

Transcripts

President's report - Kate Armfield (DSA President)

I will now speak as Deaf Sports Australia president and present the president's report to you. So in summary, there are a number of highlights. I first of all want to thank all DSA members and the board for continuing to raise the bar of Deaf Sports Australia in our community and continuing to driving the organisation forward.

There have been many challenges, particularly in late 2019 with the natural disasters throughout Australia, the Australian bushfires. They took a huge toll. It was a very challenging time for all people in Australia. Then in early 2020 the world was introduced to a new global disease. The coronavirus. It has impacted everyone all over Australia and the world. This is a profound challenge. At the same time has shown how the community has come together, garnered support, connected and used a lot of innovation to overcome this new disease.

Through technology we are able to show that we can connect. Technology is a wonderful enabler. Deaf Sports Australia is fortunate to be able to also maintain its staff through a fluctuating time of great uncertainty, lockdown as well as financial hardship and loss. Many people were having to stay home. They could not continue playing sport, doing exercise that they had become accustomed to doing in their everyday life while living through the lockdown or ongoing lockdowns.

So Deaf Sports Australia has had to recalibrate and also reschedule many different events that were to be held in the 2019-20 financial year to a later date. I want to thank all of you, our members, as well as our staff for readjusting, resetting, resetting expectations to ensure that everyday lifestyle and activities can continue.

On the staffing front, I'd like to thank Sherrie Beaver, who was our media and communications officer. Sherrie has stepped down and resigned from the position to take up a Deaf Victoria position and continue her formal studies. So on behalf of the board I'd like to express our deep appreciation to Sherrie Beaver for really amping up Deaf Sports Australia's social media presence, information and being innovative in different ways that we could collect and disseminate information. You have been truly innovative, Sherry. Thank you for all your work and also for the smooth transition handover to our new officer, Laura Townsend, who is our media and communications officer.

Thank you Sherrie for your wonderful work and we wish you all the very best in your future endeavours. We look forward to seeing you again at Deaf Sports Australia one day in the future. Now, Lauren Townsend also has a position as a sports development officer with New South Wales deaf sports. Lauren has dual records. Lauren, we wish you all the very best. At the same

time we want everyone to be able contact Lauren regarding all relevant matters in your two different roles. We wish you the very best in both roles moving forward. Lauren Townsend will also be replacing Scott, who was our deaf sports New South Wales administrator. We would like to thank Scott for his work during deaf sports New South Wales. Garry West-Bail, who you would be familiar with, was our general manager for Deaf Sports Australia and has now transitioned into a new role as project manager. Garry is working with the Australian Deaf Games organising committee, with finance and budgeting providing advice to the Deaf Sports Australia board about funding as well.

I would like to thank Garry West-Bail for his work as General Manager for Deaf Sports Australia, for your wonderful work throughout the years and moving into a new role now. You continue to do great work. Thank you Garry West-Bail. I would now like to welcome Phil Harper in his permanent role as general manager at Deaf Sports Australia.

As I said, Phil has replaced Garry in this role. Phil Harper previously was on the board of Deaf Sports Australia and also was a past Deaf Sports Australia chairperson. He brings a wealth of knowledge to the deaf sports field, technology, business management and administration. Thank you, Phil, and welcome. As you know, Deaf Sports Australia has gone through unprecedented change like never before. People, including our own staff, are working at home.

Most Deaf Sports Australia staff have been working at home for quite some time while maintaining connection with members through technology, through video chats and written email communication. I want to thank our staff for being able to readjust to the challenges that continue to come their way at any particular time. I found connecting with technology and people good but it's not the same as being able to communicate and see each other face-to-face.

Because we have a three-dimensional language of Auslan and being connected with each other is wonderful through technology, but it is via a screen a two dimensional platform. I would like to thank all of you for your ongoing support in this area. Our board has a variety of skills, experience, media, education, accounting, government-political relations, sports. These are just some of the portfolios we hold and the board directors bring these and many more skills and experience to the Deaf Sports Australia organisation.

