

# Annual Report 2017-18





Cover image: This year's cover image highlights the concept of rolling up our sleeves and getting to work. In the past year, we faced some demanding challenges in our sector, but through the commitment and passion of our staff we have been able to respond proactively and position ourselves for the future.

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# About Expression Australia

Since 1884, we've been a part of our community in big and little ways. We've changed over this time, ensuring that we remain relevant and able to provide the best and most responsive services.

Our community has grown and changed, as has the environment in which we work. We recognised that it was time to redefine ourselves and believe that our brand should reflect our values, what we currently do, and our ambitions to achieve an even greater benefit for our clients and community into the future.

To respond to these changes, over the past 12-18 months we have been consulting with our community, our partners, our stakeholders and our clients to understand the value that we bring to people's lives.

**To develop our brand, and in our broad-ranging consultations, we followed a unique and world-first method, by putting Auslan first. In Auslan, we explored the value that our clients and community told us that we bring, before we considered how this would be expressed in English.**

During consultation with our Community Advisory Group, staff and other stakeholder groups, we learnt that the Deaf community has a strong belief that people should be able to choose the way they want to communicate.

This idea of "diversity of expression" is intrinsic to our uniquely bilingual, bicultural organisation and delivered consistently through our different services.

The word "expression" also represents a key feature of Auslan, in that it is a vibrant and visual language using body movement, space and facial expression to express various meanings.

We are proud to bring all of our varied services under Expression Australia, including Expression Access, Expression Audiology, Expression Employment, Expression Learning. Expression Deaf represents our commitment to Deaf leadership development, events, programs and providing opportunities for Deaf people to get together.

**At our heart, we are proudly a Deaf organisation with the Deaf Community at the centre of all that we do.**

# Strategic Plan 2015-2020

## Our Six Strategic Priorities

## Our Strategic Outcomes

<b>Deaf Identity and Pride</b>	<p><b>01 Deaf Identity:</b> Deaf history, culture and language (Auslan) is acknowledged, celebrated and guides what we do.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Australian society is more aware of Deaf identity and pride and is more inclusive of Deaf and hard of hearing people</li> <li>Deaf leaders are actively identified, mentored and developed</li> <li>The views and opinions of the Deaf community are respected and incorporated into our planning, services and events</li> </ul> <p><b>02 Deaf Interests:</b> Issues affecting Deaf and hard of hearing people are understood and acted upon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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</li> <li>Deaf sector organisations are key partners and allies to achieve collective impact</li> <li>The role of families is recognised and influences the work we do</li> <li>Systemic advocacy and research influences our funding partners, government policy and service planning</li> </ul>
<b>Our Services</b>	<p><b>03 Communication and Access:</b> Deaf and hard of hearing people can communicate in their daily lives wherever they are.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deaf and hard of hearing people are supported to express themselves as they choose</li> <li>Interpreting and language access is increased through advocacy and education</li> <li>Information is shared to build community awareness of Deaf and hard of hearing achievements and needs</li> </ul> <p><b>04 Participation and Inclusion:</b> Support is available to those who need it, at all stages of life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clients are empowered to drive their supports to increase health, wellbeing and social and employment opportunities</li> <li>Redesigned services under the NDIS offer portable, flexible and individualised responses</li> <li>Service innovation responds to gaps and outdated service models</li> <li>Regional coverage and support to families is increased</li> <li>Quality, relevant and self-directed supports are provided to meet the needs of our diverse client base</li> </ul>
<b>Our Partners</b>	<p><b>05 Partnering for Innovation and Service Growth:</b> We connect with organisations and government to improve services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partnerships are created to develop improved service models, fill service gaps, and reach clients in locations in which we do not provide supports</li> <li>Existing joint ventures are strengthened to build revenue streams</li> <li>Collaborations translate into new ideas and improved services</li> </ul> <p><b>06 Partnering to Increase Impact:</b> We connect with individuals and group to enhance our impact.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic opportunities are achieved through collaboration and thinking creatively</li> <li>Connections are made to build and share our knowledge, skills and resources</li> <li>Partnerships based on mutual benefit for Deaf, hard of hearing and other valued clients are pursued</li> <li>Working with the Deaf community and hard of hearing individuals, we develop effective responses to address their needs</li> </ul>

## Building blocks that help us to achieve our strategies

Our Workforce	Our Businesses	Our Sustainability	Our Focus on Technology	Our Change Agility	Our Leadership and Governance	Our Impact and Performance Measurement
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# Our 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
- 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

# Board of Directors



**President: Hilary Fisher**

**BA (Politics/Linguistics), MAppComm (Marketing), Dip. Creative Arts, GAICD**

Hilary has a background in marketing and is a Principal Communications Advisor 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 Marketing and Engagement Committee, the Information and Communications Technology Subcommittee and Chair of the Community Advisory Group. Hilary is also a Director of the Tasmanian Deaf Society.



**Vice President: Gavin Balharrie**

**BA (Planning and Design), BA (Property and Construction), AIQS, GAICD**

Gavin is a National Director at an International Quantity Surveying practice with over 20 years of experience in the construction industry. Gavin has experience in governance, business management, and is an active member of the Deaf community in both advocacy and sport. Gavin is a member of the Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee and Chair of the Property Taskforce.



**Chair: 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 Chair of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee, a member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, Investment Subcommittee, Audiology Taskforce and Property Taskforce. Garry is also a Director of the Tasmanian Deaf Society.



**Deputy Chair: 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 Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee and a member of the Nominations and Remuneration Committee.



**Treasurer: 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 the Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, the Investment Subcommittee and the Audiology Taskforce. He is also a member of the Property Taskforce. Peter is also a Director of the Tasmanian Deaf Society.

