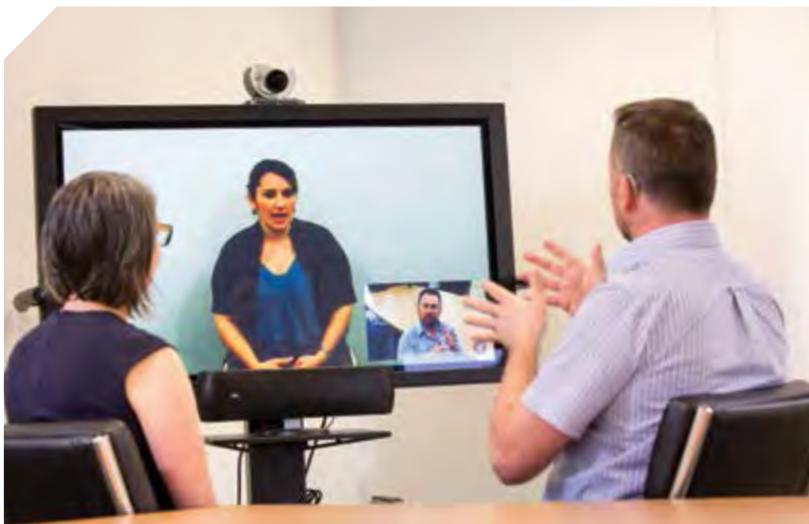
- ▶ Funding from the Pierce Armstrong Foundation in 2014 enabled us to trial a new emergency afterhours interpreting service. At the completion of the trial, the service was deemed critical for the community and is now a service Vicdeaf continues to fund.
- ▶ In November 2014 The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) funded Auslan Connections to provide **Video Remote Interpreting (VRI)** Australia wide, with a particular benefit for people living in rural and remote areas. VRI is free for services able to access the DHHS credit line. For other clients we have introduced a new flexible fee rate that reflects the short and critical nature of services provided through VRI.
- ▶ Community Sign Language Classes are a valuable way of connecting the wider community to the Deaf community. This year we upgraded our sign language materials and offered an intensive course over the summer break. This year also saw the development and inclusion of Sign Language Class advertisements on the big screen at Federation Square, which is great exposure for the work we do and Auslan as a language.



Auslan Connections was launched by Mr Shaun Leane MLC.



Auslan Connections launch, attended by Brent Phillips General Manager Community and Language Services, Christine Mathieson Vicdeaf CEO, Mac Adam Vicdeaf President, Therese Pierce Vicdeaf Board member and Mr Shaun Leane MLC.



Vicdeaf launches its Video Remote Interpreting service.



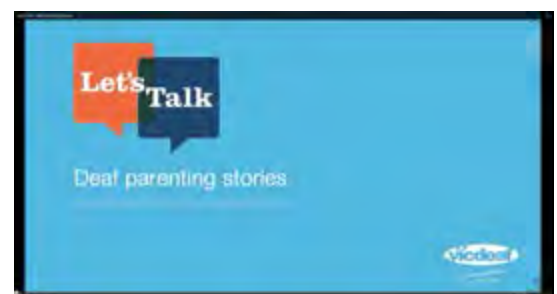
Live streamed across Victoria, *Transitions Workshops* provided Deaf youth with information as they assessed their work and further education options.

► **NEWSBOYS FOUNDATION** Vicdeaf identified our young people need useful, timely and quality information about their options as school leavers. **The Newsboys Foundation** generously funded our Transitions program providing valuable workshops to students as they move into further education or into the workplace. Tailored to the needs of the students, workshops focused on work options, further education, living independently, undertaking a gap year, advocacy and working with interpreters. The workshops were provided in conjunction with a number of organisations including SensWide Employment, Deaf Children Australia, Deaf Victoria, the Victorian Deaf Education Institute and deafConnectED. Live streaming and recordings of the workshops enabled school leavers in rural and remote areas to access the Transitions program.