We want to ensure that we have access to sport and lifestyle for all our members. I appreciate the board directors generously giving up their time to further drive access for all ... and activities and everyday lifestyles in a whole range of different ways. I would now like to share with you a little bit about what Deaf Sports Australia board has been doing of late. We provide a sounding board and engine to the general manager. The direction of Deaf Sports Australia, financial management, accountability. One example is we have recruitment of staff. We're trying different avenues to engage with different stakeholders and maintain that engagement and connection. We believe that community engagement with stakeholders is vital. And we're

providing advice to our General Manager, also providing advice and how we can improve ... of this organisation.

I will now share a few highlights with you from the 2019-20 year. It has been an exciting year to say the least, getting through 2020 to see the establishment of a national sports organisation for disability services. Nine different organisations involving people with disabilities came together in the sports fraternity and how we're working together, collaborating with these organisations, trying to find new ways to better share information, resources, promotion, to share financial resources as well. And how to educate the wider community with disabilities in sport in our country.

We understand that we need to streamline the delivery of our programs and how we can access deaf and hard of hearing people across Australia through sport. The NSOD-9 collaboration has given us an opportunity to educate and outreach to organisations to better connect to deaf and hard of hearing sportspeople. And the NSOD-9 group has also educated us on a whole range of different matters and how people with disabilities can better access and involve themselves in sports. Some highlights for me, Kate Armfield, include the Deaf Sports Australia Sport Schools Program, the SSP. That's a legacy activity of a former deaf kids program which I Irena Farinacci led and delivered, our sports and development officer. Going out across the country visiting children in schools, encouraging them to access sport. If you're deaf or hard of hearing, it's okay, get involved in sport. So I want to acknowledge Irena Farinacci planting of that seed and this program becoming a reality and for it to continue on for deaf and hard of hearing children throughout Australia. They are deaf, they are hard of hearing, but to get involved in sport and lifestyle and for them to learn about Deaf Sports Australia and to be able to play sport and for their parents not to hold them back. But it's okay to be deaf and deaf and hard of hearing children can do anything and doors can be open to them, including through sport another program I'm really excited about it and pleased to speak about is the DSA collaboration with two other organisations.

This includes Sports Inclusion Australia (SIA), and Blind Sports Australia, (BSA). We're thrilled to be working with these two organisations. The three of us together have similar to the NSOD-9 project but we three are working really closely with people with disabilities to get more involvement in sport, to lead an active lifestyle. We're looking and planning to share resources and develop new resources that enable people who are deaf or hard of hearing to engage, people with disabilities to engage in different sports whether you be deaf, hard of hearing, blind or intellectual disability, to be able to be more involved in sports and an active lifestyle. We also are the need of people with disabilities who don't want to be involved in sports. They can lead a healthy sporting active lifestyle.

Some other highlights from me. We recognised the Australian government's JobKeeper program, which has enabled us to maintain our staff. We've been able to go out and do their daily activities because of the government guidance and restrictions. Because of JobKeeper, our programs and projects

have been able to be maintained. So we thank the Australian government for the JobKeeper scheme because our staff have been able to work from home. They continue to provide programs and projects and deliver information and resources throughout this challenging time. The board really is pleased to approve the annual budget. We will be able to share more about that with you later. The Australian government has made funding available and our financial stability and revenue as well as our programs have been ensured throughout this challenging period.

Deaf Sports Australia is determined to continue to support people including the 2020 women's leader Women in Sports Program facilitated by Sports Australia. We encourage members to think about possible female women leaders because we would support you in your application for this program. Last but not least by any means, another wonderful highlight which I'm very proud, privileged and honoured to be a part of is Deaf Sports Australia's 140th celebrations in early 2020.

Fortunately, before all the lockdowns, the coronavirus pandemic, we were able to be part of this auspicious occasion. The events was held at Deakin edge at federation square in Melbourne. We were privileged to come together because this also was the hub, the games hub for the 2005 Deaflympics. It was wonderful to be there to acknowledge the significance of the venue as well as our history, our historical connection to that space for deaf sports in Australia. When we celebrated our 140th anniversary, we were joined by Kate Corkery, who is a lawyer and director of governance and strategy at Sports Australia and Kate inspired us by telling us that we really have to ensure that governance is highly effective in our sports organisation just like it must be in any other organisation. I heard her speak and enjoyed Anne Bremner's presentation about some of the history of Deaf Sports Australia and the Australian community. It was inspirational to hear about some of the highlights from our shared history.

