

Ai-Media Expands into Education Services Leonie Jackson to Lead New Education Division Delivering Access for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Students

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Ai-Media today launched a new Education Access Division to enable deaf and hearing impaired students to participate fully in mainstream classrooms in schools, TAFEs and universities.

Experienced disability educator Leonie Jackson has joined Ai-Media to lead the new division which will have a core focus on delivering live captioning into classrooms so that students with hearing impairment can easily follow any teacher's lessons.

Ai-Media will reveal details of its education service innovation at the National Deafness Sector Summit in Sydney on Friday 23 April.

Ai-Media CEO Tony Abrahams said: "We have developed a new captioning service for deaf and hearing impaired students that can greatly enhance their ability to participate and succeed in the mainstream education system.

"With a better education, these students can secure better jobs and benefit themselves, the community and wider economy," Mr Abrahams said.

"We are delighted that Leonie Jackson has joined Ai-Media and agreed to lead our new education division," he added, "Leonie has almost 20 years experience in educating children with disability and she brings unparalleled knowledge and commitment to the role".

"Our goal is to deliver the maximum education access improvement to as many kids as quickly as possible."

There are 10,000 deaf children in Australia and 160,000 Australians are out of work because they cannot hear, Mr Abrahams said.

According to Access Economics the cost to the Australian economy of excluding people from education and employment opportunities because of deafness exceeds \$12 billion a year.

Ms Jackson joins Ai-Media after 18 years at the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) where she taught in the preschool, primary and high school programs. For the last 8 years, she has been assistant principal of the Thomas Pattison School, a bilingual Kindergarten to Year 10 school. Ms Jackson began as one of the founding staff of the Auslan/English bilingual program for deaf children.

Ms Jackson said: "I have seen the positive differences this program has made in students' lives and look forward to implementing with Ai-Media the next generation of solutions driven by innovations in technology.

"I am thrilled to have the opportunity to lead a committed, dynamic and professional team at Ai-Media whose focus is ending the exclusion of deaf kids – and adults. This is an extraordinary opportunity to pave the way for hundreds of thousands of deaf and hearing impaired people worldwide to be fully included in and live independently in mainstream communities."

Ai-Media's new initiative coincides with renewed government focus on disability, including a Productivity Commission inquiry that has commenced into disability issues and the Henry Tax Review that has examined disability costs and future funding models.

Further information: Tony Abrahams 02 9813 6781

About Ai-Media:

Access Innovation Media (Ai-Media) is a social enterprise that develops and delivers access services for media, education, business and government clients to ensure their content is available to people with hearing and vision impairments.

The company provides the following services:

- Pre-recorded captioning and subtitling for television, DVD, online and corporate presentations
- Live captioning using re-speaking and stenographic methodologies for broadcast, conference, meetings, online and mobile
- Transcripts
- Audio description

Ai-Media introduced large-scale cost-effective captioning to subscription television in 2004 – a service that has now grown to deliver over 120,000 hours across 45 channels annually.

Ai-Media clients have won an unprecedented 21 Captioning Awards over the last 5 years.

Ai-Media is the platinum sponsor of the National Deafness Sector Summit next Friday 23 April at the Grace Hotel.