# Board of Directors



**Director: 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 and hard of hearing. Mac has been a longstanding Director including as Chair and President. Mac is a member of the Property Taskforce and is also a Director of the Tasmanian Deaf Society.



**Director: 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 the Chair of the Information and Communications Technology Subcommittee and a member of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and Audiology Taskforce.



**Director: 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. Peter is a member of the Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee and the Property Taskforce.



**Director: Demetrio Zema  
LLB, BA (International Relations)**

Demetrio has a variety of experience in government, private enterprise and in the not-for-profit sector, and brings his knowledge in governance, leadership, strategy and business management to the Board. Demetrio is the director and founder of Law Squared, a commercial law firm in Melbourne with offices in Sydney and Brisbane. Demetrio is a member of the Strategy, Planning and Performance Committee, the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and the Audiology Taskforce.



**Director: Simone Williams  
MA (Communications Management), BA (Australian Studies)**

Simone joined the Board in November 2017 and has a background in strategic communications and marketing. Simone has held senior executive roles in public, private and not-for-profit sectors. Simone brings valuable expertise in marketing, communications, stakeholder engagement, government relations, corporate partnerships and fundraising. Simone is the Chair of the Marketing and Engagement Committee and a member of the Audiology Taskforce.



# Senior Management Team



**Christine Mathieson**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Kim Kavanagh**  
General Manager, Linkages and Supports

- Individual Supports
- Support Coordination
- Accommodation Services



**Andrew Lyall**  
Chief Operations Officer

- Strategic Planning and Service Design
- NDIS Implementation
- Service Planning and Integration



**Tamara Pearce**  
General Manager, Access, Service Design and Language Services

- Access and Service Design
- Auslan Connections
- Tasmanian Services



**Brent Phillips**  
Director, Language, Partnerships and Innovation

- Language Services
- Learning, Partnerships and Community Engagement
- ICT Strategy and Implementation



**Gary Hunt**  
General Manager, Finance and Administration

- Finance and Investments
- Risk Management
- Operational Administration



**Leanne Van Opijnen**  
General Manager, Employment

- Employment Support Services
- Disability Management Services



**Gillian Victor**  
General Manager, Marketing and Engagement

- Marketing, Communications and Brand Management
- Engagement and Storytelling
- Fundraising Development



**Matthew Grounds**  
General Manager, Audiology

- Audiology and Rehabilitation
- Assistive Listening Devices



**Tiffany Hill**  
Manager, People, Culture and Quality

- People, Culture and Quality
- Workplace Health and Safety
- Workplace Strategy

# President's Message



**A key mark of any successful organisation is remaining true to our history and communities as we lay the groundwork for our future.**

The past twelve months have heralded significant milestones in our history as an organisation. We have worked hard to meet the year's opportunities and challenges while delivering on our vision and mission.

A key mark of any successful organisation is remaining true to our history and communities as we lay the groundwork for our future. Our work this year showcases the many ways we have done this. Our Auslan-first approach to rebranding, our work with Deaf Children Australia (DCA) and our partners to extend the benefit we bring to our clients and community all emphasise our commitment to, and focus on being, a proudly Deaf organisation. In line with this focus, in the coming year, we will be supporting current and future deaf leaders in line with our strategic priorities.

As we look back over 2017-18, I could not be prouder. Our strength lies in our dedication to supporting all people's participation, access and communication needs. It is our knowledge that "deaf people are the best communicators in the world" that allows us to do so. We intrinsically understand what access, flexibility and fluidity mean.

In the first year of my Presidency, I would like to thank past President Mac Adam, and current Vice President Gavin Balharrie for their contributions. I would also like to honour the work of the Chair, Vice-Chair, Board of Expression Australia, our CEO and all staff. This year's positive outcomes are a tribute to you all.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank the Deaf community across Victoria and Tasmania for your loyalty, passion and support. You remain, as always, at the core of what we do.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Hilary Fisher', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Hilary Fisher**  
**President**

# Chair's Report



**We faced enormous change but remain optimistic about our future as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable organisation.**

The past twelve months have been positive despite the shifting environment under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). We faced enormous change but remain optimistic about our future as a vibrant, relevant and sustainable organisation.

In response to these major shifts in our sector, we undertook a rebrand process which marked a significant milestone in the history of Vicdeaf and Tasdeaf. Our new name and brand is a bold embodiment of our position as progressive organisation that is deeply committed to the Deaf community and our emerging client groups.

We recognise the important role that the Victorian and Tasmanian Deaf Societies have played for so many people over generations and I emphasise that we remain true to both our history and focus on the needs of our Deaf communities. As part of our rebrand we undertook broad research into what people value about our services and as an organisation. We applied an 'Auslan-first' approach that informed the development of the Auslan concept for our organisation, the English name and the visual identity of Expression Australia. The process highlighted that our clients and community place immense value on diversity of expression through communication, language and identity.

The year also saw the culmination of work with Deaf Children Australia (DCA) to develop a proposal to the Victorian Government, seeking capital funding to establish a Deaf Centre. Unfortunately, we were unsuccessful, which was bitterly disappointing. Thank you to DCA and the Independent Chair of the Deaf Centre Project, Jane Fenton, for their commitment to the partnership. Also, thanks to Ernst & Young for its significant pro bono support.

Expression Australia is now moving forward to achieve our vision of providing a community space with services and supports in a new premises, which we aim to have confirmed in mid-2019.

Pleasingly, the many successes outlined in our annual report over 2017-18 were underpinned by strong return on investments and growth in our commercial fee for services businesses. I would like to extend my thanks to my fellow Directors for their commitment at Board level over the past year. Particularly, I would like to thank Mac Adam OAM for his dedicated service and Sam Patterson, who retired from the Board after eight years. I welcome Simone Williams who brings valued expertise in marketing and communications and Directors appointed at last year's AGM, Gavin Balharrie and Demetrio Zema.

