

**A Constant Struggle:
A History of Deaf Education in New
South Wales since World War II**

Naomi Malone

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Statement of Originality/Authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not been previously been submitted for a degree, nor has it been submitted as part of the requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been fully acknowledged. In addition, I also certify that all information and sources used are identified in the thesis.

Signature of Student:

Date:

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To my parents,

For loving me,

For giving me a language to connect with both of you, my family, friends and others,

For letting me *be*, and

For the education I have had,

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ABBREVIATIONS

AAD	Australian Association of the Deaf
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation
ADK	Aussie Deaf Kids
ASL	American Sign Language
Auslan	Australian Sign Language
CDA	Children with Disability Australia
CEO	Catholic Education Office
CIDE	Council for Integrated Deaf Education
CODA	Children of Deaf Adults
CRPD	United Nations' <i>Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities</i>
CSC	Catherine Sullivan Centre
Cwlth	Commonwealth (of Australia)
DA	Deaf Australia
DDA	<i>Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth)</i>
DdHHHI	Deaf, deaf, Hard of Hearing, Hearing Impaired

DFA	Deafness Forum of Australia
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission
NAATI	National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters
NAL	National Acoustic Laboratories
NSW	New South Wales
PWD	People with disabilities
SC	The Shepherd Centre
SEP	Special Education Policy 1993
SRV	Social Role Valorisation
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America
UTS	University of Technology, Sydney

ABSTRACT

Despite developments in legislation, policy, advocacy and technology, all designed to improve deaf education and its delivery, Deaf, deaf, hard of hearing and hearing-impaired (DdHHHI) students still face a raft of issues from their early years of education through secondary high school. This thesis argues that, while there have been improvements, that situation continues due largely to fragmentation within the DdHHHI movement based on competing advocacy for differing approaches to deaf education. This has occurred in the context of growing corporatisation and privatisation.

The main area of difference has centered on how young DdHHHI people should learn, be it informal learning – in the home, the playground and the like – or formal learning – such as in the classroom. Should they be taught using oralism – teaching via spoken language – or manualism – teaching via sign language? The debate between oralism and manualism has had a significant impact on the type of education delivered to DdHHHI students in New South Wales (NSW). Deaf education has generally been affected by the choice of speech or sign, each being a communication mode that encapsulates its own unique languages.

Since the 1960s, this situation has become more contested and increasingly pronounced. Different models of disability have come and gone. The findings of various inquiries and reports have stimulated various exchanges, though they have been implemented either in an ad hoc manner or not at all. New technologies have been introduced, heralding different methods of educating DdHHHI students with particular regard to their individual abilities and to their differing degrees of hearing loss. The debate further deepened with the introduction of bilingualism as another educational method in the early 1990s. Disability discrimination legislation and the United Nations' *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* served to further drive the deaf education debate. These required countries to take measures to facilitate the learning of sign language and ensure the education of DdHHHI children be delivered in the

most appropriate languages, modes and means of communication for the individual and in environments that maximise academic and social development. However, DdHHHl students continue to be marginalised in the NSW education system.