I was also fortunate to hear Hannah Britton and Callum Ashbury who were both sharing their passions with us about sports and how it's empowered them. I can see they're both passionate people about sports inclusion and we look forward to continuing to see people develop all around the country when it comes to sports, access and sports inclusion. I want to thank all of the directors and staff who are involved in organising this highly successful event. I also want to thank all of the members who came together to celebrate that event. We're fortunate as well with our timing, before the coronavirus arrived on our shores and we went into lockdown. We're so fortunate that we had that event in person.

I'd like to congratulate our 2018-19 award recipients. I don't have time to go through them now. ... on the day at our 140th celebration of Deaf Sports Australia. Finally, I would like to say that Deaf Sports Australia board and staff are focusing upon the return to normal in sport in Australia with our COVID Safe plan, putting all those measures in place to ensure we can continue to have active lifestyle and people are able to play and enjoy sport. Lots of work ahead for us as well.

Also in preparing for our Australian Deaf Games in 2022. We are thrilled. Each day that passes, that's another day closer. We have a lot of work ahead of us. Finally, I want to thank all of you, our Deaf Sports Australia members, our stakeholders, the Deaf Australia board, friends, family, supporters for generously giving of their time, their skills, their efforts, to be able to see deaf and hard of hearing continue to have healthy sporting active lives. Thank you one and all. And that concludes my President's report.

Finance Report (Darren Howell - DSA Finance Director)

Good morning everyone. I assume everyone can see me and those that need to can also see the interpreter on the screen. The financial report for 2019-20 was emailed to all members. I'm seeing some chat about no video for either the interpreter or myself. Can anyone hear me? Thank you Chris. Chris has said they can hear me. Thank you Louise. I'll let Phil sort out the video. Phil, if we can just pop to the next slide thanks. People are saying they can see me. I can see Paul, the interpreter. I guess if people can see the interpreter but need to that's a good thing. If those people that can hear me can hear me, then that's a good thing. We'll try to move forward until someone says they can't hear me. Next slide thanks Phil. Thank you.

All members will have received the full audited financial reports. They were sent out with the AGM papers I believe in January 2021. I'm going to make the assumption that everyone has had a look through those figures. I'm just going to talk through a few of the highlights from those figures on the next couple of screens. If we can go to the next screen thanks Phil.

Obviously DSA biggest financial income comes from our program funding from Sport Australia. That's our funding we receive through Sport Australia and also the state governments that support DSRV, DSRQ and New South Wales Deaf Sport. That's the total of our program funding. The collaboration and partnership grants are particularly related to what Kathryn mentioned, the NSOD-9 and also the collaboration with two other sports organisations. The impact of COVID, as Kathryn mentioned, had JobKeeper grants and just some payments from some of the state governments as well, which provided support for us - to allow the work of Deaf Sports Australia to continue during those times. On the expenditure side of things, obviously DSA, as in previous years, our largest expense item is always our employee benefits, which is wages, superannuation, basically DSA as an organisation. Our travel expenses is usually significant being a national sporting organisation.

But as you can imagine, during 2020 that was actually reduced fairly significantly in that there was not a lot of travel from our staff to interstate. Definitely with board meetings all being done online, there were some expense savings there which I think is a good thing. As Kathryn said, nothing will ever replace face-to-face but I think if we can adopt more technology occasionally for those meetings, then obviously there's some cost savings to DSA in that. Next slide thanks Phil.

So out of all that, income and expenditure, we actually achieved an accounting profit this year of just under \$30,000. That compares to an accounting loss in 2018-19 of \$25,000. Obviously the JobKeeper was a part of that in helping us to attain that profit. But again, as in every other year, DSA is not about making a lot of money, making significant profits. It's all about returning as much of our income as possible back into supporting the membership base in their sporting endeavours. The balance sheet shows cash increased between 2019 and 2020. That is primarily from the cash we received from the government in JobKeeper. And also there's a lot of cash that we've received in 2020 as support from government that's due to be spent over the next couple of years.

