

# Reframing our **Future**

2015-2016 Annual Report



# Vision, Mission and Beliefs

## VISION

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

## 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; and
- 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.

Vicdeaf acknowledges that we operate on Wurundjeri land; we aim to work respectfully with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

We aim to respect and value diversity of ability, sexuality, gender, religion and culture.

Image on cover: Photography by Artificial Studios



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# 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 the Chair of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee. He is a member of the Planning and Performance Committee, the Vicdeaf/Deaf Children Australia (DCA) Steering Committee and Chair of the Tasdeaf Community Advisory Group.
- Mac is also a Director of the Tasmanian Deaf Society (Tasdeaf).



## **VICE-PRESIDENT: Ms Hilary Fisher**

**BA (Politics/ Linguistics), MAppComm (Marketing), 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 a member of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee, the Vicdeaf/DCA Steering Committee, the Marketing and Engagement Committee, the Information and Communications Technology Sub-Committee and the Vicdeaf Community Advisory Group.
- Hilary is also a Director of the Tasmanian Deaf Society (Tasdeaf).



## **CHAIR: Mr Garry Fowler**

**FCA, Financial Counselling Australia, FAICD, Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors**

- 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 a member of the Finance and Audit Committee and Investment Sub-Committee, the Nominations and Remuneration Committee, the Vicdeaf/DCA Steering Committee and the Vicdeaf/DCA Property Committee.
- Garry is also a Director of the Tasmanian Deaf Society (Tasdeaf).



## **TREASURER: Mr Peter Berg**

**BCom, 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 lifetime of expertise in treasury, capital and liability management, risk management, audit and financial planning.
- Peter is Treasurer of the Board and the Chair of the Finance and Audit Committee and the Investment Sub-Committee. He is also a member of the Vicdeaf/DCA Property Committee.
- Peter is also a Director of the Tasmanian Deaf Society (Tasdeaf).



## **DIRECTOR: Dr Therese Pierce**

**MA (Mental Health Counselling), PhD (Special Educ.Admin.),  
GDSE (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 a member of the Planning and Performance Committee, and the Marketing and Engagement 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 Engagement Committee.



## **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 the Chair of the Planning and Performance Committee and a member of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee.



## **DIRECTOR: Mr Praveen Reddy**

**BEng (Chem), MBA, GAICD, Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors**

- 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 the Chair of the Information and Communications Technology Sub-Committee and a member of the Finance and Audit Committee.



## **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 is a member of the Vicdeaf/DCA Property Committee.

# Senior Management Team

**CHRISTINE MATHIESON**  
Chief Executive Officer



**ANDREW LYALL**

**Deputy CEO and Director, Strategy and Service Design**

- Strategic Planning and Service Design
- NDIS Readiness and Implementation
- Client Services



**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**

- 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, Events, Awareness and Training
- Sign Language Video Productions
- Auslan Connections



**GILLIAN VICTOR**

**General Manager, Marketing and Engagement**

- Marketing and Brand Management
- Engagement and Storytelling
- Fundraising



# President's Report



As we reframe our future with a stronger focus than ever before on outcomes for our community, I am proud to acknowledge that the past twelve months have included significant achievements.

An area of particular benefit to our clients and community is our increasing focus on partnerships and stakeholder engagement, in line with our Strategic Plan 2015-2020. There was positive progress in our partnership with Deaf Children Australia (DCA), as we continue to coordinate our services and our plans for the creation of a "deaf centre" as a service base for the benefit of Deaf and hard of hearing Victorians.

The second significant and somewhat historic decision was to integrate Tasmanian Deaf Society (Tasdeaf) into Vicdeaf's governance, services and operations from 1 July 2016. This marks a milestone for the deaf community in Tasmania and one that we strongly anticipate will achieve positive outcomes as we build local capacity and services in Hobart, Launceston, Burnie and surrounding areas across the state.

Our commitment to do all that we can to enhance Tasdeaf's reputation and build on service provision is unwavering. I would like to acknowledge the outstanding leadership and tireless effort of former Tasdeaf President, Steve Hodgetts, and thank the Board and staff for their hard work and good will in working through the integration.

As we meet the challenges and opportunities over the next four years, I look forward to working together to realise Vicdeaf's vision: for our clients and community to live in an **accessible, inclusive society** with **equal opportunity** in all areas of life.

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

MAC ADAM OAM  
PRESIDENT

# Chair's Report



The past year has brought both challenges and opportunities for Vicdeaf. Several outstanding successes have been achieved against a backdrop of significant change and uncertainty. These changes have been driven primarily by government funding and policy reform – in particular the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and foreshadowed changes in Disability Employment Services.

Some of our most notable successes have been through our language service, Auslan Connections, which won five government tenders to support better access for Deaf and hard of hearing people through interpreter, video and technology-based communications. Our Disability Employment Service, SensWide Employment, achieved more job placements than has ever been accomplished before. Our audiology service, Hearservice, successfully entered into the Office of Hearing Services program and now provides subsidised services to people including pension, veteran and other eligible card holders, extending our ability to provide services to our client groups.

For many years Vicdeaf has redirected significant internal resources to provide vital services to our community that are not funded by the government.

Not only do our various services directly support our vision and achieve impact for our clients and community, but they create a strong financial base from which we are able to reinvest in unfunded services. Our investment portfolio returns are strong and we achieved a break even budget at the end of the 2015-2016 financial year, despite the challenges that this past year held. These factors enable me to confirm that after a review of our unfunded services, the Board unanimously supported the continued investment in these activities despite the funding challenges ahead.

