

Family Handbook

Early Intervention—Hearing



Hello

We're glad you've found us!

Wherever you are in Australia—and wherever you are in your journey to support your child—we're here for you.



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How do I help my child navigate the world?

We want you and your child to share the fun and joy of communicating effectively with each other.

To achieve that, they need a strong foundation for learning and communication.

Learning that your child is deaf or hard of hearing can be an emotional time, but NextSense can help you explore your options and help give your child the best start in life.

How NextSense can support you and your child

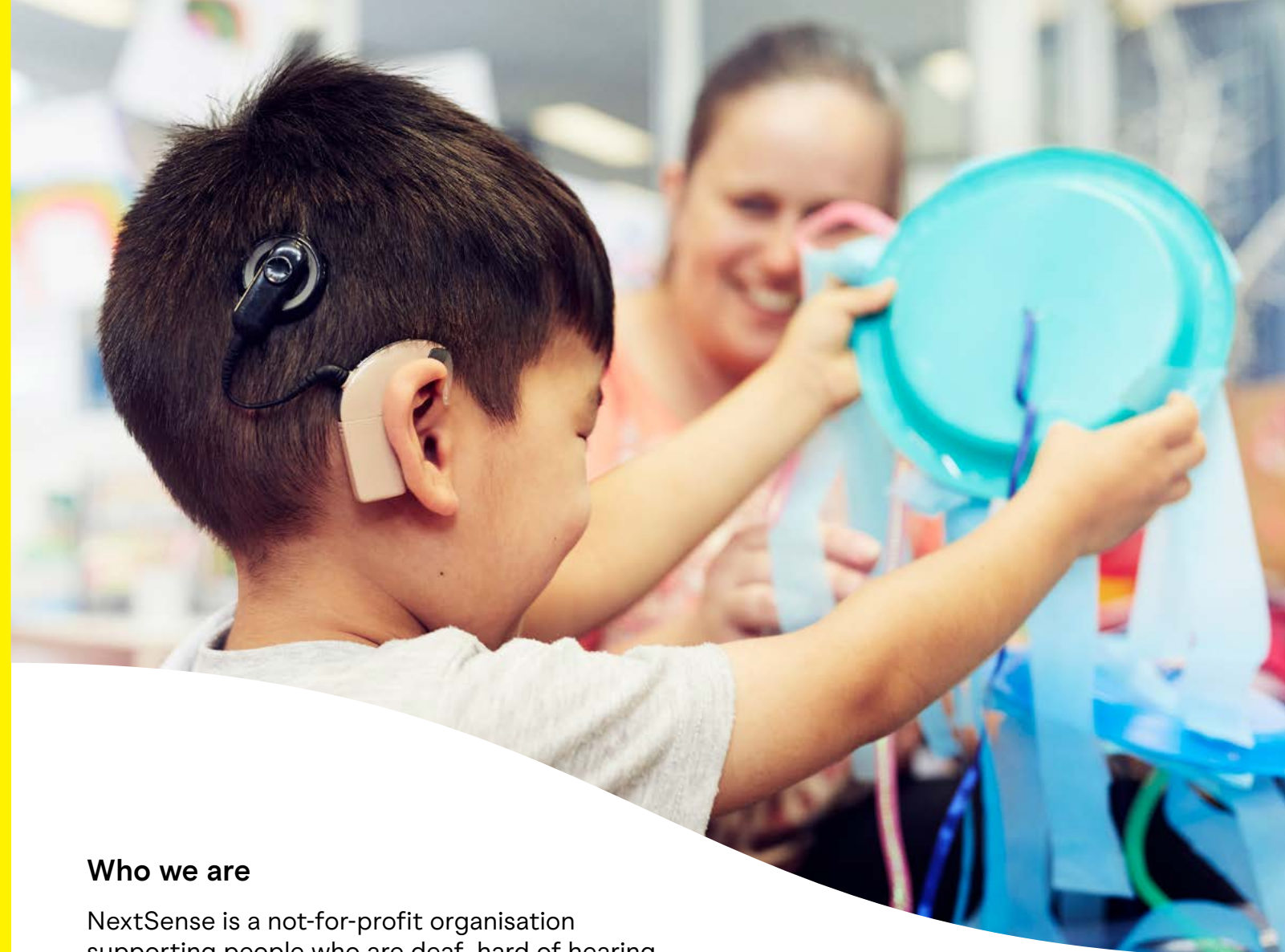
For children who are deaf or hard of hearing, tailored early learning as part of an early intervention program is an important step in their journey. Your child is unique, so we work with you to design an individualised program that meets their needs, developing the communication, language and social skills that will support your child and family at every stage.

Working with us, you don't just get one highly qualified professional, you get an entire team in your corner. Supported by the latest evidence, our programs help you access the right early intervention support for your child, from when their hearing loss is first diagnosed onwards.



Here every step of the way

NextSense Early Intervention supports the important steps that will guide you and your child on the path to achieving their potential.



Who we are

NextSense is a not-for-profit organisation supporting people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or have low vision across Australia for over 160 years.

We work with children, adults and their families to educate and create an individual program of care that meets their unique needs. We're a registered NDIS provider, and we work with you and your family to help your child achieve their goals and potential.

With the support of generous donations, NextSense provides vital support for children and adults, more cochlear implants than any other service in Australia, and is a world leader for research, technology and professional education in our field.

Every year, we work with families to provide:

1000+

children with an early intervention program

3000+


babies and children with vision and hearing screening

4500+

children and adults with cochlear implant support

Take the next step



 **1300 581 391**

 **hello@nextsense.org.au**

We'll connect you with an experienced team member to discuss your needs.

