



*National Association of Australian Teachers of the Deaf*  
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In this submission, the Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf Inc. (Qld Branch) is responding to two of the terms of reference identified for the Senate Community Affairs References Inquiry into Hearing Health:

(c) the adequacy of access to hearing services, including assessment and support services; and

(d) the adequacy of current hearing health and research programs, including education and awareness programs.

In summary, AATD submits relevant sections of the following documentation for the Inquiry to consider:

The National Association of Australian Association of the Deaf (NAATD) Policy Statements

The National Association of Australian Association of the Deaf (NAATD) Constitution

The National Association of Australian Association of the Deaf (NAATD) Competencies for Teachers of the Deaf

An important part of the of the NAATD Constitution states that the National Committee is "*To act as an informed and responsible voice on the education of children and students who are Deaf and Hearing Impaired*".

*In this document the term "deaf" covers the full range of hearing loss to be found in the population.*

*3 The objects of the Association are:*

**3.1.** *To promote unity, diversity and understanding between members of the teaching and other professions throughout Australia working with children and students who are Deaf and Hearing Impaired.*

**3.4.** *To act as an informed and responsible voice on the education of children and students who are Deaf and Hearing Impaired.*

**3.5.** *To seek, promote and determine minimum standards for the training of persons involved in the provision of education to children and students who are Deaf and Hearing Impaired.*

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**3.7.** *To support and assist parents to be involved to their maximum ability, in the education of children and students who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired.*

**3.8.** *To encourage the community through conferences, seminars and the publication of materials to afford dignity to children and students who are Deaf and Hearing Impaired to their rights as stated in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights.*

**3.9.** *To encourage governments to allocate appropriate resources to the education of children and students who are Deaf or Hearing Impaired.*

**3.10.** *To seek representation on relevant policy making bodies in matters pertaining to these aims.*

**3.11.** *To promote among decision makers in the community an awareness of the educational needs and issues of concern to children and students who are Deaf and Hearing Impaired.*

**3.12.** *To do all such other things as may be incidental to the attainment of such objects.*

*(Reference - the Constitution of the National Association of Australian Teachers of the Deaf: Objects of the Association 3.4 )*

The NAATD Policy statements are listed below, and will be supplemented by the identified skills, understanding and knowledge required by the Competencies of Teachers of the Deaf. This information will be summarised with direct comment to the two terms of reference highlighted above.

## **1:1 Teachers of the Deaf**

### **Assumptions**

- Teachers of the Deaf are specially trained teachers who have the skills to meet the learning, personal and social needs of Deaf and Hearing Impaired students.

### **Rights**

- Deaf and Hearing Impaired students have the right to access education from Teachers of the Deaf who have specialist training for their profession.
- Teachers of the Deaf must be given ongoing support from government and educational facilities.

### **Entitlements**

- Students should have the opportunity to work with Teachers of the Deaf who are eligible for membership of AATD (as stated in the Association's document "Standards for Teachers of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students").
- The Association supports Universities in their endeavours to provide appropriate and accredited courses.
- State Government and other employing authorities have a responsibility to promote access to initial specialist training as Teachers of the Deaf, maintenance of teacher supply and continuing development for practitioners in the field.

### **Related Competencies for Teachers of the Deaf:**

4.1 *Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the Legislation and policies for children and students who are deaf or hearing impaired relating to discrimination, privacy, child protection and human rights. For example:*

- Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and the Education Standards (2005)
- Anti-Discrimination Act
- Privacy Legislation
- Individual state deaf education policy

### **Relevance to inquiry .....**

This information clearly supports Reference Point (d). Providing qualified teachers of the Deaf will support the provision of appropriate education and awareness programs for students. A qualified teacher of the Deaf will have the skills and knowledge to provide support services for students as outlined in Reference Point (c).

### **1:2 Universal Newborn Screening**

#### **Assumptions**

- Earlier diagnosis provides for earlier intervention.

#### **Rights**

- Following diagnosis it is essential that parents are provided with a range of options of service and support agencies and an opportunity to meet a range of role models.

#### **Entitlement**

- The development of Universal Newborn Screening programs throughout Australia is strongly supported by NAATD.
- It is essential that a Teacher of the Deaf is involved as a member of the support network when a child is first diagnosed with a hearing loss.

## **Relevance to inquiry ....**

3.1 of the competencies statement states that teachers of the Deaf need demonstrated knowledge and understanding of the early newborn screening. A person with the understanding can promote the education and awareness programs as picked out in point d terms of reference.

