

# Terms of Reference SPEVI Inc Deafblind Education Community of Practice

**February 2024**

# Background

When Able Australia established a “Centre of Excellence – Deafblind” in 2019, it was recognised that the needs of children with deafblindness in Australia were particularly poorly addressed. With the establishment of a Deafblind International Education Network in 2023, the timing was right to form a Community of Practice specifically for educators of deafblind students to address needs facing both educators and students in Australia, New Zealand and countries in the South Pacific. In discussion with Able Australia, SPEVI Inc agreed to take a lead role in coordination and facilitation of the Deafblind Education Community of Practice (CoP).

# Purpose

The SPEVI Deafblind Education Community of Practice (DB Ed CoP) was created to incorporate the priorities and pressing needs of SPEVI members working with deafblind students, and to serve as a community to discuss issues surrounding the education of students who are deafblind.

# Members

SPEVI members from Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Island countries.

Non SPEVI members are also welcome.

# Timeframe

The first meeting will be held in the first quarter of 2024, with subsequent meetings held once per school term.

# Key Deliverables

Through the DB Ed CoP quarterly online meetings, SPEVI Inc aims to deliver the following:

1. Meetings to be used as a mechanism to strengthen connections between educators of deafblind students.
2. Meetings to include topics addressing priorities of members which may include, but are not limited to, communication, technology, accessing the curriculum.
3. Identification of areas requiring research and advocacy

CoP meeting recordings will be shared with SPEVI members who were not in attendance upon request.

# Description of Outputs from the CoP meetings

## **Format**

Real time discussions, recordings (shared upon request), professional learnings, collaborative discussions of topics steered by co-facilitators:

## **Target Audience**

SPEVI members and other interested parties

## **Goals**

To address the following aims of SPEVI Inc:

Aim 1: To be recognised as the professional body of educators whose specialty is in matters pertaining to the education of persons with vision impairment, including those with deafblindness, in Australia, New Zealand, and Pacific Island Countries.

Aim 2: To encourage the highest standards in educators of persons with deafblindness by promoting research and professional training for general and specialist teachers.

Aim 3: To promote and facilitate the interchange of information and collaboration among educators, professionals, parent groups and the broader community concerning education and equal opportunity for persons with deafblindness.

Aim 4: To encourage the use of appropriate mainstream and assistive technologies, resources, and optical and non-optical aids, in the education of persons with deafblindness, and to promote teacher education programs in the use and care of existing and new techniques and technology.

# **Responsibilities**

## C**o-**facilitator**s**

Two to three SPEVI Inc members will co-moderate the DB Ed CoP, determine annual meeting schedule and presenters, and liaise with members and the SPEVI Inc Committee of Management.

## Deafblind International Education Network

Co-facilitators will liaise with the DbI Education Network to identify opportunities for information sharing and collaboration.

## Able Australia, Centre of Excellence – Deafblind (CoE-DB)

One or more members of the DB Education CoP will be a member of the CoE-DB Reference Group and will act as a conduit of information between the two groups and look for opportunities for collaboration.

## South Pacific Educators in Vision Impairment - SPEVI Inc

One or more members of the SPEVI Inc Committee of Management will join the DB Ed CoP and act as a conduit of information between the CoP and the Committee of Management. News from the DB Ed CoP will be shared on the SPEVI website and via the SPEVI Inc media channels, such as the SPEVI FaceBook, Members List and News List. SPEVI Inc will look for more opportunities for collaboration with Able Australia, CoE-DB).