

# **PRESIDENTS REPORT**

## ***YEAR ENDED 30<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2023***

The ongoing objective of the Deafness Council is to pursue and promote issues that will improve the quality of life for Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. To that end, the Council has met 8 times this year. It was pleasing to see the continuing involvement of individuals and organizations in the Councils activities.

Council meetings are now held in a manner that enable members to attend via Microsoft Teams.

### **PATRON**

The Council are privileged to have Harvey Coates AO, a noted Paediatric Otolaryngologist, continuing as our Patron.

### **STAN PERRON CHARITABLE FOUNDATION/DEAFNESS COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP**

Romeo Ferraris is the Scholarship recipient for this year. Romeo acquired his hearing loss at aged 2 from meningitis. Romeo graduated from Shenton College and is planning to follow a career in cyber security.

We thank the Stan Perron Charitable Foundation for their continuing support.

### **HEARING AWARENESS WEEK/WORLD HEARING DAY**

Since 1979 the Council, during Hearing Awareness Week (HAW), has conducted events to focus the public's attention on the issues relative to Deaf and Hard of Hearing people. In recent years it has been agreed to use World Hearing Day (March 3<sup>rd</sup>) for this purpose. This year the Council conducted an event entitled "Breaking Down Barriers" where we asked a range of people to share their experience of meeting their particular challenge. This included Christina Matthews CEO of Western Australian Cricket Association, George Jones a leading mining industry executive and Patron of Ear Science Institute Australia and Andrew Doak the parent of a Hard of Hearing child. Geof Parry from Channel 7 then interviewed the guests.

The Dr Harry Blackmore Award and Stan Perron Charitable Foundation Scholarship were also presented.

We thank Lotterywest for their support of this event and for all those who shared their stories and advice.

## **DR HARRY BLACKMORE AWARD**

Dr Stephen Rodrigues is the recipient of the Award for this year. Stephen is passionate and measured doctor who, over many years, has performed many successful procedures that have enhanced the quality of life of people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Through numerous publications and his leadership within the profession he is sharing knowledge, information and learning that continues to raise the level of awareness of issues that affect people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

## **CAPTIONING OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC INFORMATION ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council continues to lobby State and Federal Governments to caption all their public television announcements and to open caption with, Auslan interpreters included, all emergency services public information announcements. It is pleasing to see that in many instances Federal and State government advertisements are closed captioned. We continue to point out to governments when they fail to do so.

## **HEARING SERVICES PROGRAM REVIEW**

The Federal Governments Review of the Hearing Services Program was released in August 2021. The Council welcomes the Review and is supportive of the recommendations. Little action has been taken on the report's recommendations.

## **NATIONAL HEARING HEALTH ROADMAP**

The Council has continued to support the Roadmaps recommendations. It is disappointing to note that the current Federal Government has not, to date, progressed with these recommendations.

## **PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF THE DEAF, DEAF BLIND AND HARD OF HEARING**

The inaugural event for the Western Australian Parliamentary Friends of the Deaf and hard of Hearing was held at Parliament House on Wednesday October 26<sup>th</sup> and was attended by Rae Walker and John Byrne. The Council congratulates Martin Pritchard MLC and his colleagues on this initiative.

## **CLOSING THE GAP---DEAFNESS FORUM PAPER**

The Deafness Forum prepared a paper entitled “Closing The Gap: Addressing the Hearing Health Of Aboriginal And Torres Strait Islander Peoples In The Justice System”. Several members of the Council provided input to the paper which has been distributed to decision makers across Australia., Including Senators Linda Reynolds and Steele-John.

## **JUVENILE JUSTICE SCREENING**

Mark Fitzpatrick has led discussions with the Department of Justice that has seen the implementation of a 12 month juvenile justice health screening trial that includes hearing and language screening.

## **DEAFNESS FORUM**

The Deafness Council is a member of the Deafness Forum and continues to contribute on a regular basis to submissions made by the Forum on behalf of issues affecting Deaf and Hard of Hearing people.

The Forum held a Board meeting in Perth on May 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. The Council assisted with the organization of the visit and meetings with local groups that the Forum members undertook.

## **WA DISABILITY LEGISLATION**

The Council met with officers from the Department of Communities to provide comment on the proposed reform of the WA Disability legislation.

## **SUPPORT**

We have again received wonderful support from our donors who we thank for their generosity.

The support of the many volunteers within the Council and associated organisations is very much appreciated.

**BARRY MACKINNON**  
**PRESIDENT**