



Parent Council for Deaf Education

ANNUAL REPORT

2010

Table of Contents

- 1.** President's Report
- 2.** Staff Report
- 3.** Management Committee and Staff
- 4.** PCDE Income and Expenditure Statement
- 5.** Acknowledgements

President's Report

This has been a year of reflective consolidation for the Parent Council for Deaf Education (PCDE), leading into and following its Vision Day on 30 May 2010 – the second in three years. Under the guidance of an experienced facilitator, the Management Committee members and staff could more clearly recognise the strength of PCDE as an independent, unbiased, family-friendly source (and where necessary referral point) for information, support and advocacy for parents and their children who are deaf or hearing impaired/hard of hearing.

Following on from the previous Vision Day in October 2007, the issue of a name change was discussed more intently at and after this year's Vision Day. The reason for a name change is that 'education' alone, as emphasised in the current name, is not necessarily the predominant issue of concern to our (potential) membership base. This has become the case especially since the introduction of universal newborn hearing screening in NSW (in December 2002) such that many children are now diagnosed with a hearing loss much earlier, and also with improved and continually improving technologies to assist in hearing. The proposal is to change our name to: Parents of Deaf Children, but a tagline (if any), new logo, and indeed final confirmation of this name change choice, is still pending.

Two of the regular main focuses of PCDE are the facilitating and support of POD Groups – in Northern Sydney, Central Sydney, and Macarthur (with potential for POD groups elsewhere), and production of our flagship quarterly publication, 'Sound News'. With both, there are issues– for instance with POD groups to ensure they can become (or remain) self-maintaining, and with 'Sound News' to consider its place and value in the emerging world of social media for conveying information (etc.)

I have personally attended several informative events this year (invariably also great networking opportunities), including POD sessions with guest speakers on Beating Bullying and on School Readiness; Shepherd Centre in Darlington; a couple of seminars with international guest speakers at the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC), and also their AGM; the annual Veronica James Science Challenge; the 6th National Deafness Sector Summit; the Educators of Deaf Students' Association (EDSA) & Deafness Centre annual Conference; Deaf Society of NSW Family Day Festival; AI Media Demonstration; Classroom Access Project Demonstration at Cerdon College; the Board Retreat of Deaf Children Australia (DCA) in Frankston (Victoria); and Cochlear Implant Club and ADvisory Association (CICADA) AGM.

I also made a presentation for the fourth year, as the parent of a deaf child (this time with my child) to Masters of Audiology students at Macquarie University. With our Information and Advocacy Coordinator, Kate Kennedy, we made visits to the Hearing Support Units at Strathfield South High School and St Ives High

School, and met or communicated together on numerous occasions, sometimes along with Rebecca Ladd until she resigned as Deputy CEO of DCA in July. I was unfortunately not able to attend the events co-sponsored by PCDE at the NSW Parliament House following the National Week of Deaf People in October, including the Panel Discussion on Deaf Education and Student Tour / Role Play / BBQ.

I made a submission to the NSW Ombudsman's inquiry into 'Families with a Child with a Disability', and contributed to the Senate Inquiry into Hearing Health in Australia.

I acknowledge PCDE's current partnership with DCA, whose support is deeply appreciated. Further, PCDE enjoys good relationships with the Deaf Society of NSW (including through our mutual involvement in the Parent-to-Parent Mentoring program), and the on-line parent forum, Aussie Deaf Kids, along with other stakeholder groups.

I sincerely thank the 2009-2010 Management Committee for their valued contributions, passion and support: Leonie Jackson, Vicki Cox, Amanda Li, Aileen Ryan, Anna Messariti, and Katrina Marshall (who resigned in August). I also deeply thank our personable Staff for their thorough work, enthusiasm, and initiative, often in challenging circumstances: Kate Kennedy, Anna Iacono (going on maternity leave in early 2011 as she is expecting a new addition to her family – congratulations!), and Juliet Schumacher (who resigned in March). Thanks also to the parents who have participated in the POD group meetings and PCDE events. Parents and their children who are deaf or hearing impaired/hard of hearing are of course at the core of our *raison d'etre*.