The past year marked the first year's implementation of the Vicdeaf Strategic Plan 2015-2020. Our strategic intent has been to position Vicdeaf as the organisation of choice for the Deaf and hard of hearing community in Victoria and Tasmania, and ensuring that our services and supports are person-centred, flexible and responsive to their needs.

To achieve the best outcomes for our clients we have focussed on ensuring that our internal infrastructure and service redesign maximises our position in the marketplace under the NDIS. Significant focus has been on strengthening our valued partnership with Deaf Children Australia (DCA).

While we recognise that we must consider diversifying our services and service-reach we strive to stay true to the purpose and foundations that underpin Vicdeaf, focussing on and promoting the heritage, language and culture of the Deaf and hard of hearing community in Victoria and now Tasmania. I extend gratitude and thanks to our President, Vice-President and my fellow Board Directors. I have deeply appreciated the leadership provided by our Chief Executive Officer, Christine Mathieson and her talented team throughout this challenging year and through the significant organisational change that has occurred.

A blue ink signature of Garry Fowler.

GARRY FOWLER  
CHAIR

**// SOME OF OUR MOST NOTABLE SUCCESSES HAVE BEEN THROUGH OUR LANGUAGE SERVICE, AUSLAN CONNECTIONS, WHICH WON FIVE GOVERNMENT TENDERS TO SUPPORT BETTER ACCESS FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING PEOPLE //**



# CEO's Report



**“ WE ACHIEVED A RECORD NUMBER OF ANNUAL JOB PLACEMENTS THROUGH OUR EMPLOYMENT SERVICE, SENSWIDE EMPLOYMENT. OUR AUDIOLOGY SERVICE, HEARSERVICE, ACHIEVED THE TOP 5-STAR CLIENT SATISFACTION RATING ”**

The past twelve months continued on trend with previous years, in that the pace of change, external challenges and demands, and need to be swift in our responses continued unabated. The theme of this year's annual report is apt, with a focus on “reframing our future” as we respond to the challenges ahead.

Significant time, energy and funding was invested in the redesign of our service model for the NDIS roll-out and the important work flowing from the joint Vicdeaf and Deaf Children Australia Steering Committee and Project Control Group. A series of work streams and projects were identified in accelerate the closer alignment of our organisations, including co-location and planning for the “Deaf centre”.

The positive process and outcome in integrating Tasdeaf into Vicdeaf from 1 July 2016 has been a highlight, as we work closely with the staff and community to build a vibrant and engaged deaf community in Tasmania.

Through our renewed focus on partnerships, as articulated in our Strategic Plan 2015-2020, we have seen fantastic success and results across all of our services and businesses in the past year.

We delivered on our growth strategy to increase our services and service-reach in the newly defined market place, while also increasing income, most pleasingly in our interpreting, captioning and note-taking service, Auslan Connections.

In the past year Auslan, as a language used across Australia, has benefited from greater media attention and community interest and we saw this translated into a significant increase in demand for Auslan training through our classes.

We achieved a significant success rate with government tender submissions and continued to build our valued partnerships with Deaf Children Australia, Deaf Services Queensland (through Auslan Connections, our joint venture) and Melbourne Polytechnic (Victorian Auslan Training Consortium). We achieved a record number of annual job placements through our employment service, SensWide Employment and achieved the top 5-star EARtrak rating for client satisfaction for our audiology service, Hearservice, which has also successfully entered into the Office for Hearing Services Scheme.

We have been the recipient of numerous awards throughout 2015-2016, which are excellent examples of the high quality work we do and the regard of our work. I would like to acknowledge our team-focussed culture at Vicdeaf and acknowledge the effort of all staff to maximise communication as we work in a bilingual and bicultural organisation.

I would like to thank the small but loyal supporter base and donors who continue to show an interest in our work by investing in us through financial contributions and in-kind support. We cannot sustain our service levels without this important and generous contribution to augment our income.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the support and leadership of the Senior Management Team, all our employees, who contribute on a day-to-day basis to achieve our vision and strategic objectives. I thank them for their outstanding teamwork and achievements over the past year.

Finally, I would like to thank the Board, our President Mac Adam, our Vice-President Hilary Fisher and our Chair Garry Fowler for their support, guidance and leadership. Together, Vicdeaf's leadership team continues to work in a positive and constructive way to enhance our organisation's iconic role in the Victorian community.

**CHRISTINE MATHIESON**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

# Deaf Identity and Pride



The Hon. Linda Dessau AM, Governor of Victoria, meets with Vicdeaf staff

**1,196**  
**PEOPLE ATTENDED  
DEAF AWARENESS  
TRAINING**

**INTERPRETING  
SERVICE LEVELS  
INCREASED**

**8.54%**

The past year has seen unprecedented transformation in and challenges for the sector, with the introduction of National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). In response to these funding, environmental and sector changes, we developed a new five-year Vicdeaf Strategic Plan 2015-2020, vision, mission and beliefs to ensure that we are ready to meet – and lead the Deaf Community into – a sustainable and meaningful future.

As part of our new strategic plan, we identified six strategic priorities and building blocks to support our efforts. 2015-2016 marked the first year of the implementation of our Strategic Plan.