Finally, thank you to our staff, senior management team and our CEO, Christine Mathieson, as we work to sustain and grow our quality services during these unprecedented times of change.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Garry Fowler".

**Garry Fowler**  
Chair

# CEO's Report



**During 2017-18 we continued to build strong partnerships, work closely with our communities to deliver quality outcomes and tackle the many challenges and opportunities as part of the roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).**

Our efforts focused on our vision for access, inclusion and equal opportunity, and we remained true to our mission to be 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

Our organisational rebrand to Expression Australia, was a significant emphasis during the past year. This change paves the way for more holistic and integrated service to our clients, under the service areas of Expression Audiology, Expression Employment, Expression Learning and Expression Access.

To acknowledge our foundational focus as an iconic and proud Deaf organisation, we launched Expression Deaf. Expression Deaf highlights our investment in and ongoing focus on the Deaf community. Now, more than ever, we are committed to achieving better outcomes for the Deaf community.

The rebrand was an example of excellent team effort. I want to thank our Community Advisory Group (Ramas McRae, Stef Lindner, Lance Hately, Natalie Sandon, Annabelle Beasley, Hilary Fisher), Kim Kavanagh and Brent Phillips who all played a significant role leading the 'Auslan-first' approach that developed our new visual identity, Auslan sign and name.

We have reached the two-year mark of the integration of Tasdeaf into Vicdeaf, which now also operates under Expression Australia. Engagement with the community is at a high and so too is the interest and demand for Auslan tuition.

Pleasingly, under the NDIS we were successful in winning an NDIS Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) grant to develop the Deaf Central National Portal. This will be an interactive web based information, learning and referral platform. Expression Australia is the lead organisation for this exciting national project where we will partner with other Deaf Societies across Australia.

Our partnerships have grown and deepened over the past year. We look forward to our continued work with Telstra and Academy Xi, Collingwood Football Club, Melbourne Museum, Scienceworks, Deaf Services, Deaf Can Do, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, Melbourne Polytechnic and Emergency Management Victoria. In particular, I acknowledge our intensive work with Deaf Children Australia (DCA).

I would like to thank our Board of Directors, President and Chair for their tireless efforts. Finally, I would like to thank each and every staff member across Victoria and Tasmania. It's been a busy year with so much to be proud of, especially the services we delivered to our clients and maintaining our excellent reputation, which is achieved through the work of each individual who is part of our team at Expression Australia.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Christine Mathieson'.

**Christine Mathieson**  
CEO



We were honoured to host a visit by Heather Harker from Gallaudet University in the United States. From left to right: Hilary Fisher, Mac Adam, Heather Harker, Christine Mathieson, Gavin Balharrie

**1539**  
people attended our  
Auslan Community Classes  
**28%** increase from  
last year

**53**  
hours of Auslan  
taught per week  
as LOTE in  
schools

# Deaf Identity

**Expression Australia proudly supports Deaf identity, culture and language. It is at the heart of everything we do – our engagement with individuals and communities, our championing of Deaf leaders, our celebration of Deaf identity and our pride and inclusion in planning, services and events.**

During National Week of Deaf People 2017, we were honoured to host a visit by Heather Harker, Chief of Staff at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. Heather is one of the most respected Deaf leaders in the United States and was a wonderful guest speaker at our Annual General Meeting and Deaf Professionals Network business breakfast. Heather spoke passionately about Deaf leadership and the role of Gallaudet University on the global stage. Expression Australia and Deaf Victoria jointly funded Heather's visit.

Professional development and leadership opportunities for Deaf staff is an organisational priority. Through a range of training initiatives and mentoring, this year we were thrilled to be able to support five of our young Deaf staff members in new employment and mentoring opportunities to assist them to achieve their career goals.

A staff member, Shirley Liu, was supported to take up a leadership position, joining the board of the World Federation of Deaf Youth Services.

Over the past twelve months, we undertook a range of engagement activities to ensure our continued effectiveness in responding to the unique needs of our diverse community. An exciting initiative was the employment of a Youth Engagement Officer to build young people's awareness of our services and to better understand whether these services appropriately meet their needs.

Expression Audiology embarked on an engagement process with clients around its audiology services and branding.



# Deaf Identity

During consultation about our brand, clients highlighted that they value our audiology service's status as a not-for-profit and the importance of its' independence. New technology is constantly being tested with clients and feedback collected as part of our service approach. This ensures we are always responding effectively to the needs of our clients.

Celebration of Deaf identity and culture was a key feature during the year. It was the 30th anniversary of providing services in Tasmania and to mark this important milestone more than 100 Deaf, Deafblind and hard of hearing people came together from all over the state. A full weekend of activities provided for a wonderful community celebration of achievements, past and present.

The Christmas Rally, an end-of-year celebration of Deaf culture, identity and community, is an important event on our annual calendar. The rescheduled event was held in Edinburgh Gardens, Fitzroy, from late afternoon and into the early evening after severe storm warnings played havoc with the original date. It was once again a great success, the new family-friendly format and activities were embraced by the community, especially by young people and families.

More than 300 families attended our Auslan for Families Community Day at the Melbourne Museum. The day included a variety of interactive activities focused on Auslan communication for children and families.



**Trainee, Tony Tran, recently completed his Certificate III in Business Administration and is now employed in the full-time role of Administration Assistant.**

Tony said, "As Administration Assistant, I have opportunity to develop my skills in a broad range of areas. Expression

Australia has supported me to grow in my career. I really enjoy working here and value the support that I have received."

Tony's manager said: "We are thrilled Tony has been able to continue with us beyond his studies. As a trainee, he has been able to learn about all parts of our organisation, and can apply that knowledge as part of the Access team. Tony works in a critical customer service role with our clients, as well as providing valuable broader administration support to the organisation".