*"I enjoyed it because it helps me with my confidence. And if something happens to me, I know what to do, like be assertive and fight for my rights".*

Jack, Transitions workshop

► With thanks to funding from the **Flora & Frank Leith Charitable Trust**, Vicdeaf produced *Let's Talk Deaf Parenting: A video series* about parenting from a Deaf perspective. With the aim to empower Deaf and hard of hearing parents in child-rearing, themes across the series included communication in the home; using interpreters in pregnancy and during the birth; devices and strategies in the home; benefits of bilingualism and considerations for child care and education.



# 4,507

hours were dedicated to providing Independent Living Skills to clients

- SensWide Employment supported 230 new job seekers in the last financial year, alongside those already receiving our support, to look for a job or keep their work. More than ever SensWide works to connect job seekers with information and other services, with Vicdeaf able to provide devices and aids, interpreting and case management services. This is part of the holistic approach Vicdeaf is able to take with the breadth of services we offer.

*I would like to thank SensWide for their on-going support in my current role. I have recently in the past changed team leaders and also have had the opportunity through SensWide for my consultant who visits me and another staff member on a weekly basis. Without the support of (my consultant) these changes would of become huge but going through the change slowly has made the changes at work more achievable. I look forward to working with SensWide in the future and can say that SensWide has made me feel part of the team and it is ok if things have to be modified and there is nothing wrong with this. I look forward to working with SensWide and my employer to be able to increase the awareness of Deafness Awareness throughout my workplace.*

David, 2014

- Hearservice offers valuable audiological and rehabilitative services. Much needed information, devices and aids were supplied across seven sites in Melbourne as well as home visits. In addition, their expertise in noise prevention at live music venues is shared with the **HEARing Cooperative Research Centre (CRC)** at the University of Melbourne.
- Vicdeaf has a long tradition of providing grieving families with the opportunity to fully engage in their loved ones funeral service by providing an Auslan interpreter. This is a service Vicdeaf funds as a service to the community. Vicdeaf gratefully acknowledges the contribution of the **Tobin Brothers Foundation** who provided funding toward this program.

## Lin's Story

Lin\* first came to Vicdeaf as an 18 year old refugee. She had limited Auslan skills and relied heavily on her family for communication and assistance day to day. At that time as a young adult, Lin needed help taking financial control of her life. Vicdeaf has worked with Lin for the last 5 years. Services over that time include assisting her with Centrelink applications; banking management and living independently. Her language skills were developed by attending the 'Auslan for Migrants' classes. As a young adult, she had to learn to navigate public transport; understand her rights in our community and apply for

Australian citizenship. Lin was connected to other organisations that could help support her, and learnt to be her own advocate. Being exposed to professional deaf workers also gave Lin a real life opportunity to see deaf people successfully working and participating equally in our society. Lin was able to utilise interpreters through Auslan Connections and was also supported by Hearservice to install a visual smoke alarm. This year Lin is a TAFE student, working toward her goal of achieving a qualification and gaining employment. Vicdeaf provided the supports to allow



Lin the chance to fulfill her potential and become a contributing member of our community.

\*not her real name.



# Our People

**VICDEAF CONTINUES TO PROVIDE FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE SERVICES, LARGELY THANKS TO OUR COMMITTED WORKFORCE.**

Vicdeaf is committed to the continued education and development of our team. We recognise and thank all our staff for their dedication and commitment.



In the past year, our Client Services Manager Meryle Trentini retired. Meryle worked with Vicdeaf for 11 years with dedication and commitment to the community

and her team. We thank Meryle for her contribution and wish her well for the future.



This year Bill Hynes, a valued Vicdeaf staff member retired from his position as support worker for the Vision Hearing Support Club (VHSC).

VHSC is a partner program with Able Australia. Bill has worked tirelessly in the past twenty years to support deafblind people be active socially through the club.