While we have the extra cash, that's also seen an increase in our other liabilities figure, which is essentially where we record all our cash we've received in advance. Cash we have in for future years spending. The other financial asset figure there is our term deposits which are held with various financial institutions. Next screen thanks Phil.

I'll give everyone a few - a couple of seconds there if they wish to pose any questions via the chat. As Kathryn mentioned at the beginning, unless they're absolutely urgent, they will then be addressed further in the meeting. I have a question from Jen just quickly, what is program funding? Jen program funding is a combination of all the program funding we receive from sport Australia plus funding we receive from the Queensland government, New South Wales government and Victorian government. Thanks for that question Jen. Okay, thank you everyone.

Deaflympics 2021 (Phil Harper - General Manager)

Hi everyone. I will be as quick as I can here. We have already sent some information out in relation to a decision for - in early 2020. After the 2019 ICSD Congress where Italy made a decision about where the Deaflympics would actually be held. Brazil raised their hands later and were happy to look after the Olympics and Italy said 'okay we'll give that a go, we'll try that.' Some negotiations then ensued.

The ICSD board negotiated with Brazil for the Deaflympics and the board decided let's proceed with that in 2021 in December. So that's been approved but unfortunately coronavirus obviously happened, which all plans then were changed. We thought we would best wait to make a decision. We weren't sure what we would be doing. So we also wanted information as well because they were ready to go. We obviously had training we would be doing. We had selections ready to go. So there were some questions around what was going to be happened. The DSA board felt there was a bit of a concern and weren't particularly pleased with the communication and the communication from the ICSD board and also Brazil, from the committee. We asked for additional information. At the same time we had coronavirus happening and that was a worsening situation. International travel was obviously an issue and there

were all sorts of other issues occurring. Locally, we had a very short time to provide other things as well. So in contact with the Australian government - we asked the Australian government for advice and last year there were some discussions in relation to that specifically. The advice to us was we should wait until next year, because the coronavirus was an unknown element or risk. There were several issue issues - that was one of the issues. Other majoe issues included insurance coverage. Insurance coverage was removed because of the coronavirus issue. Coronavirus obviously is still an ongoing issue. As a consequence, we would not be covered with insurance. We weren't sure whether we would be stuck there if something happened, whether we'd be in quarantine or isolation, whether we'd get our money back.. The other risks, of course, we surveyed our members, our DSA National Deaf Sport Organisation members, who were excited and who wanted to go also saying they weren't sure either.

Obviously, the coronavirus was a big health impact at that particular time in relation to finances and support. So that was a high risk that we weren't really sure that we should take. The Australian government said to us that the funding for the Australian team would be minimal because most of the funding had gone out to support the community work in relation to health and coronavirus prevention and things like that. So really, unfortunately, on the list of things support for sports were quite low. In January we received other advice and we agreed then and decided we would not in fact attend the Brazil Deaflympics Games which was announced last month in January. That's been accepted we say thank you very much for your support of our decision. Thank you very much.

We also announced four days later that the ICSD Deaflympics, the organising committee, have actually announced a delay unto May 2022. That's again because of the uncertainty around coronavirus and the potential risk with the coronavirus also. With May 2022, we're looking at maybe five or six months after December of this year. Will there be an improvement? At this stage we're not sure. There's the vaccine that's on the way. That will obviously take its time. Brazil also has that really terrible virus variant. We're not sure whether that will even proceed next year.

We need to be watching and checking and making sure that everything is going to be okay. Probably the middle of this year we will have a better understanding and make a confirmed decision about whether we will continue and go to Brazil or not.

We want to keep you informed in relation to the Brazil situation. It's unfortunate. We're not overly happy but it is what it is. We will keep you up to date from hereon.

2022 Australian Deaf Games. (Garry West-Bail - Project Manager)

Thank you everybody. Obviously the Australian Deaf Games has been as confirmed a couple of years ago are progressing fairly well and fairly positively up until the sad passing of Leonie. But we need to move on. As noted here in the PowerPoint we want to look at developing a community spirit award to honour Leonie going forward.