Tony Tran (left) and Kim Kavanagh (right) presented our patron, the Honourable Linda Dessau AM, with a lantern to represent the Deaf community.

**1017**  
people attended our  
Deaf Awareness  
Training

**160**  
videos produced  
via our Auslan  
Video Production  
service

# Deaf Interests

**We work in partnership with Deaf individuals, families, mainstream services and Deaf sector organisations to represent Deaf issues and interests. Our role sees us working across all levels of government and the wider community to influence, raise awareness and drive change.**

Our awareness raising activities are many and varied, but of note in the past year are two key partnerships that supported our work. As part of our partnership with the ABC, on 26 October 2017, the national prime time news program was interpreted in Auslan. This provided a fantastic opportunity to raise awareness of Auslan and accessibility issues as part of National Week of Deaf People. Our work with the ABC is continuing and in the future we hope to see Auslan interpretation as an ongoing service that the ABC provides to its viewers.

We also teamed up with DonateLife to secure funding and create a series of videos, produced in Auslan. For the first time, the videos allow the Deaf community to access information about organ and tissue donation in their own language. During DonateLife week we promoted the Organ and Tissue Donation Register from our stall at Run Melbourne, one of Melbourne's premier sporting events. This afforded great reach around the importance of organ donation. The stories were compelling and accessible, and importantly, resonated well with the community, eliciting some of our greatest social media reach.

Our Video Production Unit produced more than 160 videos for clients including DonateLife, NDIS, Victoria Police,

National Gallery of Victoria, Department of Premier and Cabinet, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Melbourne University. This demonstrates the growing acknowledgement of Auslan as a language and the right of Deaf people to have full access to information to support their participation and inclusion.

We have a lead role to play in not only supporting the development of existing interpreters, but in extending the workforce of interpreters to meet demand. In Tasmania, we hosted a workshop for interpreters across the state. The workshop was open to all interpreters, regardless of the organisation they work for or their level of accreditation.

We also commissioned a report, supported by the State Government, to review supply and demand for Auslan interpreters in Victoria.

As an organisation under the patronage of the Honourable Linda Dessau AM, we were honoured to be asked to present an ornament to represent our work for the Christmas tree at Government House. We presented a lantern as a symbol of Deaf history, when people who are Deaf would gather under the gaslights on the streets of Melbourne to communicate.

# Communication and Access

**People who are Deaf and hard of hearing have the right to express themselves without barriers to participation. We understand and value the unique and diverse way our clients express themselves. We have a long and proud history of strengthening communication, access and inclusion opportunities through the broad range of training, information and services that we offer.**

We employ  
**163**  
Interpreters

**41,889**  
total  
interpreting  
hours

Over the last year we conducted a series of information sessions on the NDIS across metropolitan and regional areas in both Victoria and Tasmanian. Sessions were delivered in mixed communication style - Auslan and English with interpreters. This assisted our clients in gaining a better understanding of the NDIS and the new arrangements relating to supports and services.

We had a busy year conducting training activities across the country. In July 2017, a national workshop was delivered to enable translators to turn English text into Auslan via video. This technology is increasingly in demand to create much needed, ongoing resources for the Deaf community.



Our Tasmanian-based team worked with the Port Arthur Historic Site to increase accessibility for Deaf and hard of hearing visitors and ran Auslan 'taster' classes for families. From left to right: Jo France, Jeanette Symonds, Stephen Nicholson, Michelle Czyzowicz, Joyce Clifford

The Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) service also continued to be well utilised. It is a valued resource, particularly for those in regional areas, enabling greater opportunities for participation and inclusion.

Auslan training was provided to staff at the Port Arthur Historic Site in Tasmania, making the site more accessible for Deaf and hard of hearing visitors. Feedback from the site's staff was very positive, and identified that they feel better equipped to support Deaf and hard of hearing visitors.

A free weekend of Auslan 'taster' classes were run in Tasmania to introduce the public to Auslan. Around fifteen families attended each session. Following this, there was an increase in enrolments for the comprehensive Auslan Community Classes and for the NDIS clients requesting Auslan instruction for their families.

Our unique Auslan for Deaf Migrants program provided an invaluable opportunity for Deaf migrants to learn basic Auslan/English. Through our partnership with Melbourne Polytechnic, fifteen participants from the program moved on to formal study.

Our live captioning service continued to meet the needs of many people by allowing them to access presentations, conferences or university material.

We employ 163 interpreters as part of our interpreting services, Auslan Connections (in partnership with Deaf Services). We are the largest employer of interpreters in Victoria and Tasmania and continue to grow our skill base and capacity to meet the changing needs of our diverse client base. This includes catering for people who are Deaf and hard of hearing from different language backgrounds, people who have minimal signing and or who require speech reading or oral interpreting.





We provided more than 900 hours of NDIS pre-planning support to individuals.

# Participation and Inclusion

**For people who are Deaf and hard of hearing, support is often fundamental at all stages of their life to ensure they are able to be included in the community. We are committed to providing flexible support and delivering innovative services that build connections and create equal access to opportunities.**

The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has been a key focus over the past year. We provided more than 900 hours of NDIS pre-planning information and support to assist individuals in getting maximum benefit from their NDIS plan. Information sessions were held in NDIS rollout areas and will continue until rollout is completed in 2019. In addition to face-to-face sessions in Tasmania, NDIS clients were provided with *Skype* for Auslan tuition with content uploaded to *YouTube* for students and their families.

We also responded to many requests from schools to provide students and their families with information on the NDIS.

