



MEDIA RELEASE

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Senses Foundation takes global leadership role for deafblind community

Western Australia's Senses Foundation has been awarded a lead role in the worldwide service development and advocacy for people who are deafblind.

The Foundation has been successful in its bid to host the Deafblind International (DbI) Secretariat for the next four years.

Senses is WA's primary advocate and service provider for people who are deafblind or blind with additional disabilities.

Chief Executive Officer Debbie Karasinski says this appointment places Senses at the centre of the international community of service providers for people who are deafblind.

"Being the 'hub' around which the international deafblind community revolves allows Senses to be at the forefront of the sector," says Ms Karasinski.

"We'll have the latest information about what is going on in the world, be able to participate in vital decision-making and also communicate key findings to the deafblind community throughout the globe.

"Having the DbI Secretariat under our care and management will also increase awareness of Senses' work in WA and raise its profile on the world stage."

Deafblind International is the world association promoting services for deafblind people through international collaboration. Its purposes are:

- to promote and improve the recognition and awareness of deafblindness as a unique congenital or acquired disability that affects children, adults and elderly people
- to support the civil rights of deafblind people and the equalisation of opportunities in all aspects of life
- to encourage the development of networks and opportunities for association and learning for professionals and to the benefit of deafblind people and their families
- to enable interaction between deafblind people, families, professionals, organisations in the field and the wider community
- to promote and improve education and opportunities for development for deafblind people
- to encourage support and services for deafblind people that lead to self-determination and quality of life, and

- to promote and improve quality in services for deafblind people by encouraging research, staff development and training, policies that lead to good practice and the dissemination of information.

Senses' Senior Manager Client Services Elvira Edwards has been named Dbl Secretary and Bronte Pyett has been newly appointed as the Secretariat Manager. The pair recently travelled to New Delhi to ensure a smooth handover of the Secretariat from India.

Senses Foundation was formed in 2001 when the Royal WA Institute for the Blind - one of WA's oldest charities - amalgamated with the WA Deafblind Association.

Senses is now WA's primary advocate and service provider for people who are deafblind or blind with additional disabilities, providing highly specialised programs and services to improve communication, socialisation, mobility and quality of life for both adults and children.

For more information about Senses Foundation, its advocacy and broad raft of services for the deafblind community visit www.senses.asn.au

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