

# **Parent Council for Deaf Education Inc**



## **2004 Annual Report**

# Mission

*To work with parents and families of Deaf and Hearing Impaired children, regardless of their background to promote their rights in all aspects of their lives from birth to the end of tertiary education*

## Main Objectives

- To work for the furtherance of the education and welfare of all children and youth who are deaf/hearing impaired.
- To heighten public awareness of the abilities and needs of deaf/hearing impaired youth and their families.
- To liaise with Government officers, teachers, parents and other relevant people to monitor and review the provision of services for deaf/hearing impaired youth and their families.
- To monitor and make accessible to members, the activities of the various organisations, authorities and persons engaged in the education and welfare of deaf/hearing impaired youth through “Where Do We Go From Here?” publication and quarterly journal “Sound News”.

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# ***PRESIDENT'S REPORT***

At the end of 2003 the aims and objectives of Parent Council for Deaf Education looked like a near impossibility. With the departure of Steve Ripley as Project Co-ordinator, the Management Committee only being made up of three members and lack of volunteers to work it sub-committee level, things looked dismal.

In February Alex Ebert was welcomed aboard the Management Committee as Treasurer. Alex's background is in finance and politics and he brought with him a wealth of knowledge and experience. He was also able to give PCDE's moral a boost when he announced that PCDE did in fact have funds to use to carry out its Mission. This, after many years of being told that there was no funds available over and above the basic running costs of the organization.

Linda Wilson joined PCDE's team as Project Co-ordinator on a part time basis in May, going to full time work from 1 July. Linda, who is Deaf, has worked with children, adults and young people in many and various roles including Women's Health, schools and child care services, TAFE and the Deaf Society

Then in June Peta Turner and Lyn Deane along with Siobhan Wilson, were employed on a casual basis to work on the Conference. Peta and Lyn are now job sharing the Admin role after Chris Grunter decided to leave PCDE for full time employment at the end of June. Both Peta and Lyn has grown up with deafness in their families. Peta has two deaf nieces, while Lyn's mother is deaf.

The "Whole Child" Conference, held at the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children on 21-22 August, started out as a personal dream of mine – to get families together where parents could receive information and share experiences, while their child/ren and youth could socialize together. The Conference was opened by the Signing Choir from Thomas Patterson School with speakers covering topics such as newborn screening, genetics, and access for Deafblind children, parenting program, technology, as well as presentations from two parents about their quite different experiences of having a deaf child.

While numbers were disappointing, by lunch time on the first day I was being approached by, not only attendees but volunteers, all with the same comment. "I hope PCDE will hold the same format again next year". This was great, but a little daunting, as I had not thought past getting through the next part of the day. By the Sunday afternoon many of the volunteers had offered to come back next year, including Quota International, as they had really enjoyed the interaction.

There has been a constant theme across the board from the feedback from parents, presenters and volunteers that families being able to come together with separate activities provided for all members was a great format and that PCDE should hold this every year. Parents also stated that it was a good idea to have the Expo, in addition to the conference presenters, where they could pick up extra information at their leisure, while mixing with other parents and professional.

The children's activities were a great hit – maybe just as much, if not more so, with those who volunteered. There was the Jump 'N Jive, a Jumping Castle, craft and free play, all of which was embraced with much enthusiasm. I must thank Kate Wrightson and Maria Salmon-Foong for the many hours they put in to put together separate programmes for pre-schoolers/early school age as well as primary age. I would also like to thank Eleanor, Hal, David and Helen for their help with the children.

The Youth Group ran their own activities, including Ten Pin Bowling in Parramatta.

The Youth Group, under the guidance of Craig Maynard, has grown stronger and more independent over the past year. These enthusiastic young people have helped out with selling Community Chest raffle tickets at Westfield North Rocks and manning the PCDE stand at the Hearing Awareness Week Expo at Fairfield the weekend after the Conference.

They also arranged a camp at Waterslea in the October holidays where everyone had a great time while being able to talk freely with their peers about issues in their lives. The campers have asked for this event to happen again next year but that they would like it to be a family camp.

I attended the "Perspectives of Ethics and Deafness" Conference held over 3 days by the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children. It raised many issues which will be part of ongoing discussions in the professional, medical, educational and parent sectors.

Linda and I attended a conference at Westmead Hospital which talked about the impact of newborn screening on new parents. The conference raised the question of whether screening should be deferred from birth to a couple of months down the track and so letting the parents just enjoy their new arrival.

In November I also attended for official opening of the Welwyn Centre at the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children. This centre provides early intervention programs for deaf and hearing impaired children 0-6, whether it be one of the home-based programs, pre-schools or for their remote services.

The computers are finally in working order. This now means that Sounds News will be back in production. MYOB training has been provided for Peta and the financial area is now much more streamlined and efficient.

