



Victorian Deaf Education Institute

Strategic Plan 2021-2023

Victorian Deaf Education Institute (VDEI)

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The Victorian Deaf Education Institute (VDEI) is committed to improving the educational outcomes of deaf and hard of hearing students throughout Victoria by strengthening the knowledge and practice of the professionals and communities who support them.

This Strategic Plan identifies how VDEI will enact this commitment from 2021-2023.

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VISION



Deaf and hard of hearing students will access a full and rewarding education through evidence-based teaching practices that promote inclusion, enrich learning opportunities and improve educational outcomes

MISSION



To improve educational outcomes of deaf and hard of hearing students by strengthening the knowledge and practice of the deaf education workforce through high-quality professional learning, targeted research and evidence-based policy implementation

VALUES



Our work is shaped by the Public Sector Values of responsiveness, integrity, impartiality, accountability, respect, leadership and human rights. Embedded in these values is an acknowledgement that children and young people who are deaf or hard of hearing have a right to access a high-quality education with equitable access to spoken language and Auslan



We respectfully acknowledge the traditional owners of the country throughout Victoria and pay respect to the ongoing living cultures of First Peoples

Our Context

The Victorian Deaf Education Institute (VDEI) was established by the Department of Education and Training (DET) in 2011 to enable and support excellence in deaf education. Through VDEI, DET is committed to improving educational outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing children and young people in all Victorian schools and early childhood programs.

VDEI is part of the Inclusive Education Professional Practice (IEPP) Branch in Schools and Regional Services (SRS) and is located on St Kilda Road, Melbourne, sharing Deaf Children Australia's heritage grounds with the Victorian College for the Deaf.

Our aim is to strengthen the knowledge and practice of educators who support students who are deaf or hard of hearing. This aim is underpinned by four strategic priorities:

- ✓ designing and delivering excellence in evidence-based professional learning
- ✓ enhancing learning and communication access through innovative technology
- ✓ engaging in targeted research and projects that identify and inform leading practice in deaf education
- ✓ strengthening partnerships with stakeholders in the deaf and inclusive education sectors.

By supporting leading practice in deaf education, VDEI aims to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing students access a full and rewarding education through inclusive teaching practices that enrich their learning opportunities and improve educational outcomes.

Our Primary Roles

Since its establishment in 2011, VDEI has become a centre of expertise for deaf education and a provider of high-quality professional learning and research. In addition, VDEI plays a key role in advising on technological solutions related to digital learning, access and communications, including video conferencing within IEPP and the wider DET community.



Professional Learning

VDEI designs and delivers a comprehensive professional learning program that is underpinned by robust research and provides opportunities for educators to strengthen their knowledge and practice to support deaf and hard of hearing students.

The VDEI Professional Learning Program is supported by state-of-the-art technology and features a wide range of blended learning opportunities, including online On-Demand presentations and courses, webinars and face-to-face seminars and workshops. These professional learning resources are designed for educators and allied professionals and attract a diverse range of learners who wish to increase their professional knowledge and practice in deaf and inclusive education.

Professional learning is presented by high-calibre national and international experts on a range of topics relevant to the educational needs and outcomes of deaf and hard of hearing students. The program is strengthened by consultation with leading practitioners and the expertise of VDEI's Technology Specialist who ensures that the most effective technological solutions are provided to support all formats of VDEI's programs.

VDEI's Learning Centre facilities feature auditorium space, state of the art interactive and digital technology, hearing loops, automatic captioning and videoconferencing facilities. Multiple cameras and screens facilitate professional learning events, including the participation of national and international speakers to deliver presentations, seminars and workshops. The Learning Centre space also supports accessible learning by enabling options for remote access participation and live captioning of events.



Online Learning

VDEI hosts an extensive catalogue of online professional learning presentations, online courses and e-learning modules on the Inclusive Education Professional Learning (IEPL) Learning Management System (LMS). Our LMS ensures that VDEI's professional learning program is truly accessible, while being responsive to the changing learning needs of educators looking to engage in online, flexible learning opportunities.

The IEPL LMS supports over 10,000 online learners and is projected to grow substantially as more educators look to online learning for professional development opportunities. The LMS is administered by VDEI and currently hosts coordinated online learning, the Inclusive Classroom professional learning program, Mental Health Practitioner Resource Hub, the LOOKOUT Resource Hub, School Wide Positive Behaviour Support training and Koorie Education Workforce digital resources

VDEI also hosts an online Digital Resource Hub which is home to a range of resources accessible in digitised formats that are designed to assist educators to improve their knowledge and practice in inclusive education. VDEI aims to identify and promote leading practice in teaching and learning to support the educational, social and psychological development of deaf and hard of hearing children and young people by continually adding to this already extensive digital resource library.



