



MEDIA RELEASE

18.01.2021

VALE LEONIE JACKSON

It is with great regret that Deaf Services and the Deaf Society would like to acknowledge the passing of our great friend and colleague, Leonie Jackson on the 17th of January 2021.

In 2020 Ms Jackson accepted the role of Executive Manager, Advocacy and Strategic Partnerships with the newly merged Deaf Services and the Deaf Society. Prior to that, Ms Jackson was the first Deaf CEO in the history of the Deaf Society, a role she had held since 2015.

CEO of Deaf Services and the Deaf Society, Brett Casey said Ms Jackson was a family-minded, generous and patient person, and one of the strongest advocates for Australia's Deaf Community in recent history.

"Leonie was one of the pioneers of Deaf education and bilingual teaching in Australia, an accomplished presenter, and a dynamic community leader", Mr Casey says.

"This has come as a shock to the whole community. To many of us, myself included, Leonie was far more than a colleague, her passing is an incredible loss to our organisation, the Deaf community, and the Australian disability sector at large.

"Breaking down barriers, building community capacity and supporting Deaf people to realise their dreams, were important goals for Leonie throughout her time as CEO, and she carried these values in all aspects of her life.

"Leonie was never passive in her advocacy and support of the community, and always passionately acted on the opportunities she saw for Deaf Australian's – particularly for Deaf children.

"Leonie always skilfully married strategic vision and practicality – particularly in her outlook for the Deaf Society. The landmark merger between Deaf Services and the Deaf Society, which took place last year, was largely due to Leonie's vision and her unwavering optimism about the future of our organisations.

"Australia's Deaf community would look very different today if not for the passionate work of Leonie Jackson. Deaf Services and the Deaf Society will not be the same without her, and neither will many of our lives, or those of the community we serve.

"The thoughts of all staff are with Leonie's family during this difficult time - especially her two boys, who were her pride and joy."

Deaf Services and the Deaf Society will continue to share information with the community as it becomes available, and in accordance with the wishes of her family.