Mark Burfield
President

Coordinator Report

Parent Council for Deaf Education (PCDE) continues its focus in 2010 on building strong relationships with families, professionals and government. Our aim is to guide parents with information and support and to also represent the needs and concerns of families at a systemic level. PCDE is governed by a board of parents, supported financially by DADHC and Deaf Children Australia, and staffed by two part time employees, myself and Anna Iacono, our wonderful Administrative Assistant.

Parent Support

Parent support and networking was a major focus for PCDE in 2010. PCDE coordinates three POD groups in Sydney. We received funding for POD Macarthur from West Leagues Club, and this meant an increase in focus and participation of this group. Along with POD Northern Sydney and POD Central Sydney, they form a network of parents across Sydney. Parents meet regularly for a cuppa and a chat or attend an information session on relevant topics, such as school readiness or bullying. Recently PCDE has been working with families in the mid north coast, as they work towards building a POD in their area, so we see this network growing in 2011.

Some activities that POD families have been able to participate in are:

- Australian Hearing Information Night at POD Northern Sydney
- Cool Kids Cool Parents Workshop at POD Macarthur, Leumeah.
- Beating Bullying Workshop at POD Central Sydney
- Movie night at POD Central Sydney
- Parent Feedback Session for SWISH Evaluation, POD NS.
- Ai Live Demonstration and Morning Tea at Ai Media, North Ryde.
- School Readiness Night at POD Macarthur, Parramatta.
- Free Circus Quirkus Tickets.
- Hearing Awareness Week Party at POD NS.
- Australian Hearing Information Morning Tea at POD Macarthur
- Deaf Friendly Parenting workshop at Taree.
- School holiday activities; play in park and powerhouse museum visit.

Parent to Parent Mentoring

The Parent to Parent Mentoring program, the result of collaboration between the Deaf Society of NSW and PCDE and set up in 2008, continues to grow and provide families with much needed support at time of diagnosis or any time on their journey. I would like to acknowledge the work of the Deaf Society of NSW and in particular Theresa Thompson, for the continued support in making this program possible. PCDE and DSNSW work together to train and match parents and to inservice professionals about this service.

The program has now trained 29 mentors and have 27 available to be matched. Additionally, the program has matched parents with mentors that speak Arabic, Cantonese and Mandarin and 3 parents have been matched with mentors who understand the pressures of children with additional disabilities. Regional families are now able to access this program and via technology can be matched to a family that can support them remotely.

Advocacy

Parent Council continues to advocate on behalf of parents for improved services for deaf children in NSW, both at an individual level and at a systemic level. In 2010 we contributed a number of submissions to government inquiries including the Senate Community Affairs References Committee Inquiry into Hearing Health in Australia. We trust some or all of the recommendations that arose from this enquiry will be implemented, including those very pertinent to our membership:

- Eligibility for Australian Hearing support until the age of 25 (as opposed to the current eligibility cut off at 21).
- Education providers to develop standards for interpreters working in educational settings.
- Supply and maintenance of Soundfield systems in classrooms for all new classrooms.

PCDE regularly works with other agencies in NSW to lobby for improved services for families of children who are deaf or hearing impaired. PCDE has been part of a NSW Dept of Health SWISH Evaluation reference group to put forward the parent perspective and to provide parent feedback on the SWISH program. PCDE worked with The Deaf Society of NSW and Deaf Australia NSW to promote and run the 2nd annual “Deaf Awareness at NSW Parliament” event on 19th October 2010. This event helped raise the profile of the Deaf community and was a forum for discussion and advocacy on deaf education.

On a day to day basis, PCDE fields inquiries and concerns from parents about all sorts of topics, such as the options for technology available for their deaf child through to questions about the number of hours of support their child is eligible for, or how we can help with lobbying for improved interpreter support for a deaf child.