## **KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITY 01: DEAF IDENTITY**

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

We are proud of our identity as a deaf services organisation and celebrate our unique history, culture and language.

In January 2016 we proudly welcomed the Honourable Linda Dessau, Governor of Victoria and Patron to Vicdeaf, in a visit to our office in East Melbourne. Ms Dessau was very interested to hear more about our work, our history and the role we play in advancing the interests of Deaf and hard of hearing people across Victoria and beyond.

Over the past year our celebration of Deaf Culture has taken many forms, including a very successful program in support of Deaf Migrants. Our Auslan for Deaf Migrants program enables us to teach communication skills and facilitate participation through the ability to communicate using Auslan. As a part of this program we showcased the latest technology and interpreter support available to enhance access and inclusion in the daily lives of participants. The successes of this program were celebrated on International Day of People with Disability, thanks to the **City of Melbourne** for their support.

## **TRAINEE**



### **Carly Sanders**

#### **Administration Assistant Trainee, SensWide Employment**

“Working as an Administration Assistant Trainee for Vicdeaf has been absolutely amazing. I’ve learnt so much already, I’ve made some new friends and I’ve built and gained so much confidence in myself. Before I started working for Vicdeaf, I started to lose hope in finding a suitable job for me because my previous employers/co-worker weren’t very deaf friendly. They always assumed my cochlear implants were a cure and automatically thought I was hearing. They made me feel I was not good enough, causing me to feel very depressed until I found this job at Vicdeaf. I just couldn’t believe how supportive the people are at Vicdeaf because most of the staff here have great Auslan skills and a good understanding of Deaf Culture and the struggle that people with a hearing loss have every day, helping me to understand things more clearly. To be the first Administration Assistant Trainee to be employed by Vicdeaf, makes me proud of how far I’ve come...thank you so much Vicdeaf for giving me this opportunity, you have changed my life for the better and I cannot thank you enough!”

Carly will complete her traineeship while obtaining her Certificate III in Business Administration.



Live-streaming technology enabled students to access training from all over Victoria

Deaf leadership has taken on renewed emphasis as we reframe the future for the organisation and for the people to whom we provide services. Over the last year we have promoted and supported key deaf staff into our management team, providing opportunities for our future deaf leaders. This focus also ensures that Auslan, Deaf and hard of hearing issues are acknowledged and guide our efforts to achieve meaningful outcomes for our client groups.

To support deaf leadership and our ability to provide quality Auslan teaching in Tasmania, we have provided funding to support two Auslan teachers from Hobart to complete their Certificate IV in Training and Assessment. We have also worked with deafConnectEd to develop a mentor training program, presented in Auslan. Through this program we will develop a pool of mentors, available to mentor Deaf and hard of hearing people in all areas of professional life.

Also in support of our focus on building Deaf leadership capacity, our employment service, SensWide Employment, created an entry-level administration traineeship for a young deaf person, Carly Sanders.

We recognise that the support and development of young deaf leadership is critical. 2015-2016 saw the delivery of our Transitions Beyond High School Program over six weeks to schools across metropolitan and regional Victoria. Regional and rural based schools were invited to attend the workshops via live-streaming. Special thanks to the **Collier Charitable Foundation** for funding this valuable program.

We give prime importance to the benefits of comprehensive client, community and stakeholder consultation as a means to inform our understanding of the needs and wants of our clients and community groups. Over the past year we held numerous workshops, information sessions, community consultations and participated in public events. This is particularly important as we move into the NDIS environment.

In addition, many of these sessions have been made accessible through live-streaming technology, extending the reach of our consultations into regional and rural areas.

**804**  
STUDENTS  
COMPLETED AUSLAN  
COMMUNITY CLASSES





Staff and participants at the International Day of People with Disability

WEB AND  
SOCIAL  
MEDIA  
STATISTICS:

3,872



FACEBOOK  
LIKES

3,098



TWITTER FOLLOWERS

64,071



YOUTUBE  
VIDEO  
VIEWS

In December, the Vicdeaf Christmas Rally offered attendees the opportunity to engage with our service areas and gave us the opportunity to find out more about what our community members want from the NDIS, giving us valuable insights into community interests, concerns and gaps in service provision.

Thanks to funding received from **State Trustees Australia Foundation**, we were able to create Auslan-presented and captioned videos about the NDIS, providing valuable information about the NDIS and what this will mean to Deaf and hard of hearing people.

These videos are available on our website and are provided for the benefit of people who are Deaf or hard of hearing across Australia.

In response to community interest, we have now also added question and answer panel sessions as a part of our information workshops, providing a more personalised response to our customers.

## KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITY 02: DEAF INTERESTS

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

Community forums were held in Hobart and Launceston in May to consult with the Tasmanian Deaf Community, who agreed to ratify a merger between Vicdeaf and Tasdeaf, effective 1 July 2016. Vicdeaf respects the long history of Tasdeaf and together with the Deaf Community we are looking forward to provide improved services and a more engaged community. We have a strong focus on services to families and rollout of the NDIS.

A significant focus over 2015-2016 is the stronger collaboration between Vicdeaf and Deaf Children Australia to support better representation of Deaf interests and a more holistic and integrated service provision to our customers. We look forward to strengthening this relationship into the next year as we focus together on stronger outcomes for the Deaf and hard of hearing community across all stages in life.