Vicdeaf is dedicated to increasing staff skills. Many of our staff and teams attend specific training and conferences. Some of the learning experiences include attendance at conferences such as the Disability Employment Agency and National Disability Services conferences and the World Congress of Audiology conference. General



Vicdeaf's Senior Management Team.

staff development has included training around Mental Health First Aid; Tinnitus; servicing blind and low vision job seekers; human rights; the National Standards for Disability Services; career counselling; leadership training and government compliance.

The Senior Management Team participated in a leadership and change program which included coaching and a 360 degree feedback process.

▶ The Auslan Interpreting Industry Forum of Victoria (AIIFV) worked with ASLIA Victoria, Auslan Connections and the Central Auslan Booking Service (CABS) to provide mentor training for interpreters. This was a fantastic opportunity for our staff interpreting team who participate in the mentoring process. Mentoring is also an integral part of our internship program which continues to have great impact. This program offers two paraprofessional interpreters support and mentoring to

achieve their professional level accreditation and has been a great success.

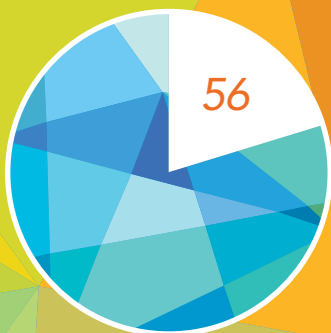
2014 saw the second group of interns undertake the program and successfully complete the NAATI Professional level exam. In its two short years the program has increased the number of Professional level interpreters.

▶ Vicdeaf is improving communication across departments to allow clients to access multiple Vicdeaf services with ease. The cross-departmental pathways structure integrates the work we do, connecting our clients with other services available. Significant work looking at what skills the organisation requires now and in the future has commenced.

## Our 2014 Staff Satisfaction survey again resulted in a very high satisfaction rating of 88%.

Vicdeaf has 274 employees

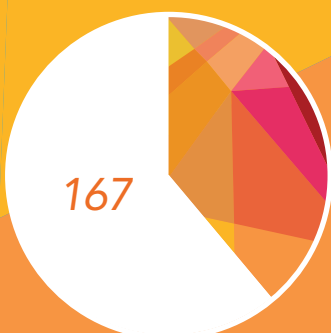
### Full-time employees



### Part-time employees



### Casual employees



Our staff.



Vicdeaf staff promoting our services.

A new Workforce Capability Framework will identify opportunities to address knowledge and skills to prepare for the future. Vicdeaf has also purchased a recruiter licence for LinkedIn to enable more strategic recruitment of new staff and to build and engage with professional networks.

- ▶ The Geoff Fethers Education Fund was established in 1985 to assist in the tertiary education of deaf people, thanks to a generous gift from Geoff Fethers. The fund has been used to provide educational opportunities at Post-Secondary level for people

who are Deaf. Accordingly, Vicdeaf has committed to using the balance of the funds to update the Training and Assessment qualifications of Deaf Auslan teachers.

*"As an intern, you are immediately part of the Vicdeaf team, and treated as such."*

**Josh, Auslan Interpreting Intern 2014-15**

# Our Resources

**TECHNOLOGY IS A GROWING RESOURCE FOR THE DELIVERY OF VICDEAF SERVICES IN INNOVATIVE WAYS. IT IMPACTS HOW WE COMMUNICATE AND CONNECT WITH THE COMMUNITY.**

- ▶ Live streaming uses video equipment and software to broadcast an event to individuals in their homes who 'join' on their own device. Since it was purchased in October 2014 Vicdeaf has streamed a number of events. Auslan Connections has delivered three successful professional development sessions allowing all of the 140 casual and part-time interpreting team an opportunity to participate, greatly improving access to professional development for our staff in rural and remote areas. It was also used as part of our consultation with the community for the development of our Strategic Plan; for Deaf Victoria's Mental Health Workshop; and our Transitions Program for young deaf school leavers.