The website is undergoing many changes and will be launched in the New Year. It will have fundamental information and events for the general public, while members will be able to access more in depth information, a parent forum, Sound News online and links to related information and service. There will also be a separate link to the Youth Group where they can chat with their peers.

I would like to thank the outgoing Management Committee for their support of PCDE under some very trying times in the past 2 years. I would also like to thank all the staff, both past and present, for their hard work.

I would like to welcome in the new Management Committee. PCDE can only grow in supporting parents, youth and children under your capable guidance and with the support of staff as well as volunteers at sub-committee level.

# *Co-coordinator's Report*

As the new Community Project Co-ordinator for the PCDE I would like to welcome readers to the Annual Report and I hope to see lots of new faces at the 2004 Annual General Meeting.

My current mandate includes a strong emphasis on the grassroots work of re-establishing contact with the community and trying to be more accessible to support networks for parents throughout NSW. PCDE is keen to hear from parents about what they need and how PCDE can support their children more effectively.

Another priority has been to continue the work started in 2003 to liaise with the Australian Hearing Services re the issues raised by the privatisation and increased market competition of AHS with mainstream private businesses. In July this year representatives from the Deafness Council, 'Let Us Hear' and PCDE met with Anthea Green and Margaret Dewberry from AHS to present concerns raised by parents.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the privatisation policy developed by the Federal Government for AHS is having a detrimental effect on the families of children who are Deaf/hearing impaired. Parents report they are now finding it increasingly difficult to raise the funds to provide their children with cochlear implants, hearing aids and other assistive listening devices. At PCDE we are receiving regular enquiries from families seeking options for financial assistance to purchase hearing aids for their children as the difference between the cost of the aides and the subsidy offered by AHS grows wider.

PCDE will continue to lobby the AHS and try to keep interested parents informed of the outcomes. To this end PCDE has prepared a report and this report is submitted to AHS on a regular basis to be updated and reviewed. Any parents who would like to raise their concerns are welcome to contact the PCDE.

In the six months I have been with the PCDE we have continued to lobby, with and on behalf of, parents of children who are Deaf/hearing impaired within the Education system. As the trend to mainstream education for children with special needs continues we are becoming increasingly concerned about the lack of funding to provide alternative forms of support for our children and young people in the schools.

For example, parents who would like their child/ren to have access to Auslan Sign Language interpreters are reporting a high level of resistance to requests to provide suitably qualified interpreters. Access to alternative forms of communication is restricted and pre-determined without real consultation with parents and the child or young person. The most common excuse cited by schools is lack of funding to provide interpreters. PCDE is keen to advocate on behalf of the children and we welcome opportunities from parents to do so. We need to be a highly visible and noisy lobby group to address the issues of access and equity in the education system.

A number of issues have been raised about teacher's training whereby they are not receiving appropriate information to be effectively equipped to work with children and youth who are Deaf/hearing impaired or hard of hearing. Another important issue raised by parents and young people has been the lack of consultation between the schools and the children/youth and their family. Parents state they feel left out of the communication loop between their child, schools and professionals involved in their child's hearing care.

There seems to be an expectation of the child/youth to be able to listen under extremely difficult situations. The limitations and functions of hearing aids and cochlear implants do

not seem to be well understood by teachers and other professionals. Generally, the school's inability to provide the appropriate equipment or reliable technology to be able to 'hear' in mainstream classes is having a detrimental effect on the student's ability to utilise residual hearing and technical aides. Students are unable to understand what is being requested of them or to participate effectively in classroom situations.

The profound lack of funding to support children and young people in the education system is reaching crisis point. This is reflected in the lack of access to qualified and experienced Sign Language Interpreters; the paucity of hours allocated for Itinerant Support and the purchase of equipment which would benefit the whole class as well as the student. As you are aware most of the classrooms are not soundproof so a child/youth with assistive devices such as hearing aids or FM system will hear background noise which at times can override the spoken communication within the classroom adding extra stress on the student.

In the area of community work PCDE has been busy developing partnerships with other organisations to support families and children. In my role as co-ordinator I have attended several Conferences focused on children and young people and this has led to opportunities to liaise and network with a range of organisations. PCDE is hopeful that our fledgling efforts to connect with other service providers such as Early Intervention agencies, the Australian Association of the Deaf and Anglicare's Respite Care programs will have lasting and positive outcomes for our children and families.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a big thankyou to this year's Management Committee. The year 2004 has been a tough year with many difficult situations and issues needing to be addressed and only a small, dedicated band of people to hold it all together. All of the members of the Management Committee have put in long hours of their time to keep PCDE afloat and on target and as a new worker I have a huge appreciation for their efforts. I especially wish to note the contribution of Louise Rakowski's amazing energy and drive behind the success of the 2004 "The Whole Child" Conference. Many thanks to our sponsors both major and minor and the hard-working volunteers who made this conference a success.