We value and prioritise our role in advocating for Deaf interests and actively encourage our staff to represent these interests on various reference and advisory groups in the Deaf sector at national and state level. Our CEO Christine Mathieson sits on the National Disability Services (NDS) Victoria State Committee, the Disability Services Board Victoria, is Chair Victorian Auslan Training Consortium Steering Committee and Chair NDS National NDIS Operations Committee.



Telstra staff say "thank you" at the Telstra for Global Accessibility Awareness Day

As a peak service provider for Deaf and hard of hearing people, we work with the National Disability Insurance Agency to ensure that the needs of Deaf and hard of hearing clients are understood.

Continuing our focus on the interests of our clients and customers, SensWide Employment actively engaged with the future model of Disability Employment Services (DES) through the National Disability Employment Framework project, using this opportunity to advocate for the rights of deaf job seekers, recommending changes to the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF).

One of the highlights of the year was our collaboration with Telstra for Global Accessibility Awareness Day, where Telstra Discovery stores in Melbourne and Sydney had Auslan interpreters available for public enquiries. The day was a great success and generated a large amount of awareness and interest on social media. Telstra employees undertook basic Auslan and Deaf Awareness Training to support better understanding of different communications needs.

**“ ONE OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR WAS OUR COLLABORATION WITH TELSTRA FOR GLOBAL ACCESSIBILITY AWARENESS DAY ”**

# Our Services

## KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITY 03: COMMUNICATION AND ACCESS

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

The ability to communicate and access information and to participate without barriers in daily life are two of the key foundations of Vicdeaf's values. We respond to these basic human rights through a variety of services and programs:

Our language service, Auslan Connections, provided over 34,000 hours of services over 2015-2016, through interpreting, captioning and note-taking support. Our video production unit delivered over fifty projects, creating information provided in Auslan through videos for the Deaf and hard of hearing community. We provided community and workplace Auslan courses to over 1,000 people, all towards ensuring that our clients are more included in the wider community.

Federal Government funds were secured to deliver a project aimed at increasing access to information and interpreting services in the lead up to, during and after times of emergency. This project, the National Emergency Management Project, was delivered in consultation with Deaf Societies across Australia, whom we acknowledge and thank for their support.

As an organisation we are proudly and uniquely able to support people who are Deaf and hard of hearing. Our workforce is actively encouraged and supported to be bilingual and Deaf, hard of hearing and hearing staff work together towards this goal. Our direct service staff offer a breadth of skills and are either first-language Auslan users or are fluent signers. Staff who do not have Auslan are provided with regular, structured personalised Auslan training to equip them in conversational and then more fluent signing skills.

Deaf migrant clients with no formal signed communication skills are communicated with using gestural sign as they are equipped with Auslan skills.

Funding support, received gratefully from the **Mary MacKillop Foundation**, enabled us to provide a program of hearing aids and hearing management advice to migrants with a hearing loss, enabling them to participate more freely in community life.

**Tobin Brothers Foundation** kindly provided funding toward our Funeral Interpreting Program, to ensure that Deaf people can participate fully at the funerals of loved ones through the provision of Auslan interpreters.

For some of our clients with a combination of disabilities, accessing public transport can be daunting, creating barriers for them to participate in community life and be independent.

**CMV Staff Charitable Foundation** generously supported our Go Mobile Program to support clients to be able to use the public transport system more confidently.

SensWide Employment accessed nearly \$170,000 of Employment Assistance Fund services for Deaf and hard of hearing people in the workplace. This money, generously provided by our valued partner **JobAccess**, included Auslan interpreting, workplace modifications and equipment, Deaf Awareness training and other employment-related supports.



## Michael McCready

### Employment Consultant, SensWide Employment

"I've been learning Auslan at work now for 10 months, and the skills I've obtained through learning the language have both boosted my confidence and aided in my career greatly, through being able to better communicate with Deaf and hard of hearing clients and staff alike."



#### KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITY 04: PARTICIPATION AND INCLUSION

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

As we reframe our future to ensure the long-term sustainability of our services to our clients and customers, we are committed to: redesigning our services under the NDIS; innovating to meet service gaps; and to fostering the ability of our clients to direct their own supports.

The past year has seen unprecedented focus on a transformation of our services to ensure better client participation at all stages of life. In consultation with our current clients we have undertaken co-design work to better understand what our customers are asking for, to guide our support responses.

As part of our service re-design response we have created a service model to provide across multiple areas of support, located in Preston, at the heart of the North East Melbourne Area under the NDIS. The Preston Hub offers support for NDIS planning, employment, audiology, interpreting, life goal achievements, rehabilitation and devices.

To increase our relevance and ability to service our clients Hearservice has become accredited to the Office of Hearing Services to provide free and subsidised hearing services to pensioners, veterans and other eligible people. This extends our ability to service more clients through our audiology and rehabilitation services.

Hearservice gratefully received funding from **Equity Trustees** to provide a successful program focussed on helping people with hearing loss and their families to learn communication and management strategies. With these strategies Hearservice clients were more able to continue to be involved in the lives of loved ones and in community activities.

SensWide Employment achieved a record number of job placements, connecting job seekers with valued employers. Over the course of the year job seekers were placed into 130 roles across many and varied industries. Of those people who stayed in the job for three months (86%), nearly every person continued working until six months (94%), showing the strong match between jobs, skills and desires of the job seekers and the needs of employers.