Access to learning and communication through technology

VDEI's expertise in Information Technology (IT) and Audio Visual (AV) infrastructure maximises access, inclusion and engagement for participants in our professional learning programs. Our technology team keeps up to date with the latest trends in digital solutions and assistive hearing technology to ensure that all participants are afforded equitable access to our courses, programs and events.

We provide a wide range of technical support, high quality audio/video editing, SharePoint design and expertise in videoconferencing platforms that support real-time captioning, Auslan interpreting and enhanced assistive listening technology. Through the use of fit-for-purpose technologies, VDEI enables participation in professional learning opportunities in a variety of blended learning formats. We provide Auslan interpreters and live captioning for all live sessions when requested by participants and all modules and On Demand presentations are close-captioned.

VDEI is committed to providing the most accessible online and face-to-face environments for professional learning registrants and visitors to VDEI's Learning Centre and office spaces. Our Institute accommodates the specific communication needs of deaf and hard of hearing individuals by providing access to real-time and closed captioning, Auslan interpreting and enhanced assistive listening technology.

The VDEI Learning Centre facilities feature lecture room space, state of the art interactive and digital technology, hearing loops, real-time captioning and videoconferencing facilities with professional standard editing capability. These facilities are in popular demand with the increase in online professional learning events, including the participation of national and international speakers to deliver presentations, seminars and workshops.



VDEI Caption Centre

The VDEI Caption Centre was established in 2011 to provide captions for a range of educational resources for Victorian schools to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing students have full access to curriculum materials. This fully subsidised captioning service is available to Government, Catholic and Independent schools that support deaf and hard of hearing students.

All VDEI online professional learning presentations and resources are captioned by the VDEI Caption Centre in order to provide equitable access to online learners who are deaf or hard of hearing. Captioning and transcription services are an essential component of VDEI's professional learning program delivery and guide DET's policies for the production of digital educational resources.



Educational Research

In partnership with universities and other professional institutions, VDEI engages in research projects, literature reviews and needs analyses that identify leading practice in teaching and learning for deaf and hard of hearing learners. Through research and community partnerships, VDEI supports the implementation of targeted policies and programs that have a measurable impact on the quality of teaching practice and the improvement of educational outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing students.

Our current research projects and initiatives focus on diverse topics that support leading practice in the deaf education field, such as Educational Interpreter competencies, automatic real-time captioning, optimal acoustic conditions in classrooms, early literacy, hearing screening and auditory processing disorder. The outcomes of these projects provide a solid evidence base for VDEI's role in supporting the professional learning needs of the deaf education workforce and informing the policy development of our deaf education system.

Lead researchers and academics who have previously engaged with VDEI are invited to profile and promote their research interests on the VDEI website, via the Associate Researcher webpage. This feature further establishes VDEI as a strong supporter of innovative research and academic discussion in the national and international deaf education context.



Professional Partnerships

VDEI enhances collaboration and professional practice in deaf education through the development of strong DET and community partnerships. We are committed to engaging with internal and external stakeholders in ways that foster collaboration, maintain trust and are responsive to changing expectations and needs in the deaf education sector.

To further consolidate our stakeholder engagement, VDEI collaborates closely with the Deaf community and with peak organisations to ensure that programs, policies and initiatives address issues that impact deaf and hard of hearing young people. We frequently meet and consult with leaders of deaf education programs to keep abreast of current trends in teaching practice and are guided in our design of professional learning resources and research projects that inform and support educational practice.

VDEI highly values engagement with advisory groups that represent deaf and hard of hearing students, peak bodies, families and educators. These advisory groups play an important part in shaping VDEI's strategic goals and serve to strengthen our commitment to the deaf education community.

Our Key Enablers

We are responsive

VDEI focuses on understanding and responding to the learning needs and challenges of deaf and hard of hearing students. We constantly reflect on the services we provide and adapt them to emerging policies and practices in order to maximize our impact. We listen to the experiences of teachers and support staff who support deaf and hard of hearing students and acknowledge the impact deafness, disadvantage and discrimination have on the learning and wellbeing outcomes of these students.

We value excellence

VDEI is a centre of expertise in deaf education, commissioning high-impact research, designing and delivering high-quality professional learning and piloting emerging learning technologies. We focus on quality educational outcomes, always seeking to learn from people who have a lived experience of deafness and from deaf and hard of hearing students themselves.

We are inclusive

VDEI seeks to recognise, understand and celebrate the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and learning needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing. In particular, we seek to strengthen our understanding of Deaf culture, together with the diverse ethnic cultures that form the rich tapestry of Victorian cultural life.

We are collaborative

VDEI is committed to engaging closely with the deaf education workforce, students, families and community organisations that support deaf and hard of hearing children and young people. These collaborations support our partnerships within the inclusive education communities and guide our work in designing and implementing policies that best support the education of deaf and hard of hearing students.

