



**Active Deaf Programs
Strategic Plan**

2020 - 2024

Mission

To facilitate and support the participation of deaf and hard of hearing Australian children and other identified age groups into sport

Vision

Building and Strengthening Opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing Australians to participate in sport

Values

Integrity
Excellence
Passion
Perseverance
Nurturing

Our Personality

Courageous
Admired
Determined
Progressive

PREAMBLE

Deaf Sports Australia (DSA) was established in 1954 as the peak body for deaf sports in Australia. DSA assists Australians who are deaf or hard of hearing to participate in sport at all levels and compete in designated National and International events including Australian Deaf Games, Asia Pacific Deaf Games and Deaflympic Games through partnerships with governments, business, sporting bodies and the community.

DSA also provides a central reference point for providing, advice on accessibility in sports as well as an education and mentoring program. A key plank of developing opportunities was the DSA Active Deaf Kids Program which ran come and try days throughout Australia in conjunction with schools, education departments, National Sporting Organisations and the Active After Schools Program.

In 2011 Deaf Sports Australia (DSA) successfully delivered a pilot 'Active Deaf Kids' School Education Program across 36 schools and 400 students as part of a pilot program funded by the Australian Sports Commission.

The pilot program demonstrated that the demand clearly existed to develop and expand the program. In 2012 the Australian Sports Commission committed to a two years funding model that has seen the following key outcomes:

1. Continued school visits to specialist deaf schools and mainstream schools with deaf support units in each State and Territory of Australia.
2. DSA commissioned an independent expert on hearing devices to address safety concerns with the advice included in a printed brochure which was distributed to parents, schools, state education departments, sporting clubs/organisations.
3. DSA worked with the Australian Sports Commission to develop links to Active After-School Communities program in each state/territory. This process was instigated but the connection(s) and take up have been inconsistent and incomplete.
4. DSA developed an information booklet about DSA which can be downloaded from the DSA website. This booklet has been distributed to state education departments, participating schools and NSOs / SSOs featuring information on:
 - Deaf sports history;
 - Prominent deaf sports role models case studies;
 - Educational fact sheets (coaching, communication tips etc)
 - List of key deaf organisations
5. DSA developed a separate website for the 'Active Deaf Kids' project which features photos of sessions in schools, camps and youth related information, advice and links

The following is a brief outline of the number of to the schools involved in the ADK program during the 2012 to 2020 years –

2012 Number of schools - 45	number of children – 600
2013 Number of schools - 60	number of children - 700
2014 Number of schools - 70	number of children - 800
2015 Number of schools - 80	number of children - 1200
2016 Number of schools - 85	number of children - 1300
2017 - 20. Schools. - 75	number of children - 900+

The Active Deaf Kids Program (ADK) has benefited a number of children, their parents and extended families. In addition, there was certainly strong evidence that has seen children move seamlessly from the school environment into the sporting club or associations.

The ADK set the groundwork and foundation to enhance the children’s access to sport and particularly support mechanisms within the sports. As detailed in previous reports the connection to playing sport and the improvement in the child’s health, wellbeing and self-worth are in - deed a very positive outcome of the program.

The ADK brand has prospered and it is now a well-known product that is connected to excellence in delivery.

Unfortunately, the ASC withdrew the ADK funding in 2016/17 so DSA together with the ASC have pursued a strategy of running the ADK initiative within the ASC Sporting Schools Program. Our history of successful sport development and opportunity programs with schools does highlight the benefits for deaf and hard of hearing children within the school system.

DSA expanded the ADK program to become Active Deaf Programs (AD) to provide a wider range of service options beyond deaf and hard of hearing school children and develop supportive pathways:

1. *Active Deaf Kids Program* – This program provides an introduction to sports or sport development opportunities for children aged 5 – 18 years. This includes learning coordination and motor skills; talent potential identified at an early age; and offering further sport development pathway opportunities as well as social interaction with others.
Funding support is now available through Sport Australia’s *Sporting Schools Program* - <https://www.sportaus.gov.au/schools/schools/sports>
2. *Active Deaf Sports Club (ADSC)* where mainstream sports organisations can learn inclusion practices for deaf and hard of hearing people within their clubs. Through workshops, coaches and administrators are given the opportunity to learn best communication practises for deaf and hard of hearing people to allow them to participate in mainstream sport within the general community.

3. *Active Deaf High-Performance Program* – This program involves elite teams and training sessions where participants aged 18 – 35 years can be involved in competitions, both locally nationally and internationally. Participants must meet selection criteria as approved by DSA, the National Sports Organisation, National Deaf Sports Committees and the International Committee for Sports for the Deaf.
4. *Active Deaf Older Australians* – this program looks at supporting this group to become and to continue to be active; to participate in structured events / programs that enable exercise, social inclusion and well - being. Adding ‘masters’ events at the Australian Deaf Games and National Championships is being encouraged.

The Active Deaf program is now being offered through our Sport Development Officers in Queensland, Victoria and New South Wales. Our State branches (Deaf Sport Recreation Queensland, Deaf Sport Recreation Victoria and NSW Deaf Sports) are supporting this which allows stronger growth through those States.

