

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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AUSTRALIAN-FIRST HEALTH CARE TRAINING TO BREAK DOWN BARRIERS FOR DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING COMMUNITIES

An Australian-first innovative training program designed to make health care accessible and inclusive for the deaf, Deaf and Hard of Hearing communities is being rolled out in one of Adelaide's key hospital networks.

Deaf Connect (now operating the services and programs formerly developed by Deaf Can:Do) has partnered with Central Adelaide Local Health Network (CALHN) to deliver the online staff training program to educate health care workers to better understand the needs of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing community.

CEO of Deaf Connect Brett Casey said they are pleased to partner with CALHN to deliver improved health care services for deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

"We know that the Deaf and hard of hearing community faces challenges when it comes to accessing health care globally," he said.

"We also understand that medical teams are doing the best they can, in an often-high-pressure environment – and this has only been exacerbated in recent years by COVID-19.

"We've worked closely with healthcare staff and community focus groups to identify gaps in communication in healthcare provision and provide solutions to create better health outcomes for Deaf Australians."

The Australian-first training solution is designed to address the barriers facing the Deaf community throughout the health care system and to debunk the myths around providing adequate care through real-life scenarios.

When communicating with the Deaf Community it's critical to quickly ascertain which is the best communication strategy to use – based on the individual's preference," Mr Casey said.

"It may involve booking an Auslan interpreter, or using a mix of visual aids, lip reading, gesturing or written notes – and this becomes particularly important in a hospital setting.

"Through this training we hope to see hospital staff better equipped to ask questions such as communication preference, and provide a consistent level of care to all Australians."

“This partnership with Deaf Connect aims to deliver health services that are more accessible for and inclusive of Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals,” said CALHN Acting Executive Director Allied Health, Anna McClure.

“These training modules provide practical advice to clinicians in their patient assessment and care,” she said.

“All patients have the right to make decisions regarding their own health and this training provides our teams with a tool kit to better communicate and understand the needs of its patients who are deaf or hard of hearing.”

CALHN staff are being encouraged to undertake this Deaf Awareness training course, as part of their Cultural Awareness, Diversity & Inclusion Program training in the Learning Management System (LMS).

Top tips for communicating to deaf, Deaf or Hard of Hearing community:

- **Ask individuals their preferred communication method.**
- **Face towards individual to communicate.**
- **Use a combination of visual aids, lip reading, gesturing and written notes.**
- **Book an Auslan interpreter if required.**

Source: Deaf Connect

For more information, please contact Lisa Reichstein at CALLIE on 0481 238 560 or lisa@callie.com.au

About Deaf Connect

Deaf Connect is the largest whole of life service provider, and social impact organisation for Deaf, deafblind and hard of hearing Australians. Formed through a merger of two of Australia’s oldest Deaf organisations, Deaf Services Limited and the Deaf Society, the organisation now delivers services in Queensland, New South Wales, the Australian Capital Territory, Victoria and the Northern Territory with Auslan interpreting services delivered nationally.

In 2022, Deaf Connect also began delivering services previously offered by Deaf Can:Do, in South Australia.

Deaf Connect is a registered service provider under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), a nationally recognised provider of home care for seniors and delivers accredited training in Auslan through Access Training and Education (RTO#41192).