Sound News

Sound News, our quarterly magazine aimed at providing parents and professionals with current, relevant information on education, technology and first hand experiences, continues to be the cornerstone of what PCDE is all about. It is seen as a valuable resource for families as well as professionals, especially those who live regionally and who are often isolated from other parents and information.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Juliet Schumacher who created the new template that is now Sound News and really raised the bar on its look and content. Upon Juliet’s resignation earlier this year, Anna Iacono stepped into the role of publisher of Sound News. Anna continues to do a fabulous job with

Sound News and is always thinking of ways we can improve. We would also like to note our thanks to all the parents who gave up their time to share their personal stories with us – the magazine is the richer for your input. We also acknowledge those professionals who contributed their expertise so that parents can be better informed to advocate for their child.

Enhancing the Identity of PCDE

PCDE has had another busy year talking to parents and professionals at many different venues and agencies. We met with parents and professionals at The Shepherd Centre, Catherine Sullivan Centre, Hear the Children, The Welwyn Centre at RIDBC, Waterford Preschool, Strathfield South High School, St Ives High School, Nuwarra Public School and the Ephpheta Centre, ACCAN, ACE Communications, AI Media and Media Access. We attended a number of conferences and workshops such as the Deafness Forum's Summit, connected with itinerant teachers at EDSA conference and worked with the Deafness Centre at The Children's Hospital Westmead to facilitate a Unilateral HL parent workshop.

We are passionate about getting the word out about this great organization but we also need to enlist the help of parents. We need parents to be champions of PCDE and this is starting to happen. Word of mouth is a great marketing tool and we would like to see more parents helping us do this. Anna has worked hard to build and renew our membership this year, and we have an increase of 20% from 2009, so her considerable efforts are paying off. We see potential for further growth in membership by linking with parent forums, especially Aussiedeafkids.

Much thought and discussion has taken place in 2010 with regards to the name of PCDE. A name change has been on the agenda for quite awhile now and as time goes on the momentum has grown, resulting in a plan to make this change over the 2011 calendar year. If you are a member of PCDE, you are able to have you say about the proposed name change to "Parents of Deaf Children".

Key Relationships.

PCDE continues to work with Deaf Children Australia, with weekly meetings and common goals. DCA provides PCDE with managerial support and guidance, along with ongoing financial support for program delivery. I would like to thank Deaf Children Australia for their considerable contribution to PCDE over 2010 and would like to pay tribute in particular to Gene Reardon, General Manager of DCA and Rebecca Ladd, Deputy CEO, both of whom have been actively involved in guiding and advising PCDE over the past few years and even though are no longer working for DCA, continue to be interested in our progress.

PCDE worked with DCA on a number of programs this year, including two parent workshops in May 2010, co-facilitated by Joni Birch from DCA QLD. We look forward to working with DCA to implement programs in areas where there is unmet need, particularly in regional areas of NSW.

PCDE continues to build a strong working relationship with The Deaf Society of NSW. Strategically there are areas of synergy, such as in advocacy and supporting families and it makes sense for us to foster a connection with this key service provider in our sector in NSW. We look forward to another collaborative year with them.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Management Committee of PCDE who give up their time voluntarily, especially our President Mark Burfield, who invests many hours in making sure that PCDE continues to grow and to run smoothly. I look forward to working with the new team to achieve our goals in 2011.

Kate Kennedy, PCDE Co-ordinator, Information and Advocacy

Management Committee and Staff

Mark Burfield – President

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".

Leonie Jackson - Vice President

Leonie is the mother of a very active two year old toddler. Her son is Deaf and attends a bilingual Auslan/English preschool program at Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children as well as the local family day care. Leonie is a Deaf bilingual adult who works for RIDBC as the Assistant Principal of RIDBC Thomas Pattison School. She is a strong advocate for the best educational fit for every deaf/hearing impaired child using all possible avenues and tools available.

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.

Aileen Ryan– Committee Member

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.