*Transitions Workshop using Livestream technology to enable remote access.*

- ▶ The Vicdeaf Video Remote Interpreting service is now accessible on a computer, laptop, tablet or traditional video conferencing equipment. Since the new service commenced in November 2014 more and more deaf people in rural and remote areas are able to access an interpreter.
- ▶ As part of Fire Action Week, Emergency Services Commissioner Craig Lapsley and Chief Strategy Officer Rachel McKay launched the OpenAccess Alerts app at the Press Club Bendigo Lunch in Bendigo. Victoria is the first state to use the OpenAccess Alerts app. This technology allows people who are deaf and hard of hearing to receive emergency alerts.



- ▶ **Hearservice** is using new technology in a number of ways. SMS appointment reminders are now sent for all appointments, resulting in less missed appointments. An updated Hearing Loss Simulation program is being used at Hearing Awareness Training, as well as information about smart device apps being provided to clients who come for tinnitus appointments.
- ▶ Thanks to a grant from the Public Records Office of Victoria, Vicdeaf is digitising historical Vicdeaf and community documents and making them available online to the public. These documents include the 1903-1940 Vicdeaf annual reports, balance reports, The Deaf Citizen and The Gesture newsletters, as well as early video releases and will be launched at the next Annual General Meeting.

*" Thanks so much for all your work in the lead up to today's workshop! It went so well for us and we could see the presenter (signing) clearly as well as the PowerPoint and the captions. I am in complete awe of how you made it happen! What an awesome find in Livestream!..."*

**Susan, Transitions Workshop**



# Our Communication

## A SIGNIFICANT PART OF VICDEAF'S WORK IS COMMUNICATING WITH OUR CLIENTS AS WELL AS THE WIDER COMMUNITY.

Vicdeaf has been active in the past year creating opportunities to connect with the community and provide information about what we do, as well as seeking feedback and information about what our clients and community want.

- ▶ The **Vicdeaf Gaslight Festival** was attended by 400 community members in celebration of Deaf culture and language. Held in the City of Wodonga, the Festival activities included sports programs, theatre by Arts Access Victoria and the Australian Theatre of the Deaf, cooking classes, healthy mind activities and a visit from the current Young Australian of the Year recipient, Drisana Levitzke-Gray.
- ▶ **Hearservice** was involved in the Avalon Airshow as well as Blokes Day Out and the Maroondah Festival. The SensWide team attended and participated in many events including the annual Pride March, the Midsumma Carnival (over 100,000 people in attendance), various job expos across Melbourne and the Yarra Youth Forum. SensWide Employment held a forum panel session to over fifty sexually diverse job seekers, along with partners Zoe Belle Gender Collective, TransGender Victoria and cohealth.



Young Australian of the Year Drisana Levitske-Grey (middle) with Vicdeaf CEO Christine Mathieson and Vicdeaf President Mac Adam.



Celebrating Deaf culture and Auslan at the Vicdeaf Gaslight Festival.

- ▶ Extensive community consultations took place in the past year as part of the development of the new Strategic Plan for 2015 – 2020. Consultations utilised live streaming and live captioning to enable us to reach many people throughout Victoria and other states.
- ▶ **Hearservice** introduced the use of a Decision Aid, an innovative tool to help ambivalent or undecided clients make a decision on the form of rehabilitation they wish to proceed with. This process assists our clients to take more control of their treatment.

- Vicdeaf provided information and awareness by participating in the Public Transport Access Committee. This committee provides feedback on public transport accessibility issues.
- Our online presence continues to grow with the addition of an Instagram account, and increasing traffic to our website and Facebook accounts. SensWide Employment designed a new online interface for the bimonthly newsletter that engages not only our clients, but informs employers and community stakeholders of our achievements and plans for the future.
- SensWide Employment rebranded the deaf and WorkingOUT programs with new marketing materials that were used at events this year. The annual SensWide Employment Participant Survey attracted a record number of responses (99) with results being the best in 6 years. 76% of the respondents were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with SensWide Employment.
- SensWide Employment is committed to being a bi-lingual workplace, utilising interpreting services in-house, as well as technological solutions such as wireless microphones.
- Hearservice continued its highest rating 5 stars for the third year in a row from the Eartrak customer rating system. Eartrak is an independent measurement system that tracks outcomes for people seeking hearing support.