We are focused on making a difference

VDEI delivers tangible and transformative learning outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing children and young people. We are strategic in our approach, focusing on programs, projects and initiatives underpinned by strong research evidence and expert knowledge. By making a difference to the knowledge and understanding of educators, we contribute to sustained improvement in learning outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing students.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES	
Strategic Priority 1	Design and deliver excellence in evidence-based professional learning
Strategic Priority 2	Enhance learning and communication access through innovative technology
Strategic Priority 3	Engage in targeted research that informs leading practice in deaf education
Strategic Priority 4	Strengthen partnerships and stakeholder relationships

Strategic Priority 1

Design and deliver excellence in evidence-based professional learning

GOAL: To deliver high-quality professional learning that strengthens the practice of teachers, support staff and allied professionals in deaf education

Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and deliver a professional learning program that highlights the latest in research and leading practice in deaf and inclusive education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VDEI is recognised for the provision of high-quality professional learning that supports the professional learning needs of the deaf education workforce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote a range of blended professional learning events, including face-to-face, on-demand and live webinars. Host a range of free digital resources available via the Digital Resource Hub 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victorian educators and allied professionals will be confident in their ability to support and strengthen educational opportunities and outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage associated digital platforms dedicated to hosting e-learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VDEI 's management of digital platforms will play a pivotal role in the provision of professional learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver all Inclusive Education Professional Learning for the IEPP Branch and wider DET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased collaboration with Branch colleagues and other Divisions strengthens the delivery of inclusive education professional learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in regular consultation with the educational workforce, networks and allied professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations will improve the understanding of the professional learning needs of educators and allied professionals in the deaf education field
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate and consult with deaf educators and peak organisations to ensure that professional learning is inclusive and relevant to their needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VDEI's professional learning catalogue will include topics that are informed by individuals with a lived experience of deafness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and administer the annual learning needs analysis survey for the professional learning program and analyse registrants' evaluation data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of the learning needs survey and evaluation data informs the design of future professional learning and addresses the gaps identified in survey responses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate student voice into the program to ensure that professional learning represents students and their diverse learning needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design of professional learning resources are strengthened due to increased understanding of student learning needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster strong stakeholder relationships with professionals in deaf education to ensure professional learning is presented from a range of perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions from the deaf education workforce will benefit the design of professional learning resources and improves relevance of topics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate and consult with colleagues across DET to deliver professional learning as part of implementing the Disability Inclusion Reform initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced communication and collaboration with other DET Divisions will greatly benefit the implementation of the Disability Inclusion Reform initiatives

Strategic Priority 2

Enhance learning and communication access through innovative technology

GOAL: To enable the delivery of digital resources and provide access to communication through the effective use of technological solutions

Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase and expand VDEI's profile as an expert in specialist technology support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VDEI's expertise in specialist technology will enhance DET's commitment to digital professional learning and the provision of equitable communication access
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify technological solutions that provide effective digital access to professional learning and information sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VDEI's expertise in technology will promote a high standard of production and delivery of inclusive education professional learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a high level of technical expertise that supports a wide range of blended professional learning resources and access to communication and learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blended courses and resources will provide a wide range of self-paced professional learning for the inclusive education workforce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and expand digital resources and virtual hubs hosted on the IEPL LMS and the Digital Resource Hub, hosted on the VDEI website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VDEI's management of the IEPL LMS and Digital Resource Hub will contribute significantly to professional learning goals identified in the Disability Inclusion reform initiatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop workflow processes for the delivery of digital professional learning courses and resources, on-demand and live streamed presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VDEI's reputation as effective and efficient administrators of digital professional learning in deaf and inclusive education will be strengthened
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a peer-review system to ensure that all professional learning resources delivered through IEPL are of an approved standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality control of digital professional learning will ensure that IEPP's contribution to the IEPL initiative is of a consistently high standard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical support for captioning, audio/video production, SharePoint design, videoconferencing, assistive listening technology and website management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VDEI will strengthen its reputation as a centre of expertise in technology that supports the learning and access needs of deaf and hard of hearing students and teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore technological solutions that address challenges for deaf and hard of hearing students who access their education via remote learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VDEI's expertise in managing digital platforms will provide effective solutions to enable equitable access to learning for deaf and hard of hearing students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide enhanced learning opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing students through the provision of real-time automatic captioning and transcription software 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of captioning and transcription software in schools will ensure that deaf and hard of hearing students are provided with enhanced access to the curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide captioned educational resources for Victorian schools to ensure that deaf and hard of hearing students have full access to learning materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VDEI Caption Centre will continue to improve educational opportunities of deaf and hard of hearing students and will expand to include Primary Schools in 2022.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop VDEI's website as a hub of high-quality information related to all aspects of deaf education, professional learning and research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The VDEI website will raise VDEI's profile and will reinforce its position as a centre of expertise in deaf education and professional practice