The SensWide Employment Professionals Network commenced as a new initiative for white-collar job seekers. This group provides a forum for job seekers from professional industries to come together and provide peer-to-peer networking and collaboration opportunities in a safe and supportive environment.

218,052

HOURS WERE DEDICATED  
TO IMPROVING  
INDEPENDENT  
LIVING SKILLS  
OF CLIENTS

130

PEOPLE WERE PLACED  
INTO JOBS

505,895

HOURS OF CASE  
MANAGEMENT  
WERE PROVIDED  
TO CLIENTS



Members of DCC Deaf Connect Club enjoyed an outing to Blue Lotus Water Garden at Yarra Junction [Yarra Valley]

Deaf Connect Club (DCC) is a social group for people who are deaf with additional disabilities from metro Melbourne and regional Victoria. Bi-monthly events enable members to enjoy friendship and to make connections with each other and within the Deaf Community. DCC members choose activities which often include visits to museums and special exhibitions, visiting famous Victorian landmarks and tourist sites, movie

and game days, and country and inner city excursions.

Members engage with each other using communication methods of their choice and many relationships have blossomed and continue outside of group hours. The development of and the strengthening of connections with each other and within the Deaf Community is a wonderful outcome for DCC members.

# Our Partners

## KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITY 05: PARTNERING FOR INNOVATION AND SERVICE GROWTH

### We connect with organisations and government to improve services.

We recognise that through partnerships, joint ventures and collaboration, we are able to maximise our services to our clients and customers, drawing on the strength of combined resources and skills. We enjoy strong and valued partnerships with a number of key partners.

Our joint venture with Deaf Services Queensland, under Auslan Connections, has allowed us to increase our success in tenders for services across Australia, ensuring that people who are deaf or hard of hearing are able to access support through language services.

Our partnership with Melbourne Polytechnic through the Victorian Auslan Training Consortium has enabled us to jointly deliver over 700 enrolments of accredited Auslan training in 2.5 years – a positive example of innovation for service growth.

Over this past year, SensWide Employment partnered with Victorian College of the Deaf and Melbourne Polytechnic in two separate projects to enhance pathways to employment for young Deaf school leavers. These projects included presentations to audiences of school students, live-streaming events to engage regional youth and attendance at several expos.

SensWide Employment's partnership with CROWN Resorts over the past year has resulted in five Deaf job seekers commencing work in a range of roles. These Auslan users have commenced exciting new careers and have demonstrated that CROWN Resorts is a progressive workplace that is proactively developing a diverse workforce.

After three years completing a traineeship at Va Tutto restaurant in Ivanhoe, Brad Ren is now a qualified chef.

Brad started on the program with SensWide Employment with a clear career path in mind: he wanted to become a Chef to share his passion for cooking with others. After several months of job seeking SensWide helped Brad to contact restaurants in the local area, resulting in Va Tutto offering him a trial, although there were some reservations about how Brad

would 'cope' being profoundly deaf in a highly busy and sometimes stressful environment.

SensWide provided intensive support during the initial period; Auslan Interpreters were provided through EAF and Advocacy support and Deaf Awareness Training was provided for staff. Since beginning work at Va Tutto three years ago, Brad continues to be an integral member of the kitchen and is now assisting in training the new apprentices.



### BRAD REN

// BRAD CONTINUES TO BE AN INTEGRAL MEMBER OF THE KITCHEN AND IS NOW ASSISTING IN TRAINING THE NEW APPRENTICES //

## KEY STRATEGIC PRIORITY 06: PARTNERING TO INCREASE IMPACT

**We connect with individuals and groups to enhance our impact.**

We recognise that other organisations, groups and individual connections can improve the impact of our work. Over this past year, **Hearservice** and **Able Australia** have partnered to provide monthly support groups for people with dual sensory-loss to better manage their hearing. With thanks to the **Gorman Foundation** for their generous support, we have partnered with Mission Australia to deliver programs to support sixteen pre-learner drivers who are Deaf and need support to access and achieve their learner driver's licences.

Over the year we partnered with the **Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission** to develop a "Signs for Health" project, increasing access to and awareness of Auslan interpreting in public hospitals.

During the year **Hearservice** partnered with **BioRevive** to deliver an interactive public awareness program around safe listening behaviours and the prevention of hearing loss. This program had extensive reach and was presented across metropolitan Melbourne in public areas, public events and in educational institutions.

SensWide Employment partnered with **Transgender Victoria** to run an Employment Forum for trans and gender diverse job seekers. This was the first of its kind in Melbourne and was well attended by the community and allies. A similar second forum was held later in the year to offer further education to interested people, ensuring that the impact of our work is extended and long-lasting.



Vicdeaf and SensWide Employment staff at the Midsumma Pride March, January 2015



John Donnon, General Manager SensWide Employment, Christine Mathieson, CEO Vicdeaf and Rowena Allen, Victorian Gender and Sexuality Commissioner celebrate SensWide Employment's win.

SensWide Employment's WorkingOUT program won the prestigious ANZ GLOBE Excellence in Business award before the Lord Mayor and a packed crowd in the Myer Mural Hall. This was a tremendous achievement as DES providers are not usually recognised for the innovation in business and their support of the community. National press attention was achieved from this award, showcasing the program's innovation and success in achieving outcomes.

SensWide Employment also works with large mental health providers including **NEAMI**, **MIND** and **cohealth** to broaden their understanding of the needs of our job seekers and to collaborate to provide better support.