Support continued to be provided to more than 40 clients over the age of 65 years, under the Commonwealth Home Support Programme (CHSP). This enables older Deaf and hard of hearing people to live in their own homes, remaining independent, and connected to the wider community.

In February 2018, we successfully passed our first Australian Aged Care Quality audit.

The Australian Deaf Gay and Lesbian Association (ADGLA), provided funding for a project to identify the needs of the Deaf LGBTIQ+ community and how these are best supported. Over six months, focus groups, consultations,

# Participation and Inclusion

research and social events were held, predominantly in Auslan. The project identified a range of recommendations including building stronger links with the Deaf LGBTIQA+ community, providing better information and partnering to deliver relevant services.

Our audiology team provided its *Living Well with Hearing Loss and Hearing Awareness Training* course to 157 people. The majority of sessions were run in workplace settings to support employees impacted by hearing loss, and their colleagues, to better understand the implications of hearing loss.

In response to the needs of our clients and requests in NDIS plans, our audiology service extended its services this year. Our hearing aid appointment program was extended to include additional rehabilitation. A new speech pathology service including communication assessments and speech, language and literacy services was also introduced.

Our employment service focused on achieving sustainable and rewarding outcomes for our clients. Throughout the financial year, 73 per cent of people supported to find a job remained in employment after six months.

As part of our dedicated focus in creating job opportunities for young people, many new apprenticeships were secured across various sectors for our young clients. These include business, panel beating, steel fabrication, automotive repair, hairdressing and carpentry. We were also very pleased to have two new Deaf young trainees join the employment team.

We take great pride in our *WorkingOUT* program, the only Disability Employment Service provider within Australia dedicated to supporting members of the LGBTIQA+ community. To date, 70 per cent of our clients are still employed and we are providing ongoing support to them in their workplaces.

Our *Trans@Work* training program is educating workplaces about how to make their environment more LGBTIQA+ friendly. To date we have trained ten workplaces across various industries.

**70%**

of LGBTIQA+ jobseekers supported through our WorkingOUT program remain in employment

**73%**

of people we supported to find a job by are still employed after 6 months



Our WorkingOUT program attended many events during the past year including the 2018 Midsumma Festival.



**This year, Carly Sanders and Nicholas Steer brought their passion for making a difference in people's lives to their work as trainees to our employment service.**

Carly believes in the work we do to break down barriers and “help employers see the potential in people”. Carly feels proud to be working in an organisation with values that align with her own.

Nicholas' recent experience at the YMCA Victoria Youth Parliament provided him with an insight into Australian politics and the opportunity to advocate for Deaf and hard of hearing people, on matters such as cinema captioning and public transport. Nicholas wants to continue to have a positive impact, “I see our participants leave their appointments looking satisfied with the job we do,” he said. “It's a privilege to be part of a driven team that helps people facing disadvantage to find employment.”

Carly and Nicholas' manager, reinforced how important it is to provide opportunities for young Deaf people to gain work experience whilst completing a traineeship. “Carly and Nicholas bring energy and enthusiasm and are always willing to help out.”

We recently witnessed a powerful and heart-warming moment when a young person came in to register for our service. The girl, who was also Deaf, noticed Carly and Nicholas signing to each other and when the girl turned to her mother and said, “Look mum, they are both Deaf and working here. Wow! That's what I want to do”.



# Partnering for Innovation and Service Growth

**Building partnerships across sectors, with organisations and communities drives service innovation and growth. We value and invest in partnerships as we believe they significantly benefit and create better outcomes for people who are Deaf and hard of hearing.**

We have strengthened our relationship with the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) and Local Area Coordinators. As a provider of choice we have seen a significant increase in new National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan referrals, particularly for capacity building through support coordination.

In an exciting new development, growing demand for Deaf interpreters led to a partnership with RMIT to create scholarships for Deaf people to train as Deaf Interpreters. A training course was also developed and a paper published on training Deaf interpreters.



Our Auslan for Families Community Day saw more than 300 people attend the Melbourne Museum for a range of Auslan themed activities.

We continued our partnership with the Collingwood Football Club to make their events, including their Annual General Meeting and the Best and Fairest Award, accessible. This work greatly benefits the experience of Collingwood supporters who are Deaf and hard of hearing.

We also worked to support the AFL more broadly with focus on increasing accessibility. As part of this move, a presentation was provided to media managers of all eighteen clubs on Deaf culture and issues around accessibility and inclusion.

Our ongoing partnership with Melbourne Museum has proved invaluable in enabling Deaf and hard of hearing people and their families to take advantage of everything the Museum has to offer. The Auslan 'taster' classes run at the Museum provided a stimulating education space for interactive games and Auslan storytelling. Free access to the Museum was also provided for more than 300 people to attend our Auslan for Families Community Day. The event, hosted in the Museum's Bunjilaka Aboriginal Cultural Centre, included pop-up Auslan classes, Auslan storytelling, roaming performances by baby dinosaur puppets and other interactive activities.

We were successful in obtaining two Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Minor Works Funding Grants. The funds enabled the upgrade of two accommodation units to improve resident comfort. Residents were involved throughout the process, ensuring a sense of ownership over their home environments.



We continued our partnership with Collingwood Football Club, helping them to increase accessibility for their Deaf and hard of hearing supporters.

“

As a guest of the AFL, I had the opportunity to present to the media managers from all 18 AFL clubs on the benefits of providing access and inclusion for Deaf and hard of hearing fans in all aspects of AFL football. The topics covered included membership, access to information, match day experiences and club events. The information was well received and it has been great to see an increase in the number of clubs now providing increased accessibility to their Deaf and hard of hearing supporters.

”

- Brent Phillips, Director, Language, Partnerships and Innovation at Expression Australia

“

The presentation was insightful and provided a solid overview around inclusion for the Deaf and hard of hearing community. It demonstrated to me and my colleagues across the AFL industry that there is value and benefits to improving accessibility.

