



Parent Council for Deaf Education

ANNUAL REPORT

2008

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President's Report

Parent Council for Deaf Education (PCDE) has seen an amazing membership growth with our membership almost doubling over the last two years, trumpeting our success as an organisation offering support and advocacy to parents with deaf children. This may be attributed to the partnership and guidance that we receive from Deaf Children Australia (DCA), and the wonderful efforts of our dynamic staff and committee.

This year before leaving PCDE, Nicki Flambouras was instrumental in establishing POD Macarthur, a parent support group established in the Liverpool area, in line with our strategic plan to build a network of parents. This POD group continues to grow and its success has been greatly facilitated by the efforts and dedication of two committee members, Aileen Ryan and Vickie Cox. Further development of POD groups is imminent, with parent groups eager to receive support from PCDE, the peak body for parent support in NSW.

Upon Nicki's departure in May this year, the Management Committee split the vacant position into two roles, an Information and Advocacy Coordinator, three days, and a Project Officer, two days. This arrangement has been highly successful. We are now very fortunate to have Kate Kennedy in the management role and Juliet Schumacher in the co-ordinator role.

Sound News has been distributed widely and judging by the requests for extra copies it is literally walking out of the office, helping keep parents informed and connected. Recently PCDE experimented with the in-house desktop publishing of Sound News, with acclaim to Juliet and Kate. I would like to thank Ann Porter also for her calm and diligent support with the website and previously with Sound News. More recently Kelly Norton from DCA, based in Sydney, has successfully partnered with PCDE staff to co-ordinate the delivery of Cool Kids Cool Parents workshops in NSW and Canberra.

Thank you must also go to The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) for our recurrent funding and DCA for their financial support and the managerial support offered by Gene Reardon to support Kate in the smooth implementation of our goals. The Committee also acknowledges and thanks Veronica Pardo, Deputy CEO, DCA for her active support on governance. We also acknowledge the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) in housing us at a reduced rental, offering professional support where necessary and supplying quality articles for Sound News.

The Management Committee has remained stable and committed. This year we farewell Kate Kennedy, a Committee Member, and we thank Kate for her valuable contribution. We thank Mark Burfield for his time as a parent representative at the Teachers of the Deaf meetings. Tracy McGee has been

elected as the Lismore POD Representative, valuing those members that live in the greater NSW area. To our Treasurer Amanda Li we also owe a huge thank you. As parents on the PCDE Committee and ourselves with deaf children, our vision is to share information, offer parent to parent support and mentoring, networking and socialisation. We are eager to support parents in the very early stages of diagnosis. We have been visiting SWISH social workers and further establishing relevant contacts in these areas. This continues to be a growth and consolidation stage for PCDE.

We welcome all our new members and thank all our continuing members for their support and we look forward to evolving with you into the future.

Gabrielle Hill

Staff Report

PCDE's mission as stated at our Vision Day in 2007 is: "To empower parents in NSW to support their deaf/hearing impaired children to reach their full potential through information, support networks and representation."

With this in mind, I report to you today on our past year's activities, by using the key priority areas of the PCDE Management Committee's Strategic Plan (2008-10) which came out of the Vision Day.

I am relatively new to the role of Coordinator, Information and Advocacy, having commenced in August this year. Together with Juliet Schumacher, who commenced as the Project Officer at the same time, we have taken on the role of supporting and advocating for parents in NSW in line with the vision of the PCDE Management Committee and its Strategic Plan.

Strengthening Parent Support Networks

Parents acknowledge that they are stronger together than apart and a key goal for PCDE is to build strong parent networks through the creation of POD ("Parents of Deaf") support groups. POD Macarthur, the parent support group in the South West of Sydney has been up and running for over a year now. PCDE is currently in discussion with North Shore Deaf Children's Association about becoming POD North Shore and our plan is to have five active PODs in NSW within three years.

Empowering Parents through Information and Support

There has been an increase in the number of people using our service and who have taken on membership of PCDE. In the last month alone, we were contacted by seven families needing information and support for issues as diverse as HSC

support for a student, an Itinerant Support Teacher who needed information on how to help build her deaf student's self esteem, a parent looking for information on Auslan services and a parent enquiring about the questions to ask when researching schools for her hearing impaired child. The issues are diverse but the common thread is concern for the wellbeing of our deaf children and their future, particularly in terms of their education.