Anna Messariti – Committee Member

Anna Messariti is currently on the management committee of PCDE. Her son Xavier, who is twenty months old, has a bilateral mild to severe sensorineural hearing loss, that is predominantly moderate. Xavier was diagnosed when he was 13 days old and has been aided since he was five weeks old. Xavier has also been assisted by early intervention strategies since his hearing loss was identified and is displaying age appropriate language development. Professionally, Anna has a history of working in theatre, film and radio. She is an Executive Producer and Producer for ABC Radio National, working across five of its Performance and Features programs. She co-founded muchadofilms and has produced a number of short films and documentaries. Anna’s work in theatre spanned more than a decade, during which she directed many new Australian plays. She has also been a secondary school drama teacher in Sydney and also worked as a drama tutor for La Trobe University.

PCDE 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.

Anna Iacono - Administration Assistant

Anna has a nephew with a moderate hearing loss and is working at PCDE to raise awareness and share information with families. Anna works on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Anna is the mother of Sarah, a active young 4 year old girl and Anna is pregnant with another baby on the way.

PCDE Income and Expenditure Statement

PARENT COUNCIL FOR DEAF EDUCATION INC

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2010

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>
	\$	\$
<u>INCOME</u>		
Advertising	-	50.00
Department of Ageing, Disability & Home Care Funding	82,041.00	80,897.00
Other Grant Income	4,500.00	-
Memberships & Donations	2,343.56	2,156.36
Interest Received	154.23	428.63
Deaf Children Australia - subsidy/(contribution)	23,750.83	3,281.39
TOTAL INCOME	112,789.62	86,813.38
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		
Bank Charges	149.43	260.13
Car & Travel	3,666.36	4,681.67
Committee Expenses	1,790.45	1,910.04
Depreciation	2,600.00	0.00
Equipment	1,060.00	2,625.46
Insurance	4,724.60	645.26
Interpreting	1,386.37	2,374.55
Office & Meeting Expenses	9,173.81	1,300.01
Printing, Postage & Stationery	8,107.49	10,587.43
Program Expenses	6,636.95	2,107.70
Rent & Utilities	2,116.78	1,890.88
Salaries	52,811.22	48,065.28
Superannuation	4,474.56	4,050.23
Staff Training & Amenities	127.27	1,033.26
Telephone & IT	5,813.42	3,733.23
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	104,638.71	85,265.13
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$8,150.91	\$1,548.25

Treasurer's Report 2010

PCDE 's financial position remains stable and strong over the past year. The bank account balance currently is sitting at \$ 38,789

The balance sheet shows the net asset at the end of 2010 financial year at \$20,988 which is an increase from the previous year of \$12,837.

PCDE's main source of income in 2010 is ADHC grant totalling \$82,041. An increase of \$1,938 was received due to indexation. Revenue from membership and advertising has remained steady at \$2,343.

However PCDE's expenses for the last year have increased from \$85,265 to \$104,638. The difference is mainly due to a change in allocation of expenses from DCA. In the expense category of office and admin, an additional accounting and business support expense which totalled \$6,128 was included in PCDE expenses. Depreciation which totalled \$2600 was allocated this year where as none was claimed in 2009. Also in the category of insurance there was an increase of \$4,079 from the previous year. Other increases in expenses included IT support from DCA and staff salary.

The partnership with DCA has provided PCDE with valuable support and strong financial position. One priority in the coming year would be to continue to work closely with DCA to clarify and strengthen our partnership.

The increases in expenses meant that subsidy received from DCA also increased in order to meet the shortfall. DCA subsidy went from \$3,281 in 2009 to \$ 23,750 in 2010.

The financial side of PCDE in the past year ran very smoothly due to all the help and support provided by DCA. I'd like to thank Julie Chaplin and Elani Kokkinakis from DCA for all their help and support through the year.

In conclusion, I'd like to present the financial reports to the meeting. PCDE is in a stable financial position with the partnership with DCA as well as ongoing ADHC funding secured until 2011.

Resolutions

With that I recommend that:

- the financial reports as prepared by Julie Chaplin be accepted
- a vote of thanks to be given to Julie Chaplin and her team at DCA for their work with PCDE in the past year.

Acknowledgements

The Parent Council for Deaf Education Inc., relies on a government grant provided by Department of Human Services, Ageing, Disability and Home Care (ADHC) to provide 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 memberships and tax deductible donations.

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