

14 November 2016

Deafblind conference sparks global interest

More than 80 people from across the globe will converge on Fremantle for The Usher Pre-conference Workshop and the 10th National Deafblind Conference from Tuesday, 15 November 2016 to Thursday, 17 November 2016. This will be an opportunity to connect with others as well as hear from international and national experts regarding combined vision and hearing loss.

Matthew Wittorff, Senses Australia's Manager Deafblind Services, says deafblindness is a unique disability where an individual has a combination of a vision and hearing impairment.

"The 10th National Deafblind Conference theme is 'Celebrating Experiences Across the Lifespan' and delegates from around the world will have an opportunity to connect with people who are deafblind, family members, educators, allied health professionals, medical and nursing staff and researchers to learn more.

"We have an array of international and national experts who will be speaking about a number of topics, including key note speakers Dr Walter Wittich and Molly Watt. Dr Wittich is an Assistant Professor at the School of Optometry at the University of Montreal, Quebec and will be presenting his research with a specific focus on the rehabilitation of older adults with combined vision and hearing loss. Molly, is arriving from London, is 21 years old and was born with Usher Syndrome and will share her experiences.

"Almost 30 people who are deafblind will be attending the conference and some will be presenting at the conference. We also have a wonderful team of 30 volunteers and 26 interpreters who will assist with communication and sighted guide.

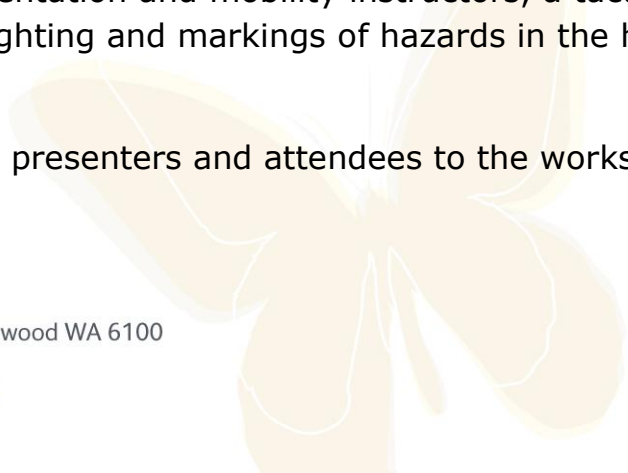
"We are very pleased to be able to provide many accessibility features at the conference to support the many unique needs of people who are deafblind. These include, platform interpreters at the front, visual frame interpreting for individuals who are deaf with tunnel vision, individual tactile interpreters, trained communication guide volunteers, hearing loops, live captioning, note takers, orientation and mobility instructors, a tactile map of the venue, Braille, large print, extra lighting and markings of hazards in the hotel with high visibility tape.

"We are looking forward to welcoming presenters and attendees to the workshop and conference," says Matthew.

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Senses Australia is proud to host the Usher Syndrome Pre-conference Workshop and the 10th National Deafblind Conference. Senses Australia is a not for profit organisation which provides services to people of all ages, for all people with disability and has supported the Western Australian community for 120 years.

Both the workshop and conference will be held at the Esplanade Hotel, Fremantle. An art exhibition will also be on display at the conference by artists who are deafblind. Art forms include paintings, knitting, pottery and sculpture and will be available for purchase by the public.

To find out more about Senses Australia visit www.senses.org.au or to find out more about the 10th National Deafblind Conference visit <http://www.deafblind2016.com.au/>.

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