Sound News

Sound News continues to be produced by PCDE quarterly and I would like to acknowledge all the organisations and parents who have contributed to this wonderful magazine. It provides our membership and professional organisations, especially those in regional areas, with valuable, timely information and is a great promotional tool for PCDE.

I would like to acknowledge the work of Juliet Schumacher in this regard, who has worked very hard to make sure the quality of the magazine is never compromised and that the deadlines are met.

Cool Kids Cool Parents Workshop

Due to PCDE's partnership with Deaf Children Australia, we have also been able to offer parents the opportunity to attend Cool Kids Cool Parents. This workshop aims to bring parents together to share the challenges and joys of raising kids with a hearing loss. Having trained up an army of parents to run this workshop, we are now able to offer this across NSW. We have already run two workshops in Sydney, one in Dubbo and one in Canberra, with another about to run next week in Sydney.

Enhancing the Identity of PCDE

I have been building on the good work already done by PCDE staff and its Management Committee in building our relationships in NSW with key stakeholders such as RIDBC, The Shepherd Centre, the Deaf Society of NSW, Deaf Australia and Deafness Forum. I have made contact with all these organisations in the last few months along with many others. We are currently working in partnership with the Deaf Society to lobby the NSW Department of Education to improve the level of qualifications for Auslan for NSW teachers. We are also working closely with The Shepherd Centre and will be working with this organisation in 2009 to provide staff development on parent support and information.

We work closely with RIDBC and it continues to support PCDE with regular articles in Sound News and with distribution to its parent base of upcoming events.

Consolidating our Partnership with DCA

PCDE continues to work closely with Deaf Children Australia, with weekly meetings and common goals. This relationship has been further enhanced by the addition of Kelly Norton, who is back from maternity leave to work for DCA in NSW.

I would like to acknowledge the weekly support given to my role by Gene Reardon, General Manager of DCA, the regular support on governance and national issues given by Veronica Pardo, DCA Deputy CEO and the ongoing and invaluable support of Julie Chaplin, DCA Accountant and her team.

In conclusion, I would like to acknowledge the active support given to myself and Juliet by the Management Committee of PCDE. I am looking forward to an exciting year ahead.

Kate Kennedy
Co-ordinator, Information and Advocacy

Management Committee and Staff

Gabrielle Hill – President

Gabrielle has three beautiful children, two profoundly Deaf sons and an older hearing daughter. Gabrielle says, "We are a signing family. As a family we are bilingual and bicultural with Deafness a celebrated part of life. The fascination of watching my sons' language unfold inspired me to study linguistics and ultimately to become a teacher. The boys are avid readers and writers. This is my passion - literacy." Gabrielle is currently enrolled in a Master of Special Education, studying Deafness and Literacy.

Aileen Ryan – Vice President

Aileen and her family live in Raby, Sydney. She has three sons, one daughter and two grandsons. Her daughter has Down syndrome and was diagnosed with a hearing loss at age four. Her daughter is in a hearing unit in high school and is dependent on the use of Auslan together with spoken language to be clearly understood. Aileen works with parents and professionals involved with children/adults with speech and/or developmental delay teaching and presenting talks on "key word signing". She has written three sign language resource books and has been involved with Makaton Australia for many years. Aileen feels very strongly about sign language support for children during their years at school.

Amanda Li – Treasurer

Amanda is the mother of three children. One of her children is Deaf and attends a bilingual Auslan/English school in Sydney's north west. "I've had very little experience with deafness prior to my daughter's diagnosis, it hasn't been easy and it has certainly opened my eyes to the state of our education system. I believe that parents are the best advocates for their children and by becoming involved in PCDE, I'd like to provide support and information to other parents and help them achieve their goals for their children." Amanda practises as a dentist part time, she has recently completed Certificate IV in Auslan and will go on to further study to become an Auslan Interpreter.