**// WE RECOGNISE  
THAT OTHER  
ORGANISATIONS,  
GROUPS AND  
INDIVIDUAL  
CONNECTIONS  
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THE IMPACT OF  
OUR WORK //**



# Our Building Blocks

OUR BUILDING BLOCKS ARE THE RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE THAT HELP US TO ACHIEVE OUR AMBITIOUS STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020. WE RECOGNISE THE IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF OUR STAFF AND OTHER RESOURCES.

## OUR WORKFORCE

The foundation of our services is our workforce. We are proud to report that our employee engagement survey reported a total engagement score of 82%. In the past year, Vicdeaf welcomed 51 new staff members across our services. A new set of values and guiding principles were developed to align with our Strategic Plan, outlining how we will work with each other, with clients and with our communities. Our interpreters are a valued part of our workforce. Over the year, we delivered numerous professional development sessions which were also accessible nationally via live-stream technology.

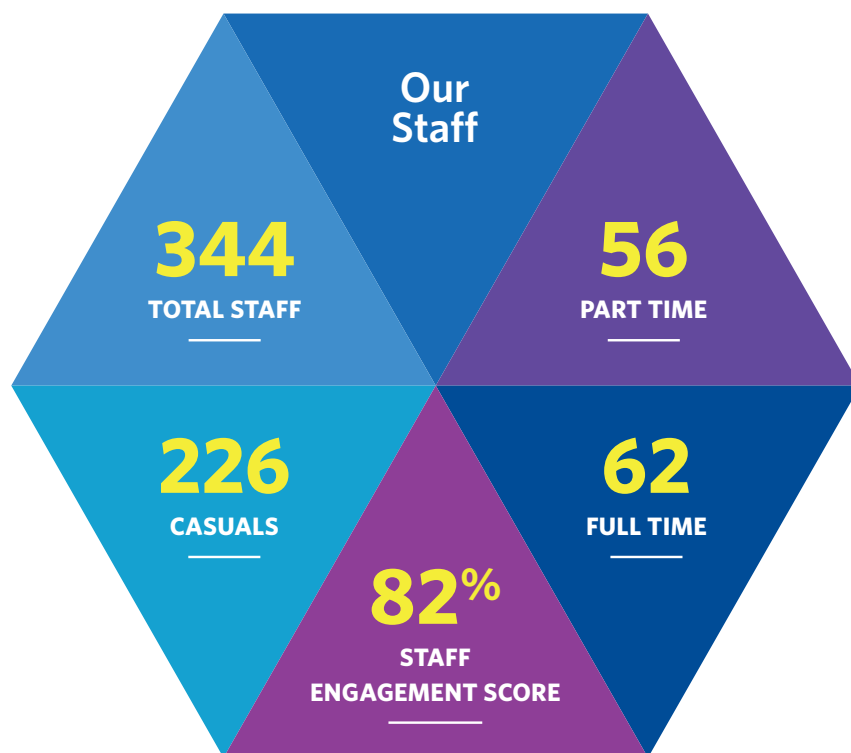
## OUR BUSINESSES

Over the year we experienced significant growth across our fee-for-service businesses, in particular Auslan Connections and Auslan Programs. Income generated through our commercial businesses is redirected into unfunded activity for our clients and community.

## OUR SUSTAINABILITY

We finished the 2015-2016 year with a good financial report card, with income growth in many areas of our business. To support our sustainability in an uncertain environment, we developed rolling and flexible three-year financial models.

Our service achieved 7% growth in income before profits on sale of investments. We received two significant bequests and increased fundraising income in support our work, helping us to provide services which are unfunded.



## OUR FOCUS ON TECHNOLOGY

Vicdeaf conducted an audit of its information, communication and technology systems and resources to better understand how we are placed and to identify any significant gaps in our approach to technology. Arising from this audit, we have established a Board Sub-Committee to give ICT (Information Communication Technology) the focus it requires to enhance our strategic approach. As part of this, we are investing in the upgrade of our client database management system to ensure it is more responsive and efficient with the impending changes in how we deliver services to clients. We have introduced free wifi at the East Melbourne site to improve visitor experience and have upgraded hardware and software used by Hearservice.

## OUR MARKET RELEVANCE

Our successful language service tender submissions during 2015-2016 are evidence of our strong relevance in the sector. The integration of our services with Tasdeaf has enabled us to expand our service reach. Vicdeaf has commenced co-design of services with clients, particularly within the NDIS space. Co-design of services is new for Vicdeaf and will become an ongoing component of our service responsiveness as the NDIS rolls out. Our consultations increasingly are available to regional and rural areas through live-streaming and live-captioning to ensure all stakeholders have the opportunity to provide input.

## OUR CHANGE AGILITY

To better respond to the needs of our clients within a holistic approach to service provision, we have introduced cross-departmental responsibilities within a number of existing roles, and have employed staff into new roles that have an organisational-wide focus. We have activated project teams to enable us to be more responsive to changing needs.



Vicdeaf staff receive the Deaf Australia Organisation of the Year award

## OUR LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Over the 2015–2016 year we reaffirmed our commitment to have Deaf leadership representation at every level of the organisation. Our President and Vice-President are both well-regarded leaders in the Deaf Community. In moving forward, we are investing in a mentorship program to further develop Deaf leadership within our organisation.