## **Related Competencies for Teachers of the Deaf:**

### *3.1 Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of*

- Universal Newborn Hearing Screening
- screening, diagnostic and referral procedures
- audiometric results, audiological and clinical reports
- speech acoustics and the application to language development
- environmental acoustics
- implications of hearing levels on communication, language and learning
- procedures for checking and maintaining sensory devices

## **Relevance to inquiry .....**

This information clearly supports Reference Point (c). The NAATD promotes Newborn Hearing Screening and ready access to hearing services, and appropriate support programs to support families through this process as outlined.

## **1:3 Early Intervention**

### **Assumptions**

- Deaf and Hearing Impaired children benefit from early intervention for language and social development

### **Rights**

- For children who are Deaf and Hearing Impaired it is essential that intervention occurs from diagnosis.
- Specialised early intervention programs should involve the participation of a Teacher of the Deaf.

### **Entitlements**

- Specialised early intervention programs should include language and social skill development. The Teacher of the Deaf has the skills to develop and implement such programs in collaboration with families and other professionals.

## **Related Competencies for Teachers of the Deaf:**

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### 1.1 *Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of*

- child development
- language development
- social-emotional development
- the impact of deafness on development
- family centred practice
- adult learning styles
- Deaf culture
- additional disabilities and/ or learning needs

#### **Relevance to inquiry .....**

This information clearly supports Reference Point (d). A teacher of the Deaf is able to provide appropriate education programs to support children and their families.

### **1:4 Audiological Management**

#### **Assumptions**

- Families need to make fully informed decisions about audiological management for their Deaf or Hearing Impaired child.

#### **Rights**

- The Association believes it is the right of families to make fully informed decisions about audiological management.
- The Association believes it is the right of the individuals and/or families to choose appropriate amplification and/or cochlear implant devices in consultation with audiologists and other professionals . (*Currently the range of amplification devices includes systems such as hearing aids, cochlear implants, and tactile devices.*)

#### **Entitlements**

- Teachers of the Deaf will work collaboratively with Australian Hearing and other accredited audiological providers.
- NAATD supports the free provision and service of amplification equipment/ devices and cochlear implants.

#### **Related Competencies for Teachers of the Deaf:**

### 3.1 *Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of*

- definitions of deafness and hearing impairment
- anatomy, physiology, functions and disorders of the auditory system

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- causes of hearing loss
- Universal Newborn Hearing Screening
- screening, diagnostic and referral procedures
- audiometric results, audiological and clinical reports
- sensory devices such as hearing aids, cochlear implants and radio frequency systems
- speech acoustics and the application to language development
- environmental acoustics
- implications of hearing levels on communication, language and learning
- procedures for checking and maintaining sensory devices

### *3.2 Demonstrate through professional practice*

- effective use of audiological information and technology
- a range of strategies which maximise the use of residual hearing to develop communication
- the use of formal and informal assessments for measuring functional listening

### **Relevance to inquiry .....**

This information clearly supports Reference Point (c) and the adequacy of access to hearing services including assessment and support services and hearing technologies. Qualified teachers of the Deaf can support hearing health professionals with this work.

### **1:5 Classroom Acoustics**

#### **Assumptions**

- Learning opportunities for most Deaf and Hearing Impaired children will be maximised when optimum acoustic conditions are provided.

#### **Rights**

- Deaf and Hearing Impaired children have the right to optimum classroom acoustic conditions at all times.

#### **Entitlements**

- Australian Standard AS2107-1978 should be adhered to that has recommended maximum ambient noise levels for teaching areas (unoccupied classrooms) to be 40 dBA with a specified maximum value of 45 dBA. Reverberation times should be 0.4 to 0.5 seconds for primary schools and 0.5 to 0.6 seconds for secondary schools.
- NAATD supports the use of sound field amplification where appropriate.

### **Related Competencies for Teachers of the Deaf:**

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*1.1 Demonstrate professional practice in meeting individual learning needs within an inclusive framework by making reasonable adjustments*

- to the learning environment

*3.1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of*

- speech acoustics and the application to language development
- environmental acoustics

### **Relevance to inquiry .....**

This information clearly supports Reference Point (d). A qualified teacher of the Deaf can provide appropriate education and awareness programs in schools to target classroom environments to support child and student learning.

### **1:10 Captioning & Equipment**

#### **Assumptions**

- Deaf and Hearing Impaired benefit from captioned multi-media materials .

#### **Rights**

- Deaf and Hearing Impaired children should be given equal access to all multi-media materials in educational settings

#### **Entitlements**

- Where captioned materials are available they should be made available to all Deaf and Hearing Impaired children.
- Where captioned materials are not available alternative arrangements should be made to meet the learning needs of individual students.
- All technology purchased by education facilities and schools should have

### **Related Competencies for Teachers of the Deaf:**

*1.2 Demonstrate professional practice in meeting individual learning needs within an inclusive framework by making reasonable adjustments*

- to the learning environment
- to the curriculum

- within individual and family learning plans

### **Relevance to inquiry .....**

This information clearly supports Reference Point (c) in relation to the provision of hearing technologies.