Vicki Cox – Secretary

Vicki is the mother of two girls who were both born profoundly deaf. Both have received cochlear implants and attend a Hearing Support Unit. "Prior to children, I had a career in marketing but the difficulties my two children encountered inspired me to return to university to complete a Master of Speech and Language Pathology." Vicki now works as a Speech Pathologist with children who have a range of special needs.

Mark Burfield – Committee Member

Mark is the father of three young children. The first was born profoundly deaf in 1999, received a cochlear implant in 2001, and she is currently in a public school hearing support class. Mark's concern is the maintenance and improvement of services for the hearing impaired in the education system and beyond. He is President of the P&C Association at his daughter's school, Chairman of the scout group that she attends, and works as a Director and Treasurer of entities in Australia of the "Universal Peace Federation".

Tracy McGee – Committee Member

Tracy lives at Emerald Beach, north of Coffs Harbour. She has a daughter who is profoundly deaf and communicates using Auslan and Signed English. She is fully mainstreamed into her local high school. Tracy is actively involved in the Coffs Harbour Deaf Community.

Staff

Kate Kennedy – Co-ordinator, Information and Advocacy

Kate is a parent of three school age children, two of whom have a hearing loss. She was a PCDE Committee Member for three years prior to taking the role of Information and Advocacy Co-ordinator. In her professional life, Kate has worked in the IT training arena for many years and has had her own small business for

the last five years. She feels strongly about the need for unbiased information and support for parents of deaf children so that they can make informed choices about their child's future.

Juliet Schumacher - Project Officer, Information and Advocacy

Juliet comes from a background of personal/family experience in hearing impairment and the broader field of disabilities. She has three children and balances her work at PCDE with primary school teaching. Juliet is familiar with Auslan, is passionate about the rights of people with special needs and hopes to further her studies in the field of special education or disabilities.

PCDE Income and Expenditure Statement

PARENT COUNCIL FOR DEAF EDUCATION INC

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2008

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2007</u>
	\$	\$
<u>INCOME</u>		
Advertising	1,965.45	0.00
Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care Funding	77,545.00	75,068.00
Memberships & Donations	2,345.45	1,931.50
Miscellaneous Income	0.00	1,178.29
Interest Received	560.90	217.52
GST Refund	2,149.00	0.00
Subsidy by Deaf Children Australia	32,333.14	0.00
TOTAL INCOME	<u>116,898.94</u>	<u>78,395.31</u>
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Activities	14,115.39	7,431.47
Administration	0.00	559.80
Bank Charges	382.65	409.31
Car & Travel	3,190.92	0.00
Computer Expenses	1,378.00	1,129.56
Consultant Fees	1,000.00	61,652.49
Depreciation	5,669.00	368.00
Insurance	3,454.00	2,109.60
Interest Expense	0.00	143.29
Interpreter	315.34	(88.86)
Meeting Expenses	1,732.62	298.69
Printing, Postage & Stationery	15,000.75	1,458.12
Rent	2,127.24	890.65
Repairs & Maintenance	180.91	148.18
Salaries	60,783.87	0.00
Superannuation	5,021.49	1,623.55
Provision for Staff Benefits	0.00	(7,327.39)
Staff Training & Amenities	315.00	795.59
Telephone & Internet	3,611.74	1,616.07
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	<u>118,278.92</u>	<u>73,218.12</u>
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	<u>(\$1,379.98)</u>	<u>\$5,177.19</u>

Acknowledgements

The Parent Council for Deaf Education Inc., relies on a government grant provided by The Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) to maintain support, information and advocacy services for families. We acknowledge with gratitude their financial support and also that of Deaf Children Australia. We also rely on tax deductible donations and in this instance would like to thank Judith White for her generous donation.

We would like to recognise the support provided by the Deaf Society of NSW, the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children, The Shepherd Centre, The Deafness Centre at Westmead Hospital and Aussie Deaf Kids in promoting our services, publications and training programs. In addition, we appreciate the support shown by our members, both individual and organisational.

Lastly, the management committee would like to thank the staff and management of Deaf Children Australia for their support and leadership. Your time and commitment has been much appreciated and valued.

Parent Council for Deaf Education

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