Strategic Priority 3

Engage in targeted research that informs leading practice in deaf education

GOAL: To identify evidence-based practices that promote improved educational and wellbeing outcomes for deaf and hard of hearing students

Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage in research projects in partnership with academic institutions to identify leading practice in teaching and learning for deaf and hard of hearing students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' outcomes will be enhanced by strengthening educators' knowledge and practice through evidence-based pedagogical frameworks and high-impact teaching strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the implementation of targeted policies and programs that have a measurable impact on the quality of teaching practice in deaf education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VDEI's knowledge and expertise in deaf education will contribute significantly to the development of DET policies that benefit deaf and hard of hearing students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trial the use of hearing and auditory processing screening in primary schools using specialised technology developed by the University of Melbourne 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved technology for screening young children in schools will identify many more students with undiagnosed hearing loss which impacts on their learning outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with the deaf education workforce to identify action research projects that will strengthen the knowledge and practice within the field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with Teachers of the Deaf and support staff on practice-based projects will reinforce evidence-based data and provide practical strategies for implementation of programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement real-time automatic captioning and transcription software in Victorian primary and secondary schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of automatic captioning and transcription software will provide deaf and hard of hearing students with enhanced access to the school curriculum
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with DET and non-government agencies to strengthen vocational pathways and transition programs for deaf and hard of hearing students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-sectional collaboration will inform and guide the development of DET programs that enhance vocational opportunities for deaf and hard of hearing students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a framework and resources that identify the competencies required for Auslan educational interpreters in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Professional Standards for Educational Interpreters provide an evidence-based framework that guides and - Virtual Hub, professional learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead projects that focus on early literacy programs for young deaf and hard of hearing students - Fingerspelling our Way to Reading and Foundations for Literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Early literacy programs developed specifically for deaf children will enhance educational opportunities, particularly for bilingual deaf students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with the DET Data Governance team to access assessment data of deaf and hard of hearing students across Victoria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysing assessment data will assist in monitoring the learning outcomes of deaf and hard of hearing students and will provide evidence for targeted programs and interventions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate a commitment to bimodal bilingual practice in Victorian schools including the establishment of a digital repository of Auslan resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on Auslan-English bilingual practice will strengthen the knowledge and practice of the deaf education workforce and will inform DET's language policies

Strategic Priority 4

Strengthen partnerships and stakeholder relationships

GOAL: To enhance collaboration and professional practice in deaf education through strong departmental and community partnerships

Strategies	Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foster strong partnerships with DET colleagues to ensure that VDEI contributes to DET's strategic goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VDEI's contribution to the deaf education field will be enhanced by strengthening its profile throughout DET
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build trust and increase stakeholder engagement through participation in cross-sectional initiatives with peak bodies and advocacy groups in the deaf field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultations with key stakeholders will promote cohesive policies and practice principles and will contribute to improved coordination of strategic priorities that support deaf education, e. g. Transition, vocational pathways, language access, NDIS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with stakeholders who have a lived experience of deafness to ensure that VDEI's commitment to deaf education is guided by personal experience of the education system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions from the Deaf community, deaf and hard of hearing students, deaf teachers and support staff will enrich DET's understanding of the educational needs of deaf and hard of hearing students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with peak bodies and advocacy groups which are active in communicating with government and non-government departments on issues related to the education of deaf and hard of hearing students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaf and hard of hearing students, their families and communities will benefit from the advice and knowledge shared with VDEI/DET with respect to current legislation and Standards that impact on deaf education and inclusion
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish partnerships with organisations that represent Teachers of the Deaf, Auslan teachers, educational interpreters and allied professionals in the deaf education field 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing strong relationships with organisations representing key practitioners will provide VDEI with valuable input from professionals who lead the field in teaching and supporting deaf and hard of hearing students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that VDEI/DET is represented in major disability organisations' communications and initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with deaf and disability stakeholder Working Groups will provide opportunities to increase awareness of issues that impact on DET's policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build and strengthen partnerships with educational leaders in Australian States and Territories through national projects and leadership forums 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration with national leaders in the deaf education field will provide opportunities for sharing of evidence-based projects, policies and practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with DET and non-government colleagues to ensure that Auslan language programs are promoted and valued 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DET benefits from its partnerships with non-government agencies that specialise in educational pathways for students who communicate in Auslan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formulate a Communications Action Plan for 2021-23 to guide stakeholder interactions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A Communications Action Plan will ensure that communications are targeted to maximise the positive impact of interactions with stakeholders in English and Auslan

Victorian Deaf Education Institute

Inclusive Education Professional Practice Branch

Schools and Regional Services Group

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