”

- Meagan Lechucki, Media Officer at Collingwood Football Club

# Partnering to Increase Impact

**Through extending our reach into a range of new and exciting areas we are able to seize strategic opportunities and share our knowledge, skills and resources. This investment assists us to enhance our impact as an organisation.**

We were thrilled to be one of the fifteen not-for-profit organisations selected as part of the nationwide *Tech4Good Challenge*. We will develop our technology-based idea to help young people thrive in a connected world. We are aiming high and awaiting the Telstra Foundation's decision on the final five organisations which will receive \$450,000 each.



Olivia Beasley (left) and Christine Mathieson (right) attended Telstra's Academy Xi as part of the *Tech4Good Challenge*.

Over the year we created new partnerships with likeminded organisations and have worked collaboratively with these employers. We built a strong relationship with Victoria People Solutions, a progressive and LGBTIQ+ friendly provider, who have now employed a number of our clients. A collaboration with Deafblind Victoria provides support to employees who work across various administration roles within the organisation. We also partnered with The Bridge to provide pre-employment training programs. At Melbourne Polytechnic (MPT) two participants were placed into roles delivering LGBTIQ+ training to their colleagues. Without these partnerships we would not be able to achieve the wonderful outcomes for our clients and we thank them for their support.

High quality outreach support was provided to participants through our partnerships with Mind Equality Centre and the Positive Living Centre.

Our partnership with Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) continues to strengthen. We signed and executed an MOU executed in 2017, which sees EMV commit to including Auslan interpreters in major media and emergency events. It also includes funding for professional development of our Emergency Media Interpreting Team.

“

**We are so grateful to Telstra Foundation for this opportunity to be a part of the *Tech4Good Challenge*. As a young Deaf person myself, I'm excited to get to work and start developing ideas for how we can use technology to improve the lives of other young Deaf and hard of hearing people**

”

- Olivia Beasley, Project Lead for Telstra Foundation's *Tech4Good Challenge*





It is through the commitment and dedication of our workforce that we are able to achieve our goals.

# Building Blocks

**These are the Building Blocks that help us achieve our strategies.**

## Our Workforce

During the 2017-18 financial year we had 376 total staff - this includes 58 full-time staff, 47 part-time staff and 271 casual staff.

We developed a Developing Managers Group so that staff can come together about issues relating to staff management and receive training that will better equip them to support their teams. There are four Deaf participants in this group of aspiring organisational leaders.

A survey was conducted to measure how well staff transitioned to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The aim was to understand whether enough support was offered to staff throughout the transition process and identify any potential areas of improvement. The results of the survey showed there is a greater need for communication, education and support around the NDIS. Staff also wanted greater clarity on the impact of the NDIS on their roles. This issue will be addressed throughout the coming year.

Our annual intern program provides Certified Provisional (CP) interpreters with coaching and mentoring to prepare them to sit the NAATI Certified Interpreter (CI) test. The program is part of our commitment to enable interpreters to realise their career goals and deliver the best interpreting service possible. This year saw one CP interpreter successfully become a NAATI Certified Interpreter.

We also offered a novice intern program for staff identified as having the necessary language fluency, attitude and aptitude to train as interpreters. These staff are mentored and provided with learning opportunities to support their development.

Investing in staff through these intern programs is hugely beneficial, not only for the staff members' professional development, but also to provide our clients with the best quality interpreting services.

# Building Blocks

Through our interpreting service, Auslan Connections (run in partnership with Deaf Services) we supported two staff interpreters to undertake the Graduate Diploma of Interpreting at Macquarie University.

Auslan Connections ran three free livestreamed events as professional development opportunities for interpreters. These covered the topics of the NDIS and ethical practice.

## Our Businesses

We continue to adapt our organisational processes, in line with the customer-driven environment and commenced the development of marketing strategies for business areas. This has led to excellent outcomes for Auslan tuition, awareness training and video production.

We continue to focus on streamlining functions and processes across our business to achieve efficiencies. We commenced centralising our reception functions to a single service centre and we continued to successfully embed our Hobart and Launceston operations into our broader business systems and processes.

## Our Sustainability

We recorded a net profit for the year of \$403,238 with excellent results from our investment portfolio.

We continue to evolve our fee for service areas and create service offerings under the NDIS and in broader markets, such as audiology and video production. An Audiology Taskforce was established to review and recommend future activity and financial sustainability.

The 2017-18 year finished with a good financial result across the organisation – achieving a surplus result. Our investment portfolio performed well against market related benchmarks.

## Our Focus on Technology

Our focus on technology has intensified to assist us in finding efficiencies across all areas. Our newly created ICT Board Subcommittee drives this focus at the strategic level of the organisation.

We increased our use of livestreaming to allow people greater access to organisational announcements, training opportunities and Auslan tuition. Livestreaming is especially beneficial for people in regional areas, for example, providing Auslan classes to regional families via Skype.

Our Auslan Connections service, a joint venture with Deaf Services, has invested in a new booking system. The new system allows us to sustain a high-quality service by

effectively handling the escalating number of interpreter bookings, both now and into the future.

We have three new Video Remote Interpreting (VRI) suites. These suites provide flexibility for both interpreters and clients, allowing them to be located anywhere in Australia and still deliver or access a timely interpreting service.

## Our Market Relevance

As a registered provider under the NDIS, we have been operating since the trial site in Barwon. Subsequently, we have been delivering services in all areas and age cohorts in Victoria and Tasmania. We have been working hard to position ourselves as a provider of choice in the NDIS market place

Our recent rebrand from Vicdeaf to Expression Australia represents our commitment to building upon feedback from clients, families and the wider community, around the value we bring and our market relevance. As part of the rebrand we have also implemented changes to our service models.