### **1:11 Students in Regional and Remote Areas**

#### **Assumptions**

- Deaf and Hearing Impaired students need to access educational programs that best meet their current needs.

#### **Rights**

- The Association believes it is the right of Deaf and Hearing Impaired students to access education and support from Teachers of the Deaf regardless of their location.
- Deaf and Hearing Impaired students have the right to access an educational setting that respects their choice of communication mode.

#### **Entitlements**

- Deaf and Hearing Impaired students are entitled to access the curriculum through the provision of reasonable adjustments that include appropriate teaching and assessment practices, specialist equipment specialist support from Teachers of the Deaf, interpreters, note-takers etc, regardless of their location.
- Educational authorities have a responsibility to address the barriers to the curriculum presented by the unique circumstances of rural and remote areas.
- Location should not deny Deaf and Hearing Impaired students and their families a choice of educational setting and communication approach.

#### **Related Competencies for Teachers of the Deaf:**

*1.3 Demonstrate professional practice by providing effective and supportive teaching strategies across a range of*

- settings, age groups and socio-cultural contexts
- communication needs
- individual learning requirements, behavioural and psycho-social needs

### **Relevance to inquiry .....**

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This information clearly supports Reference Point (c) and (d) and the provision of access to hearing services and health programs for all children and students regardless of where they live.

## **1: 12 Rights of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children**

### **(i) Equal Opportunities**

#### **Assumption**

- equality of opportunity is a prerequisite of education.

#### **Right**

- to equality of opportunity regardless of degree or type of deafness.

#### **Entitlement**

- not to be discriminated against on basis of degree or type of deafness, or mode of communication or amplification type.

### **(ii) The Abilities of Deaf Children and Young People**

#### **Assumptions**

- Deaf children and young people are not all the same: they have differing needs and requirements.
- Deaf children and young people have the same potential for the range of language development and learning as their hearing peers.

#### **Rights**

- to have their individual needs respected.
- to a full and relevant education in an appropriate educational environment, such that they leave education with optimal language and communication skills.
- to have literacy skills to enable them to take full advantage of the standard curriculum.
- to develop the range of skills, knowledge and experiences required for individual fulfilment, independence and responsibility.

#### **Entitlements**

- to educational services which respond to their needs through the provision of access to differing forms of support and a range of approaches to education.

- to qualified Teachers of the Deaf and other professionals who have skills to recognise, assess and meet their academic, personal and social needs.
- to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum.
- to specialist consideration for assessment and accreditation.
- to have the optimum provision and management of personal and other amplification systems as appropriate.

### **(iii) Identity**

#### **Assumption**

- Some deaf children and young people will grow up to be part of the deaf population: some will live fully in the hearing world and some will move between the two.

#### **Rights**

- to be valued in terms of both their deaf and hearing identities.
- to develop appropriate skills to enable them to participate in hearing and deaf communities to the extent which they themselves choose.

#### **Entitlements**

- to opportunities of access to both hearing and deaf communities.
- to be recognised, appreciated and valued as an equal member of society.

### **(iv) Family**

#### **Assumption**

- Deaf children come from hearing or deaf families, from differing household structures and from differing ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

#### **Rights**

- to have their family background recognised and valued.
- to be presented with a full range of current options and services available.
- to have parental wishes and informed choices recognised and respected.

#### **Entitlement**

- to an education which facilitates good relationships and communication within the family.

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## **Related Competencies for Teachers of the Deaf:**

All teachers who are accepted to membership of the National Association of Australian Teachers of the Deaf accept these rights as part of their role as teachers of the Deaf. These rights are outlined throughout the Competencies document, but are specifically referenced in section 4: Professionalism.

## **Relevance to inquiry .....**

This information clearly supports Reference Point (c) and (d). All children have the right to access appropriate health and hearing services.

## **Recommendations**

The Australian Association of Teachers of the Deaf Inc. (Qld Branch) submission refers directly to these two terms of reference:

- c) the adequacy of access to hearing services, including assessment and support services, and hearing technologies;
- d) the adequacy of current hearing health and research programs, including education and awareness programs;

The association recommends that all children in Australia have access to:

- timely and readily available hearing assessment commencing with Newborn Hearing Screening and continuing as recommended by a qualified hearing health specialist
- hearing services and educational support from staff who are qualified to work with Deaf and Hearing impaired students
- health and research programs that are educationally sound and based on evidenced based practice.