Some of the positive things occurring, we know that Destination New South Wales, the key state supporter and the two cities are very much behind the Games. We're going to be very confident in confirming in the next couple of months a number of local sponsors, both corporates as well as service providers within the region. We're also fairly confident of announcing a number of national sponsors involved in the deaf industry as such deaf services. We do have a volunteer coordinator vacancy on the GOC. As noted here, Phil Harper has taken up the chair role as an acting role until we find a new chairperson.

Most of the sport venues are booked and I am very pleased that that is the case. The opening ceremony has now been confirmed at the NEX entertainment centre in Newcastle a 1200 seat auditorium. The games hub will be at that same venue for the 12 days of the games. I'm very, very pleased with that. The registrations - sorry online volunteer registrations is already open. Registrations for the games will open on 16 April on the same day as the one year event to goes. Newcastle airport is on board. Obviously there will be a lot of promotion happening at the airport as well as looking at providing transport from the airport to cities Newcastle and Lake Macquarie.

The closing ceremony is booked at what's called Speers Point on Lake Macquarie. It is going through a multi-million dollar upgrade and it will be outstanding the venue for our closing ceremony. It will be very, very, very good. Both Newcastle and Lake Macquarie cities have put on aside a good amount of money to run a coordinated Auslan and deaf awareness training programs over the next seven to 10 months. That will be primarily in the beginning to their own staff but then they will open it up to the general community.

We will soon be announcing the ADG patron in the next couple of weeks or months. We are very happy with how that's progressing at the moment. We're certainly talking to Newcastle TAFE as well the University of Newcastle about getting a number of volunteers from that area to help us in the social media campaigns and our marketing campaigns. Other than that, the social program as far as venues is concerned is progressing. Newcastle Museum, Newcastle Civic Theatre, the 16 foot Belmont Sailing Club, Mereweather Sailing Club and Club Macquarie are all venues aware - all venues where the social program can occur.

We will also be announcing a number of accommodation venues that - which suggests are preferred or recommended. We would certainly be allowing everybody to go on to the Newcastle or Lake Macquarie tourism sites where

you can make your booking as you feel free. We will also be announcing a number of pubs or areas where they'll be known as the Games pubs shortly as well as the quest apartments will be the - which is in Hunter Street in New South Wales will be the official games apartments.

Certainly the website is up and running now and it will be populated with a lot of the stuff I'm talking about now over the next month which includes the registration fees. As distinct to sports fees. Sports fees will be confirmed by the one year to go but the registration fees will be up on the website soon. Basically they will have gone up from about two per cent from 2018. If there's any questions, we can obviously address them post the meeting. We can sort of take note of them now and say we will address them after this meeting. Thank you.

Australian Deaf Games and Oceania Games. (Phil Harper - General Manager)

The Australian Deaf Games plus also the Oceania games, which happen every two years, we were thinking that in the future there has been a lot of games - 2016, 2018 games and then we had a break. The reason for that is we had to fit in with the international Deaflympics, the world championships. Then they were cancelled of course, and things have been delayed. Our Games were obviously a little bit askew because we had to fit in with that. Many people have asked - we've been waiting for four years for championships for deaf sports. We're actually seriously considering that.

Obviously, the 2016 and 2018 Australian Deaf Games were quite successful. We worked quite hard to make sure that happened. We've got both positive and negatives feedback there. We have to consider the work load of the board and volunteers. We have to find funding, sponsorship support and government support. Interested community members to attend and also the Oceania countries say that money they had there was quite small. We're unsure whether that will still be there in four years' time. We're actually thinking about that being every two years. Those games will be mixed, just like ADG plus popular sports for Australia and Oceania countries such as rugby, netball, Volleyball and things like that. We will talk more about that later.

Certainly, we will have a close discussion, have a talk about that, maybe on Zoom or something like that with our members. We'll make sure that we engage and discuss that everybody and make an informed decision at the end of the year. Whether we are still going to continue that every four years or move that to a two-year process and swap it over. We're not sure. Certainly, we will let you know and provide more information on that soon and contact you soon. Thank you very much.