The WorkingOUT team at Senswide Employment celebrate the 20th annual Pride March with Vicdeaf CEO Christine Mathieson (far right).



Technology, like this wireless microphone, is used for better communications.

Facebook Likes: from **1,845** to **2,763**

Twitter Followers: from **2,312** to **2,744**

YouTube Vicdeaf's YouTube channel: **42,767** views

SensWide Website: **74,431** page views

SensWide Facebook Followers: **307**

WorkingOUT Facebook page: **517** followers

Vicdeaf website •  
**79,274**  
 users in 2014-15



# Our Supporters

WE WOULD LIKE TO PAY A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO VICDEAF'S WONDERFUL SUPPORTERS WHO SHARE OUR VISION FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE TO LIVE IN AN ACCESSIBLE, INCLUSIVE SOCIETY WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IN ALL AREAS OF LIFE.

All support, in whatever form, ensures that we can continue our important work and is gratefully received. We are especially grateful to our first Vicdeaf Heroes who competed in The Age Run Melbourne 2015, and to all our key supporters who have played an important role in funding much needed programs through grants, regular giving, in-kind support and bequests.

A special thanks to the following:

## Bequests

Estate of Dudley Barton Adams  
Estate of Mary Mildred Stewart  
Estate of Phyllis Jessie Morris  
Joe O'Connor

## Corporate Support

Asian Beer Cafe  
Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (Victoria)  
BioRevive Pty Ltd  
Ozito Industries Pty Ltd  
Word of Mouth Technology

## Friends of Vicdeaf

Ms Judith Dynan  
Ms Hilary Fisher  
Mrs Louise Gahleitner  
Miss Emma Hunt  
Mr Ross Ivey  
Mr & Mrs Shields  
Mrs Cherie Werner-Jones

## In-Kind Services & Donations

Doran Printing  
Ernst and Young  
Mailing Matters  
Philip Webb Real Estate

## Sponsors

Bradley Reporting  
Conexu Foundation  
Deaf Children Australia  
Greater Shepparton City Council  
National Relay Service  
Police and Nurses Limited

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Mr C.H. (Roger) Brookes  
Mr & Mrs Adler  
Mr John Balmford  
Mr & Mrs Len & Marilyn Bradford  
Mrs Jessica Carvell  
Ms Dora Chan  
Mrs Esther Cramer  
Miss D M Croot  
Mr Geoffrey Davey  
Mr Zyga Elton  
Mrs Nicky Keurtjies  
Mrs Alison Leslie  
Mr Randal Leung  
Mr J W Lynton  
Mr Ronald McKinnon  
Methodist Ladies College  
Mr R J Osborne  
Mrs Doreen Rodwell  
Mr John Shalit  
Mr E Zerbe

## Trust & Foundations

ANZ Staff Foundation  
B B & A Miller Fund, a sub fund of Australian Communities Foundation  
CMV Staff Charitable Foundation  
Deafness Foundation  
Ernest & Letitia Wears Memorial Trust  
Estate of Late Charles K Edwards  
Estate of Leslie Francis Gill

Francis Thomas & Jeanette Warren Trust  
Frank and Sybil Richardson Charitable Fund  
Frederick Shepherd Trust  
Grace Horton Charitable Trust  
Howard and Georgina Berry Benevolent Fund, managed by Equity Trustees  
Joe White Bequest  
Marrich Charitable Foundation  
N J Horton Charitable Fund  
R E Ross Trust  
The Barbara Luree Parker Foundation  
The Mary MacKillop Foundation  
The Ruth Fagg Foundation, managed by Equity Trustees  
Tobin Brothers Funerals  
Wodonga City Council

## Vicdeaf Heroes

Mrs Bridget Andritsos  
Mr Peter Berg  
Mrs Wendy Devlin  
Ms Hilary Fisher  
Mr Chris Hansford  
Miss Sophie Li  
Mrs Sarah Linssen  
Ms Jacqueline Mellington  
Ms Elizabeth Naysmith  
Mr Michael Parremore  
Mr Paul Pritchard  
Mr Scott Prosser (HBF Finance)  
Ms Stephanie van Rossum  
Miss Alana Young  
Mr Demetrio Zema



Vicdeaf acknowledges the support of the State Government of Victoria.

