



Media release

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Specialist deafblind services arrive in NSW

People living with deafblindness in NSW can now access support from one of Australia's leading service providers in the field.

Able Australia has a long and proud history of supporting people with multiple disabilities, including deafblindness, which dates back nearly 50 years. Through years of listening and learning, the not-for-profit organisation has acquired genuine expertise in supporting the needs of people who have a combination of hearing and vision loss.

"The number of Australians experiencing deafblindness is expected to reach 1.2 million by 2050 so it's vital we start reaching out and supporting as many people as we can by providing experiences that assist them to achieve their life goals," said Able Australia CEO, Kaye Collard.

"Since 1967, we have worked closely with people experiencing dual sensory loss to develop a series of effective programs that allow them to live an independent and socially engaged life. We are delighted to have the opportunity to provide the same level of support to the people of NSW."

Able Australia has appointed Bethany Evans as its first NSW Community Development Worker. Bethany will make formal contact with the deafblind community in NSW and the ACT to identify service gaps and provide information. Additionally, she will liaise with key stakeholders throughout the state to improve outcomes for people with deafblindness.

Bethany is well known within the NSW deafblind community and is a board member of Deaf Australia NSW. She regularly supports people with deafblindness on day outings, doctor appointments and social and community events. She is also involved with the Deaf Society of NSW's Ushers Group and the Deafblind Association of NSW's Hand Over Hand program.

"I have a sound understanding of the many challenges deafblind people in NSW face and I will be working to ensure these people receive more support and access to workshops and day programs – particularly in rural areas," said Bethany.

"I am delighted to be associated with an experienced and forward thinking organisation like Able Australia. We want to reach and support as many people as we can, but we also want to hear from carers, family members and existing sensory disability service providers so we can continue our learning and growth."

About Able Australia: Able Australia is one of Australia's leading not-for-profit organisations, delivering high quality, person-centred services to people living with multiple disabilities, including deafblindness and in community support services. From its humble beginnings in 1967 as an association supporting people with deafblindness and Rubella, Able Australia has grown into a diverse and dynamic organisation that supports more than 4000 people throughout the Australia (excluding Western Australia and the Northern Territory).

For information, interviews and images, please contact Scott Darkin, National Manager, Communications & Branding on 0408 273 828 or scott.darkin@ableaustralia.org.au.