The new administration staff – Peta Turner and Lyn Deane – have worked with me as a highly effective and enthusiastic team since the end of June this year. I hope they continue to place their special brand of magic on the PCDE office and stay awhile.

PCDE has reached a crossroads and the organisation needs the input of a diverse and enthusiastic Management Committee with lots of volunteers. The potential for PCDE to be a dynamic and influential service is already established but we need more hands to help us achieve all the important work our children will require for their future. This year a few good people put in a big effort. Next year we would like to see a lot more people around to share the load. I look forward to meeting you out in the community and if you do have a special talent, or a bit of time to help, approach us or give us a call.

I look forward to meeting the new members of the Management Committee and hope we can take PCDE into a new and dynamic phase of growth and community development.

Linda Wilson  
Community Project Co-ordinator

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

*President*  
**Louise Rakowski**

*Secretary*  
**Louise Jones**

*Treasurer*  
**Alex Ebert**

*Public Officer*  
**Craig Maynard**

*Ordinary Committee Members*  
**Craig Maynard**

## ASSOCIATE ORGANISATION REPRESENTATIVES

**Lorraine Mulley**  
*Deaf Society of New South Wales*

**Nina Quinn** *(regional manager)*  
*Australian Hearing*

**Chris Rehn**  
*Children's Cochlear Implant Centre (NSW)*

# THE PARENT COUNCIL FOR DEAF EDUCATION INC.

## *BALANCE SHEET*

AT JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup> 2004

	2004 \$	2003 \$
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash	25,891.71	13,958.66
Other assets	1,368.81	956.31
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u>27,260.52</u>	<u>14,914.97</u>
<b>NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Investments	40,400.29	39,631.52
Property, plant & equipment	1,358.45	2,300.45
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT ASSETS</b>	<u>41,758.74</u>	<u>41,931.97</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<u><u>69,019.26</u></u>	<u><u>56,846.94</u></u>
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Creditors & borrowings	12,306.90	14,033.85
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<u>12,306.90</u>	<u>14,033.85</u>
<b>NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<u><u>12,306.90</u></u>	<u><u>14,033.85</u></u>
<b>NET ASSETS/(LIABILITIES)</b>	<u><u>56,712.36</u></u>	<u><u>42,813.09</u></u>
<b>REPRESENTED BY:-</b>		
<b>ACCUMULATED SURPLUS</b>	<u><u>56,712.36</u></u>	<u><u>42,813.09</u></u>

**THE PARENT COUNCIL FOR DEAF EDUCATION INC.**  
***INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT***  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup> 2004**

	2004	2003
	\$	\$
<b><u>INCOME</u></b>		
Ageing & Disability Department Funding	70,753.60	68,638.00
Members' subscriptions	175.00	4,415.00
Donations & Corporate Sponsors	749.82	2,897.00
Advertising	557.70	1,400.00
Raffles	1,203.75	644.00
Miscellaneous Income	542.99	81.00
Interest Received	858.09	1,322.90
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>74,840.95</b>	<b>79,397.90</b>
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		
Administration	5,485.40	15,970.50
Salaries	36,922.46	36,443.81
Superannuation	3,095.10	3,136.51
Insurance	5,325.98	3,087.21
Depreciation	942.00	537.00
Sound News	(592.64)	2,422.00
Activities	2,093.83	2,185.78
Bank Charges	69.22	57.46
Rent	1,923.65	1,382.74
Telephone & Internet	1,355.78	1,696.72
Repairs & Maintenance	1,053.76	1,870.78
Meeting expenses	531.82	193.50
Electricity	1,144.53	524.54
Printing & Stationery	(44.85)	1,845.89
Postage	287.14	762.91
Interpreter	1,812.50	1,920.00
Memberships	269.10	408.19
Staff Training & Amenities	756.50	41.69
Staff Procurement	749.46	0.00
Filing Fees	39.00	56.00
Sundries	233.18	65.91
Provision for LSL & Leave Entitlement	(2,511.38)	739.67
WeBsite Costs	0.00	363.64
Software	0.14	787.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>60,941.68</b>	<b>76,772.45</b>
<b>EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>13,899.27</b>	<b>2,625.45</b>

## ***DONORS 2003 / 2004***

*Blacktown TAFE Certificate  
III in Auslan students*

*Kate Wrightson*

*Eleanor Maxwell*

*Misty Mountain Water*

*Ken Wright*

*Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children*

*Australian  
Communication Exchange*

*Quota International*

*Bill Hamilton*

*Dr David Starte*

**Our special thanks to John G. Oehlers, Chartered Accountant, Parramatta, who kindly donated his services as auditor for PCDE.**

**And to  
*Marco Fabini*  
For all his work providing IT support.**

**PCDE Receives Recurrent Funding from The Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care**