# Treasurer's Report

For the year ended 30 June 2015

The year to June 2015 has been a good year for Vicdeaf as it moves into its new strategic plan for 2015-2020. Vicdeaf finished the year with a surplus of \$870,345 before taking into account the profit on sale of the property. This resulted in an overall surplus of \$8,405,882.

The property at 340 Albert Street, East Melbourne was sold and settled on 1st September 2014 at a sale price of \$14,875,000 and a profit on sale of the property of \$7,535,537.

The surplus before profit on sale of the property of \$870,345 includes an excellent return from our investment portfolio which offset what would have been a deficit result for the year, slightly below our budgeted deficit of \$49,000.

We note some very pleasing results, highlighted by:

- ▶ Our language access service, Auslan Connections, which has increased its service levels by 31%.
- ▶ The investment portfolio has performed well over the year, exceeding our market related benchmarks in a challenging market. The proceeds from the sale of the property were invested in the portfolio from September 2015 and our investment advisors confirm the portfolio had a total return of 7.51%, following on from a return of 13.46% in the previous year.
- ▶ Our other businesses including Hearservice, Senswide Employment, Client Services, Information and our Auslan classes continue to work hard to produce excellent community outcomes.
- ▶ We continue to perform well with grant income which is able to be directed to additional projects that we would not otherwise be able to fund.

These outcomes assisted Vicdeaf to continue its current community support whilst maintaining staffing levels, activities and sponsorships.

As we turn to 2015-16, the Society faces funding challenges as it transitions to full roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Significant planning and financial modeling is underway to prepare for the scheme.

I would like to acknowledge members of the Finance and Audit Committee for their support over the year. These include the Chairman of the Board Mac Adam and fellow directors Peter Berg, Wendy Miller and Praveen Reddy who commenced on the committee in April 2015. I note that Wendy Miller resigned from the Board in April 2015. Her contribution has been highly valued by the committee.

I would also like to thank Christine Mathieson and Gary Hunt for the high standard of the governance, accounting records and the reports we receive, which makes our task so much easier.

