



Memo: Questions and Answers re Integration

To: Hear For You Members

From: Yetta Abrahams, Chairperson

Date: 8 August 2021 – day of notice for Extraordinary General Meeting

Re: Integration of Hear For You's Operations into the Shepherd Centre

Dear Hear For You Members,

This memo is to provide you with information about why Hear For You is pursuing integration into The Shepherd Centre and what it means for our future. Over the past 6 months, there have been detailed discussions between the boards of the two organisations, and our operations teams have been working together to prepare for the integration should it be approved by you the members.

The proposed integration is a strategic move that has been strongly supported by the Hear For You Board in the interest of ensuring long-term support for young Australians with a hearing loss in a financially strong and sustainable model. This decision also takes into account the goal of continuing the vision by Hear For You founder Olivia Andersen, as articulated in her special video message to you.

With this in mind, the Hear For You Board is calling an Extraordinary General Meeting for 30 August 2021 of members to formally seek approval to integrate Hear For You into The Shepherd Centre. This requires our members to vote for the dissolution of Hear For You as an entity, and agree for the operations, branding, assets, and staff to be integrated into the Shepherd Centre on 1 September 2021. The Boards and executive management of both organisations are ready to formally complete this integration process by 31 August 2021 and seamlessly continue to Hear For You operations from 1 September 2021. This will ensure minimal disruption of service delivery of Hear For You programs to young Australians with hearing loss.



What will this integration mean for Hear for You?

The Boards of both organisations have formally agreed on the following:

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- Hear For You's branding, logos, and website will remain as they currently are. The program names and information will remain, and the Shepherd Centre's Beyond Sound program will be incorporated into Hear For You.
 - All staff, including our Founder Olivia Andersen, will retain their current positions. All payroll, entitlements, and reporting will be integrated into the Shepherd Centre's structure and employment contracts with Hear For You will transfer to The Shepherd Centre. Staff will all be eligible to access The Shepherd Centre entitlements, employment policies, and agreements.
 - Hear For You as an entity will cease, with the Board, Company Secretary, and CEO David Brady's positions to cease as of the agreed date of integration – 5.00 pm 31 August 2021, should the members approve the integration.
 - To ensure long-term strategic input, two current Directors (Dan Jarvis and Tony Coles) of the Hear For You Board will be appointed to join the current The Shepherd Centre Board.
 - Existing programs planned for 2021 will proceed as normal, including the "Hearing for Life" and Online Programs. It is expected more new programs will be offered should the integration proceed.
 - The Shepherd Centre will take over the Finance, Business Management, Marketing, Governance, Risk Management, Legal, Insurance, and other reporting requirements from the CEO on integration. Current Hear For You staff who will be employed by TSC will have more time to focus on coordination, delivery, and reporting of the mentoring programs, including mentor recruitment and training.
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Directors from both the Hear For You Board and The Shepherd Centre Board are extremely positive that the integration will bring greater opportunities for the staff, mentors, and importantly the participants (teenagers) involved in Hear For You. For staff, it will provide a more stable employment future to enable everyone to apply their experience and skills towards coordinating the incredible Mentoring programs that make such a positive impact on lives now and in the future. Most importantly, this integration is also expected to provide long-term financial stability and a base of individuals that will encourage an increase in the reach of Mentoring programs for more Australian teenagers with a hearing loss throughout Australia.

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16 University Ave
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If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me as Chair of the Board, or our Founder and current board member, Olivia Andersen.

Email contacts:

Chair of the Board: Yetta Abrahams - yetta.abrahams@hearforyou.com.au

Founder: Olivia Anderson – olivia.andersen@hearforyou.com.au

FAQ

Why do we as Members need to vote on this process?

The Hear For You Constitution requires a vote by the Hear For You Members to decide on whether to approve the integration; primarily the transfer of assets from HFY to TSC, and commence the process of deregistration of HFY as a stand-alone company.

Will there be any redundancies, changes to hours, or changes to responsibilities for HFY staff?

There will be no redundancies or changes to hours for any Hear For You staff. On the TSC side, some TSC staff will have some changes to responsibilities. The Hear For You services (mentoring and mental health website & referrals) will be continued by the current HFY staff and mentors. TSC is planning for the HFY staff to continue their current work, but just within TSC. The HFY CEO David Brady's role will cease as he is contracted to the HFY entity and TSC already has a CEO role in a place that is filled.

What if HFY staff don't want to continue in the integrated organisation?

Any HFY staff who don't want to work within the merged organisation, can of course resign as normal, however, because their employment terms and responsibilities will continue, voluntary redundancies aren't available.

HFY currently offers mentoring in Auslan – will that change?

The current Auslan support will continue (a small proportion of HFY participants use Auslan); TSC now and in the future supports children achieving their best whether that is with spoken or signed

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language. As is currently the case, TSC will not be teaching Auslan as they aren't specialists in Auslan and to meet this choice, TSC will work with the Deaf societies and Next Sense to support families who want, request, or need to learn Auslan for their personal and family communications.

Do we expect push-back from the Deaf community and societies because of TSC's spoken language focus?

The Deaf community and societies may be concerned that support for participants who use Auslan will be negatively impacted. Both HFY and TSC Boards have confirmed that this will not happen.

Can Hear For You not integrate with The Shepherd Centre?

The main reason for integration is to combine the strength of HFY (programs, mentors, founder, staff, and cohort) with the strength offered by TSC (business operations, marketing, information technology, and alumni contacts) to be in a position to expand the reach of Mentoring programs to more young deaf Australians. HFY does have the capacity to continue as a stand-alone entity, however, with limited resources to support the vision of our founder to reach all young deaf Australians, this goal will take longer to achieve than being integrated into TSC.

As always, if you feel you have more questions please reach out to me, otherwise, I hope to see you online at our EGM on 30 August 2021.

Kind Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Yetta'.

Yetta Abrahams
Chair of the Hear For You Board
Sunday 8 August 2021