ACTIVE DEAF PROGRAM 2020 - 2024

Objectives

- To ensure a pathway that bridges the gap from school to sporting clubs and associations. Such a structure would enhance the capacity and capabilities of all stakeholders;
- To create a sustainable connection and buy in with the National Sporting Organisations (and their members) that will ensure a safe, welcoming and supportive environment for deaf and hard of hearing children and young people;
- Included in the Memorandum of Understanding between the NSO(s) and DSA is the AD programs. Such detail will advocate, educate, inform and support the mainstream sporting structure to make it deaf friendly and capable of including deaf people within the structure. In addition, and where appropriate conduct pilots between identified stakeholders that will highlight sustainable and new development areas for the program
- To work with DSA members and sporting committees to foster, educate, promote and encourage deaf and hard of hearing children’s participation and skill development via the ADK program;
- To continually review and update the AD program to ensure the program is addressing the needs of all parties and ensure the framework is achieving its goals which includes maintaining a high retention level;
- To foster and develop relationships with identified parties who will benefit the program. Such parties will provide a connect, supporting services and pathways for the deaf and hard of children thereby improving the sustainable objective;
- To develop data analysis that will highlight repeatable outcomes and processes. Such data is to be used in highlighting the successes of the program to all stakeholders;
- To have the program rolled out by DSA State members who have employed Sport Development Officers to perform the AD duties;

- To implement fundraising programs which will allow DSA to support and grow the program via the employment of a sport development officer who will drive the AD program;
- To generate a consistent and relevant AD message to the deaf and hard of hearing community, relevant sporting organisations, government departments, funding organisations and other stakeholders;
- To work with and provide support, knowledge and skills to NSO's in educating their inclusion officers in understanding the deaf and hard of hearing community. This would include the aim of having hard of hearing officers employed by some NSO's
- To identify other age groups that require inclusive support and understanding by way of active programs

This plan is visionary, challenging and all-encompassing requiring the development of ongoing partnerships with State Member Organisations and external stakeholders. We believe the foundations and framework are in place, we now need to increase our footprint by expanding the AD brand via a transparent network that provides every opportunity for deaf and hard of hearing children to enjoy the benefits that are provided by participating in sport. A dedicated staff member of DSA needs to be employed to ensure the goals are achieved and the network and footprint is managed.

To achieve these objectives and the foundations that are required to have a successful framework the following key pillars are required to be followed:

Our Strategic Pillars

- 1) To ensure effective leadership and management of the AD Program;
- 2) To develop and contribute to the promotion and growth of the AD Program;
- 3) To oversee, coordinate and highlight participation research that will connect with the promotional and communication plans of the AD Program;
- 4) To foster and develop ongoing and meaningful relationships with all stakeholders.

Driver/Pillar

1. To Ensure Effective Leadership and Management of the AD Program

- To seek adequate funding that will ensure the attainment of the stated goals and outcomes;
- To work with all levels of Government in ensuring the program is a success;
- To ensure all members (of DSA) strategic plans consistently highlight the AD Program as a key pillar and all agreements with external parties (e.g. NSO's) highlight the program. In both cases the plans and agreements must detail the DSA/AD awareness or education programs that are to be provided to staff and officials;
- To develop a "collecting" database that accurately captures AD participants and retention;

- To identify and work with identified NSO's to ensure strong committed joint programs are in place that will bridge the gap from the school to clubs. This work will aim at building expertise within the NSO's about inclusion and running pilot programs and initiatives that will increase participation numbers;
- To create systems that can measure numbers and connections (social media) thereby highlighting the success of the AD Program;
- To ensure a strong essence of the AD Program is a consistent commitment to positive repeatable outcomes and processes that engage, are relevant and create a sustainable future;
- To ensure the ADHP program is oversights, planned, managed and results driven.

2. To Encourage and Contribute to the promotion and growth of Deaf Sports in Australia

- To conduct Silent Sports Challenges events during Hearing Awareness Week and National Week of Deaf People with identified sports. Such events to be held in every State and Territory;
- To utilise AD Ambassadors and other Sport Ambassadors to work with the program and highlight the benefits of sport;
- To continue to facilitate AD sport clinics that are run by DSA State Members;
- Develop educational workshops (ADSC) to assist with building bridges between schools and sport clubs and other facilities;
- To work with schools promoting sport as being beneficial to the well being and health of the students and other identified age groups;

3. To Oversee, Coordinate and highlight participation research that will connect with the promotional and communication plans of the AD Program

- To work with identified Universities on conducting studies and research into obesity, access to sport, participation and other areas with the data being used to highlight the needs and resources that are required by the deaf and hard of hearing community;
- In conjunction with the promotion and communication plans of the AD Program highlight the DSA Athlete Eligibility Policy that provides a sport classification based on the hearing loss;
- Develop improved technologies that will better connect with the deaf and hard hearing community. This will include the DSA/ADK website and a specific section of Facebook and developed sport applications

4. To Foster and Develop ongoing and meaningful relationships with all Stakeholders

- To work with Sport Australia's 'Sporting Schools Program' (SSP) to ensure schools have access to our team, expertise and knowledge;
- To work with School Sport Australia (SSA) on having deaf and hard of hearing Australian Teams compete at the bi-annual Pacific School Games;
- To develop a working relationship with key stakeholders / partners whereby information regarding DSA, AD and the healthy benefits of sport can be distributed to clients;
- To develop constructive relationships with Universities, PCYC and YMCA's aiming at increasing the awareness and linkage of the AD Program;
- To work with all DSA Members to ensure the AD program is part of their strategies and thinking.