Being viewed as experts on issues around access, Auslan and Deaf culture enabled us to work with the ABC during National Week of Deaf People (NWDP). We provided Auslan interpretation during their evening news program on 26 October 2017.

## Our Change Agility

To ensure we were fully compliant with the Victorian Government's new Disability Worker Exclusion Scheme, we updated our recruitment policy, compliance policy, contracts of employment and code of conduct.

## Our Leadership and Governance

We successfully achieved reaccreditation against service and ISO 9001 quality standards.

Our employee value proposition is outlined and promoted to potential employees. Our Employee Engagement Survey results and values are promoted externally to attract new staff and assist in employee retention.

Through our continued inclusion of Auslan classes as part of our induction program, eleven new staff went on to undertake level one and two Auslan Community Classes. This contributes to greater bi-lingual and bi-cultural awareness and allows us to model best practice as an inclusive organisation.



# Building Blocks

## Our Impact and Performance Measurement

We continued to evolve as an organisation that delivers against outcomes rather than outputs. We commenced a review of our Performance Framework to strengthen our understanding of our impacts and outcomes, and how we measure both.

Our 2017 Employee Engagement Survey global satisfaction result was 81 per cent. We have maintained this score over the last couple of years. The benchmark for the Disability Services Sector is 80 per cent. We scored especially well in terms of how staff viewed our connection to our mission and values (96 per cent), the levels of teamwork (95 per cent) and work-life balance (86 per cent). Staff responses towards opportunities for career progression

and development need some improvement, so this will be an important area of focus for the coming year. A new performance management process will be implemented to support this. Our employment service retained its contracts with the Australian Government enabling us to continue to support Deaf and hard of hearing, blind and low vision, and LGBTIQ+ people to find rewarding and sustainable employment.

Our audiology service retained our 5-star EARtrak accreditation for delivering high-quality customer service.

**81%**

employee  
engagement  
satisfaction

**11**

new staff  
trained in  
Auslan



The annual Christmas Rally, our end-of-year celebration of Deaf culture, identity and community, was held in Edinburgh Gardens, Fitzroy.

# Thank you to our Supporters

Thank you to our funding partners, bequestors, regular donors, community event supporters and the many people who provide in-kind support to us. We couldn't achieve the wonderful successes and outcomes for our clients without you.



Three of our Run Melbourne Heroes.  
From left to right: Mark Whyte, Lisa Morgan, Cameron Armstrong

Thank you to the following organisations for their generous support of our vision of access, inclusion and equal opportunity for all:

- Ernst & Young
- CTIUM
- Collingwood Football Club
- Telstra
- PwC Australia
- Melbourne Museum
- Scienceworks

Thank you to our Heroes who brilliantly represented us at Run Melbourne and raised much needed funds:

- |                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| • Cameron Armstrong       | • Laura Gusts     |
| • Olivia Beasley          | • Rachel Harvey   |
| • Sherrie Beaver          | • Chelsea Jose    |
| • Kirri Dangerfield       | • Lisa Morgan     |
| • Amy Decker              | • Alex Quinnell   |
| • Kelly Decker            | • Anna Robinson   |
| • Jade Decker-Waldschmidt | • Peggy Soo       |
| • Jonathan Dunlea         | • Riette Veldsman |
| • Emma Godden             | • Mark Whyte      |



# Treasurer's Report

The Society recorded a net profit for the year of \$403,238 before an adjustment with regard to the accounting treatment of unspent grants to comply with accounting standards, which has the effect of increasing the reported net profit for the year to \$1,338,769.

Service planning and redesign continues in line with the phased rollout of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and we maintain service continuity for existing clients who are shifting from Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) funded services to the new model under NDIS. The pace of transition to NDIS has been slower than anticipated.

Our employment service, has had an excellent year with services operating from five sites around Melbourne. Our interpreting service, Auslan Connections, has performed strongly increasing its service levels by 13 per cent this year after a 17 per cent increase in the previous year.

Our audiology service had a good year with income up 15 per cent and our Auslan classes had an excellent result with services up 41 per cent following a 16 per cent increase the previous year.

The total investment portfolio has performed well against our market related benchmarks this year. The portfolio had a total return of 8.63 per cent following on from a return of 10.79 per cent the previous year. The portfolio's benchmark performance in this year was CPI plus 4.5 per cent over a five-year period. The portfolio had a performance of 8.98 per cent over the five-year period against the benchmark performance of 6.34 per cent.

In Tasmania, additional to services above, we continue to have a strong focus on the development of the service model in light of the NDIS, community engagement and capacity building, Auslan tuition and the development of strategic partnerships.

We are now entering the final year of transition from DHHS funding to the new NDIS service model. The process continues to be challenging for us as it is with all in this service space. We continue to model our services in this area to ensure we can provide an ongoing sustainable service to the community.

As advised at the AGM last year, the Board undertook an audit tender process, and appointed Ernst & Young (EY) as auditors this year. We would like to thank our outgoing auditors, ShineWing for their support over the previous three years and look forward to an ongoing relationship with EY in the future.

I would like to acknowledge members of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee for their support over the year. These include the Chairman of the Board, Garry Fowler and fellow directors, Praveen Reddy and Demetrio Zema. 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.