**Garry Fowler**  
Treasurer

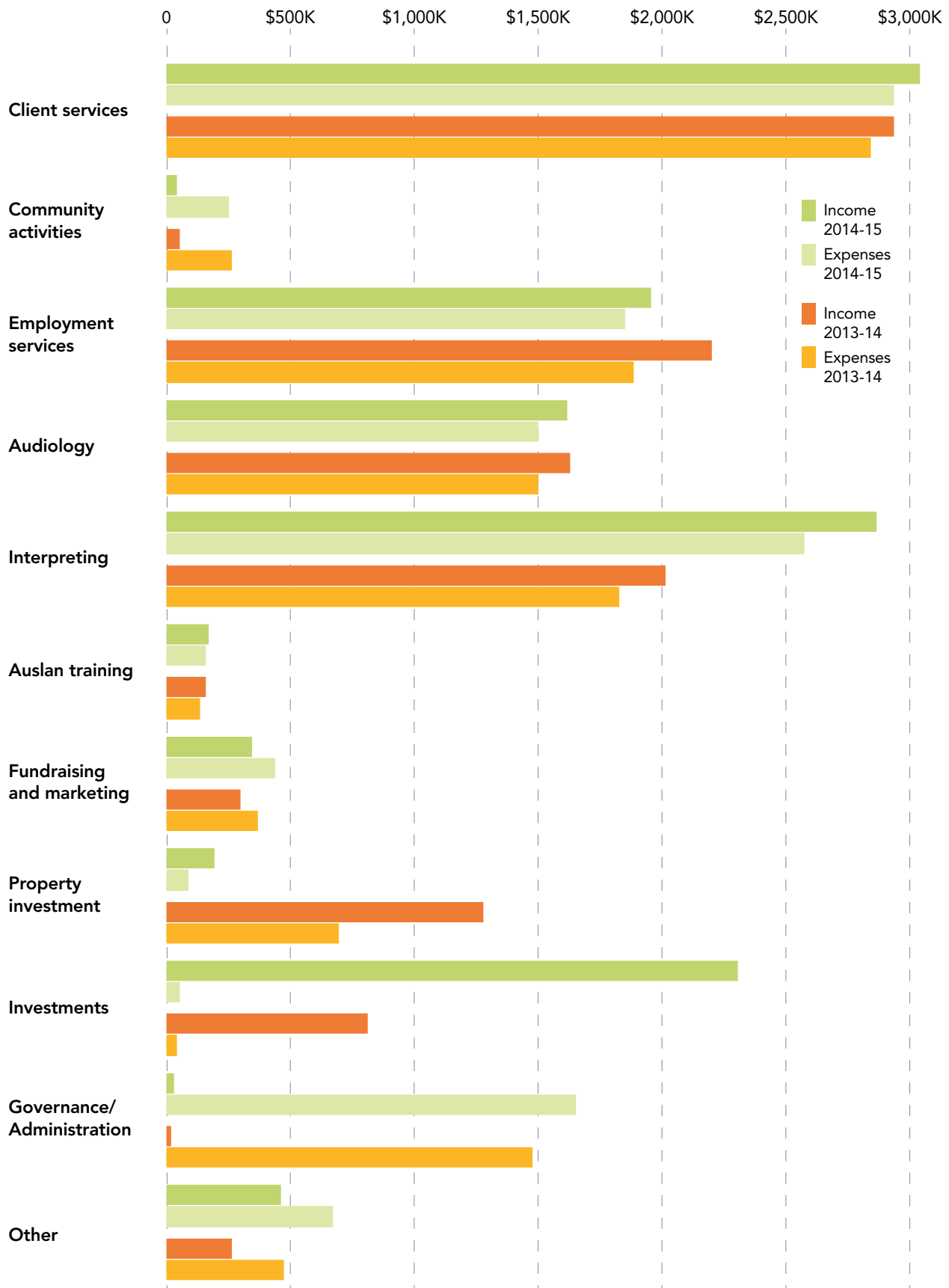
A good year  
for Vicdeaf

## 26 Abridged Extract from the Financial Statements

This information has been extracted from the Financial Statements of the Victorian Deaf Society for the year ended June 2015. A copy of the full audited Financial Statements and Audit Report for 2015 can be provided upon request.

<b>Abridged Financial Performance for the year ended 30 June 2015</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
	<b>\$</b>	<b>\$</b>
<b>Revenue:</b>		
Government grants	5,564,621	5,442,679
Accommodation fees	52,110	50,433
Income from sale of goods and services	4,228,630	3,383,688
Property and investment income	1,861,339	584,753
Donations, bequests and fundraising	260,362	331,531
Other income	16,366	12,391
Profits/(loss) from sale of assets	(8,697)	4,764
Profits from sale of assets and investments	496,042	278,231
<b>Total income from continuing activities</b>	<b>12,470,773</b>	<b>10,088,470</b>
<b>Expense:</b>		
Community support	(2,325,746)	(1,921,824)
Information	(415,766)	(357,530)
Interpreting	(2,623,083)	(1,755,031)
Auslan training	(158,839)	(130,413)
Employment services	(1,836,785)	(1,877,402)
Audiology & rehabilitation	(1,813,461)	(1,716,094)
Fundraising & marketing	(270,688)	(252,273)
Central administration	(1,603,159)	(1,304,486)
Special projects	(53,792)	(137,152)
Provision for special projects	(447,751)	(276,902)
Investments	(51,358)	(45,723)
<b>Total expenses from continuing activities</b>	<b>(11,600,428)</b>	<b>(9,774,830)</b>
<b>Profit from continuing operations</b>	<b>870,345</b>	<b>313,640</b>
<b>Profit/(loss) from assets available for sale</b>	<b>7,535,537</b>	<b>(177,282)</b>
<b>Profit for the year</b>	<b>8,405,882</b>	<b>136,358</b>
<b>Other comprehensive Income</b>		
Movement from restatement to fair value of investments	(711,915)	362,419
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	<b>7,693,967</b>	<b>498,777</b>