One of the ways we measure our excellence is through accreditation and compliance procedures, which we value highly. SensWide Employment underwent two quality audits in the 2015–2016 year, and became officially accredited under the ISO9001 framework alongside the National Standards for Disability Services.

Continual audits were also undertaken by the Department of Social Services of SensWide Employment's business transactions, with no non-compliances recorded, nor any recovery of funds.

Department monitoring visits also noted the high quality of services delivered by SensWide Employment to the job seekers and workers accessing the service. Hearservice again received 5-star EARtrak accreditation for high quality customer services.

Our Employee Engagement scores reflect that staff and clients are very satisfied with Vicdeaf's services and as a workplace and that we are an employer of choice within our communities. Measured in the same survey, our leadership score was also very high, well above sector average, indicating that our workforce has confidence in the ability of the Senior Management Team and that the team are good role models for staff.

Our services and programs are setting a high standard: in April, we were recognised as Organisation of the Year at the Deaf Community Awards for our work on the Deaf Emergency Information Project; our WorkingOUT LGBTIQ employment program won the ANZ Globe Excellence in Business

Award. In April, Vicdeaf was recognised as Organisation of the Year at the Deaf Community Awards for our work on the Deaf Emergency Information Project.

## OUR IMPACT AND PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

With a changing environment, we have reorientated our focus to more contemporary measurement tools, developing a new Performance Management Framework to support our focus on the new priority areas and to support a rigorous and more relevant measurement of these outcomes.

Next year, our focus will move towards understanding the impact our work has on the lives of our clients and our communities.

# Our Supporters

Vicdeaf is privileged to have a loyal supporter base which invests in our work and vision for access, inclusion and equal opportunity. We are grateful to all of our supporters who play an important role in funding much-needed programs, supporting our work and involving themselves in our community events, creating exposure and publicity about the needs and interests of Deaf and hard of hearing people.

A special thanks to our funding partners, bequestors, loyal regular donors, our supporters who participate in community fundraising events and the many people who provide in-kind support to us.

## Special thanks

**Australian Communities Foundation** – Auslan for Deaf Migrants Program.  
**BioRevive** – Hearing Loss Prevention Programs.  
**Collier Foundation** – Transitions Beyond High School Program.  
**City of Melbourne** – International Day of People with Disability Celebration.  
**CMV Staff Charitable Foundation** – Go Mobile Program.  
**Equity Trustees** – Managing Hearing Loss – Strategies against Isolation Program.  
**Gorman Foundation** – Changing Gears pre-learner driver Program.  
**Mary MacKillop Foundation** – Hearing Hope in a New World Program.  
**Deaf Emergency Information Program** – Regional Development Victoria Communications in Emergencies Project.  
**State Trustees Australia Foundation** – NDIS Video Resources Project.  
**Tobin Brothers Foundation** – Funeral interpreting Program.

## Vicdeaf Heroes

Matina Bastakos	Jenny Dang	Lisa Morgan	Peter Nicholls	Angelene Shannon	Christine Mathieson
Deirdre Black	Kate Fraser	Matthew Munro	Jane Taylor	Elizabeth Sleeth	Chris Thompson
Melanie Berry	Seray Lim	Teale Nicholls	Alexa Sakkal	Alex Stoiche	Riette Veldsman

Once again, Vicdeaf participated in *Run Melbourne*, which was a huge success in 2016, with 18 Vicdeaf Heroes raising over \$20,000! This was a tremendous achievement and exceeded our fundraising goal. Our Vicdeaf Heroes were so enthusiastic that they even made videos in Auslan to raise awareness and support their fundraising efforts, as well as organising a trivia night complete with magic show.

Though it was a cold start to the day, our runners soon warmed up and so did we, with our Vicdeaf marquee a hub of activity. We ran impromptu Auslan classes, gave away free hearing check offers and filmed proceedings using a drone. We also worked to make this year's event more accessible for Deaf and hard of hearing runners, with our Vicdeaf flag used as a visual start to the race.



Run Melbourne 2016 runners strike a pose – L to R: Christine Mathieson, Seray Lim, Jane Taylor, Lisa Morgan, Angelene Shannon, Matthew Munro and Chris Thompson.



The Vicdeaf flag signals the start of Run Melbourne 2016



# Treasurer's Report

## FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016

The year to June 2016 has been another strong one for Vicdeaf as it completes the first year of the Strategic Plan for 2015-2020. Vicdeaf finished the year with a surplus of \$445,513, which was enhanced by a higher than expected income distributions from our investment portfolio. We had budgeted a surplus of \$1,600 for the 2016 year.

The 2015-2016 result was especially pleasing as resources had to be redeployed from operational areas to focus on the challenges in our services and business environment resulting from the upcoming implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The surplus included very good results in many of our operational areas. Highlights include:

- Our interpreting service, Auslan Connections, increased its service levels by 8.54% this year after a 31% increase the previous year.
- The investment portfolio has performed well over the year, exceeding our market-related benchmarks in a challenging environment. Our investment advisors confirm the portfolio had a total return of 4.71%, following on from a return of 7.51% in the previous year.
- Service levels for Auslan classes increased by 71% and services for visual resources and live-streaming are growing.
- Our fundraising activities continue to perform well and excellent ongoing projects continued to be undertaken with the grant income that we receive from various funding bodies.

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

Vicdeaf devoted resources during the year towards further developing the relationships with Deaf Children Australia and Tasdeaf. On 1 July 2016, Vicdeaf became the sole member of Tasdeaf and assumed responsibility for management, operations and service delivery in Tasmania.