**Peter Berg**  
Treasurer

# Financials

## Summary of comprehensive income for the year

	2017-2018 (\$)			2016-2017 (\$)
	Income	Expenses	Income	Expenses
Community support	3,586,087	3,617,424	3,549,275	3,418,862
Interpreting	4,167,556	3,906,776	3,609,081	3,353,327
Auslan training	501,400	473,004	346,369	278,261
Employment services	1,965,261	1,751,058	1,916,813	1,735,754
Audiology services	2,259,110	2,164,376	1,984,780	2,072,188
Fundraising	223,679	137,839	594,478	143,011
Central administration	31,941	1,936,422	22,380	2,267,117
Special projects	395,907	389,929	242,027	320,331
Development expenses	-	45,396	-	45,956
Investments	1,746,451	51,930	1,760,257	48,441
	<b>14,877,392</b>	<b>14,474,154</b>	<b>14,025,460</b>	<b>13,683,248</b>
<b>Underlying profit for the year</b>		<b>403,238</b>		<b>342,212</b>
<b>Accounting standard adjustment</b>		<b>935,531</b>		<b>(180,348)</b>
<b>Net profit - financial statements</b>		<b>1,338,769</b>		<b>161,864</b>
<i>Items that will not be reclassified to the profit or loss</i>				
Changes in fair value of equity investments at FVOCI		418,341		824,869
Reserve acquired on acquisition of Tasmanian Deaf Society		-		547,716
Other comprehensive income for the year		418,341		1,372,585
<b>Total comprehensive income for the year</b>		<b>1,757,110</b>		<b>1,534,449</b>

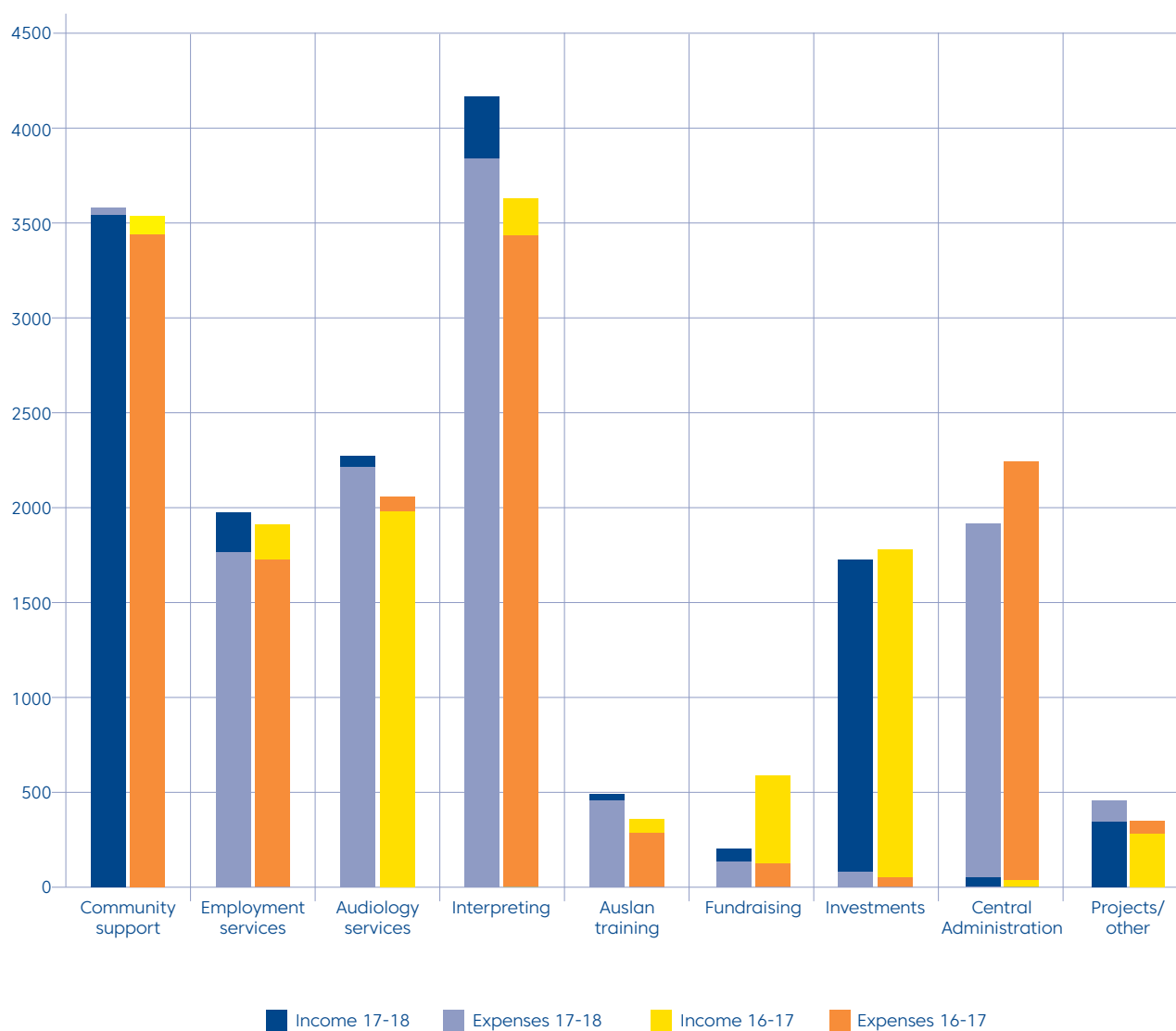
## Summary of financial position for the year

	2018 (\$)	2017 (\$)
Investments	25,307,059	24,587,534
Other Assets	4,335,014	3,200,963
Total Liabilities	(2,775,363)	(2,678,897)
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>26,866,710</b>	<b>25,109,600</b>
Financial Assets at FVOCI Reserve	119,457	606,679
Development Reserve	-	96,618
Tasmanian Deaf Society Reserve	547,716	547,716
Unspent Grants Reserve	1,301,616	-
Retained Earnings	24,897,921	23,858,587
<b>Total Equity</b>	<b>26,866,710</b>	<b>25,109,600</b>

A copy of the Financial Report for year ended June 2018 can be provided on request.

# Financials

## Results by area: 2017-18



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