## Results by Department - 2014-15



# Contact Us



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### GEELONG

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 Newtown VIC 3220

### GREENSBOROUGH

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 Greensborough VIC 3088

### LILYDALE

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### OAKLEIGH

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### PRESTON

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### SUNSHINE

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## VISION

Our clients and our community live in an **accessible, inclusive society** with **equal opportunity** in all areas of life.

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

## Our Six Strategic Priorities

### Deaf Identity and Pride

# 01

#### Deaf Identity

Deaf history, culture and language (Auslan) is acknowledged, celebrated and guides what we do.

##### OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Australian society is more aware of Deaf identity and pride and is more inclusive of Deaf and hard of hearing people
- Deaf leaders are actively identified, mentored and developed
- The views and opinions of the Deaf community are respected and incorporated into our planning, services and events

# 02

#### Deaf Interests

Issues affecting Deaf and hard of hearing people are understood and acted upon.

##### OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Collaboration with Deaf Children Australia achieves the best outcomes for Deaf and hard of hearing people, connecting and strengthening the Deaf community, its culture and language
- Deaf sector organisations are key partners and allies to achieve collective impact
- The role of families is recognised and influences the work we do
- Systemic advocacy and research influences our funding partners, government policy and service planning



## Building blocks that help us to achieve our strategies

Our Workforce

Our Businesses

Our Sustainability

Our Focus on  
Technology

## MISSION

We are a progressive, iconic community organisation that:

- Builds pride in being Deaf
- Improves social, economic, cultural and civic participation
- Supports people to communicate and connect with the world
- Advocates and promotes the aspirations of those we service

## BELIEFS

- Human potential has no boundaries and we embrace diversity
- Communication is a human right and Auslan should be recognised and celebrated
- Every person has a role in reducing barriers and attitudes that discriminate
- Empowered leaders can advocate for a better future

### Our Services

## 03 Communication and Access

Deaf and hard of hearing people can communicate in their daily lives wherever they are.

#### OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Deaf and hard of hearing people are supported to express themselves as they choose
- Interpreting and language access is increased through advocacy and education
- Information is shared to build community awareness of Deaf and hard of hearing achievements and needs

## 04 Participation and Inclusion

Support is available to those who need it, at all stages of life.

#### OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Clients are empowered to drive their supports to increase health, wellbeing and social and employment opportunities
- Redesigned services under the NDIS offer portable, flexible and individualised responses
- Service innovation responds to gaps and outdated service models
- Regional coverage and support to families is increased
- Quality, relevant and self-directed supports are provided to meet the needs of our diverse client base

### Our Partners

## 05 Partnering for Innovation and Service Growth

We connect with organisations and government to improve services.

#### OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Partnerships are created to develop improved service models, fill service gaps, and reach clients in locations in which we do not provide supports
- Existing joint ventures are strengthened to build revenue streams
- Collaborations translate into new ideas and improved services

## 06 Partnering to Increase Impact

We connect with individuals and groups to enhance our impact.

#### OUR STRATEGIC OUTCOMES

- Strategic opportunities are achieved through collaboration and thinking creatively
- Connections are made to build and share our knowledge, skills and resources
- Partnerships based on mutual benefit for Deaf, hard of hearing and other valued clients are pursued
- Working with the Deaf community and hard of hearing individuals, we develop effective responses to address their needs

Our Market  
Relevance

Our Change  
Agility

Our Leadership  
and Governance

Our Impact and  
Performance  
Measurement



## Victorian Deaf Society

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