Over the next few years, Vicdeaf faces significant funding challenges as it transitions to a full roll-out of the NDIS. Extensive planning and financial modelling continues to be undertaken to ensure we prepare for the scheme in a sustainable manner to maximise outcomes for our community. In 2016-2017 Vicdeaf has budgeted for a deficit caused by an immediate fall in income as funding transitions from the Department of Health and Human Services to NDIS. This change also involves additional substantial investment in capital and operational resources.

At 30 June 2016, Vicdeaf had \$23,149,313 in financial assets. In collaboration with Deaf Children Australia, Vicdeaf is investigating the feasibility of building a "deaf centre" for the Deaf and hard of hearing Victorian community and this will involve using an as-yet unknown but significant portion of our financial reserves.

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, Garry Fowler, and my fellow director Praveen Reddy. I would especially like to recognise the valuable contribution of Garry who has served as Treasurer in two terms over a number of years, prior to assuming the role of Chair during 2016.

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

PETER BERG  
TREASURER

**“ IN COLLABORATION WITH DEAF CHILDREN AUSTRALIA, VICDEAF IS INVESTIGATING THE FEASIBILITY OF BUILDING A “DEAF CENTRE” FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING COMMUNITY ”**

# Financial Statements

## 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 2016. A copy of the full audited Financial Statements and Audit Report for 2016 can be provided upon request.

ABRIDGED FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016	2016 \$	2015 \$
<b>Revenue:</b>		
Government grants	5,615,275	5,564,621
Accommodation fees	56,684	52,110
Income from sale of goods and services	4,758,517	4,228,630
Property and investment income	1,770,228	1,861,339
Donations, bequests and fundraising	583,862	260,362
Other income	22,106	16,366
Profits/(loss) from sale of assets	(7,903)	(8,697)
Profits/(loss) from sale of assets and investments	22,925	496,042
<b>Total income from continuing activities</b>	<b>12,821,694</b>	<b>12,470,773</b>
<b>Expense:</b>		
Community support	(2,322,016)	(2,325,746)
Information	(444,176)	(415,766)
Interpreting	(2,841,915)	(2,623,083)
Auslan training	(223,670)	(158,839)
Employment services	(1,823,014)	(1,836,785)
Audiology & rehabilitation	(1,935,203)	(1,813,461)
Fundraising & marketing	(135,403)	(270,688)
Central administration	(1,867,484)	(1,603,159)
Special projects	(65,465)	(53,792)
Provision for special projects	(565,785)	(447,751)
Development expenses	(103,382)	-
Investment expenses	(48,668)	(51,358)
<b>Total expenses from continuing activities</b>	<b>(12,376,181)</b>	<b>(11,600,428)</b>
<b>Profit from continuing operations</b>	<b>445,513</b>	<b>870,345</b>
<b>Profit from assets available for sale</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>7,535,537</b>
<b>Profit for the year</b>	<b>445,513</b>	<b>8,405,882</b>
<b>Other comprehensive Income</b>		
Movement from restatement to fair value of investments	(583,444)	(711,915)
<b>Total comprehensive net of tax income for the year</b>	<b>(137,931)</b>	<b>7,693,967</b>

ABRIDGED FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2016	2016 \$	2015 \$
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	250,786	256,978
Trade and other receivables	1,831,066	1,662,162
Inventories	29,298	47,038
Financial assets	23,149,313	23,342,825
Other financial assets held in trust	19,529	17,071
Other assets	175,004	191,724
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	25,454,996	25,517,798
<b>Non-Current Assets</b>		
Plant and equipment	663,928	666,802
<b>Total Non-Current Assets</b>	663,928	666,802
<b>Total Assets</b>	26,118,924	26,184,600
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	759,291	768,429
Payables – trust	19,529	17,071
Provisions	1,786,225	1,672,401
<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	2,565,045	2,457,901
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>		
Provisions	525,161	560,050
<b>Total Non-Current Liabilities</b>	525,161	560,050
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	3,090,206	3,017,951
<b>Net Assets</b>	23,028,718	23,166,649
<b>Equity</b>		
Fair value reserves	(95,933)	487,511
Development reserve	96,618	200,000
Retained earnings	23,028,033	22,479,138
<b>Total Equity</b>	23,028,718	23,166,649

ABRIDGED STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2016	FAIR VALUE RESERVES \$	DEVELOPMENT RESERVE \$	RETAINED EARNINGS \$	TOTAL EQUITY \$
Balance as at 30 June 2014	1,199,426	200,000	14,073,256	15,472,682
Profit for the year	-	-	8,405,882	8,405,882
Changes in fair value of an available-for-sale financial asset, net of tax	(711,915)	-	-	(711,915)
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	(711,915)	-	8,405,882	7,693,967
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2015</b>	487,511	200,000	22,479,138	23,166,649
Profit for the year	-	-	445,513	445,513
Charge to Development Reserve	-	(103,382)	103,382	-
Changes in fair value of an available-for-sale financial asset, net of tax	(583,444)	-	-	(583,444)
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>	(583,444)	(103,382)	548,895	(137,931)
<b>Balance as at 30 June 2016</b>	(95,933)	96,618	23,028,033	23,028,718

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## THE 2015-2016 VICDEAF TEAM



Image credit: Casamento Photography

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