Get the support and tools you need

—in your language

With NextSense Early Intervention services, you can access the right support for you, your child and family





Our services are designed for children from birth to eight years of age and their families to develop strong foundations for learning and communication. We can continue to support you after your child turns eight, based on the goals you identify.

And as your needs change over time, we can adjust the support we provide.

We understand that the best language for your child to learn is the language you use at home. That's why we can provide interpreter services as needed during early intervention sessions, usually at no cost to you.

We support children with different types and degrees of hearing loss, from mild hearing loss to profound hearing loss in one or both ears. We also support children with multiple disabilities, including children who are deafblind.

Together with you, we can help your child to navigate and explore their world, by:

-  developing listening and spoken language skills
-  helping you and your child to gain confidence using Auslan
-  supporting your child's unique communication needs
-  supporting transition to kindergarten and big school.

Why NextSense



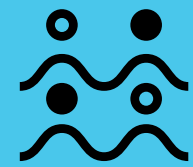
Support tailored to your child and family's goals



Gain the confidence to make decisions to support your child



Resources, knowledge and the tools to help your child achieve their potential



Connect with a network—other families, professionals and education specialists





How we work with you

To help your child learn, grow and thrive, our approach is:

Respectful

We value and respect your child and family's unique and specific strengths.



Family centred

We build your capacity to support your child in your everyday activities, giving your child many more learning opportunities.

Evidence based

We're committed to delivering services based on national and international best practice principles and the latest evidence. We challenge ourselves to keep learning so we can support you better.



Proactive

Early identification and intervention are key to helping your child develop their communication and reach all of their other developmental milestones. We can support your family to do this.

Learning in everyday life

We want early intervention to be meaningful, functional and fun. We know that children learn best when they are having fun and when early intervention goals are integrated into daily routines and community activities.



Language and communication foundations

Language and the brain

By the time a baby is just a few months old, the parts of the brain that interpret sound are becoming specialised to the language the baby hears. Already, their brain is losing the ability to recognise different sounds found in other languages. Learning a language—any language—is easiest when we're very young and our brains are the most flexible.

Interested in learning more?

Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child provides more information about how the early years impact brain development and more. Visit bit.ly/brain-architect and bit.ly/brain-concepts

Start learning early

With quality support early in your child's life, you can help them build the foundations for a love of learning, communicating, exploring the world around them and interacting with others. For many children, early intervention can lead to needing fewer supports later in life, more confidence, better inclusion, independence and increased participation in everyday activities.

Talk, read, sing, play

Your child actively learns by doing these everyday activities and our programs support you to develop fun and engaging learning experiences. Early childhood is a time of rapid (and exciting!) development for growing children. Early intervention guides and supports your child through this important phase.

Partnering with you

We give you the tools, information and understanding that helps you nurture your child's communication skills early in their life. That may mean speaking English to each other, speaking another language, using Auslan or using another way to communicate, such as picture communication tools or key word signs.



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Early access to language is vital for babies as a foundation for their communication development. And, it helps parents to effectively communicate with their baby, establishing a strong connection from the early stages of life.

Inge
NextSense Best Practice Lead—
Early Intervention—Hearing

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What to expect with NextSense



Our early intervention services can support you and your family from the very beginning of your journey with hearing loss until the age of eight.



Our evidence-based and goal-focused programs address the listening, language, communication and social skills children need to flourish in their early years.



Your child is unique, and so are their development and learning needs so your child's early intervention program is tailored just for them. It's a unique mix of services and support to help your child achieve their potential.



NextSense can give you the resources, knowledge and the tools you and your family need to help your child reach their goals at home and in the community.

The first step

To develop the right plan for your child, we start by understanding their needs, through a baseline communication assessment. You will be allocated a key worker who is a teacher of the deaf or speech pathologist.

We then build the best possible team for your child, which can involve audiologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech pathologists and developmental psychologists.



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We've loved group therapy with Arthur at NextSense – as he starts his hearing journey. The NextSense team are encouraging and insightful. For Nak and I, we enjoy meeting other families in a supportive environment. For Arthur, he loves playing with his new friends.

Anthony,
Arthur's dad

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Keeping you informed

We host parent information sessions to help you connect with other families, learn from leading experts and participate in discussions on a range of topics.

Choose your service type

Individual sessions

One on one sessions with a teacher or therapist are fun, stimulating and goal-directed to promote your child's listening, communication and overall development. You'll be involved in all aspects of the session and can learn how to incorporate the same goals into your daily routine at home. You can ask questions and chat with your child's teacher/therapist about your child, their progress and your experiences.



Early intervention is available in person at NextSense centres, at home and via video conferencing or 'telepractice', depending on your location.

Group programs

Held at select NextSense centres, various early intervention groups are available for your child based on their needs. Children play together and get involved with early literacy, music or getting ready for school.

They're a chance to build friendships, learn through play and have fun.

Groups are also an opportunity to connect with other families, as together you'll learn new ways to support your child's development. Share experiences and learn more about hearing loss, child development, education services, hearing devices and a range of topics that can help you on your journey.

Support for children in the community

To make sure your child has the support they need beyond your home environment and your sessions with us, we can also provide support at your childcare centre or preschool.

And when your child is ready to start school, NextSense School Support can help children attending independent schools to transition and access their school curriculum, helping them succeed in their school setting.



● Alisha using the Listen and Learn app from NextSense

Play and learn at home with our apps

We've developed a range of apps that can help you and your child continue to learn together. We're constantly working to bring you new, innovative education tools, which you can download from our website.

nextsense.org.au

Expert team around your child and family

With NextSense you don't just get one highly qualified professional—you get an entire team around your child. And just as your child's program is customised depending on their needs, so too is the team supporting you.

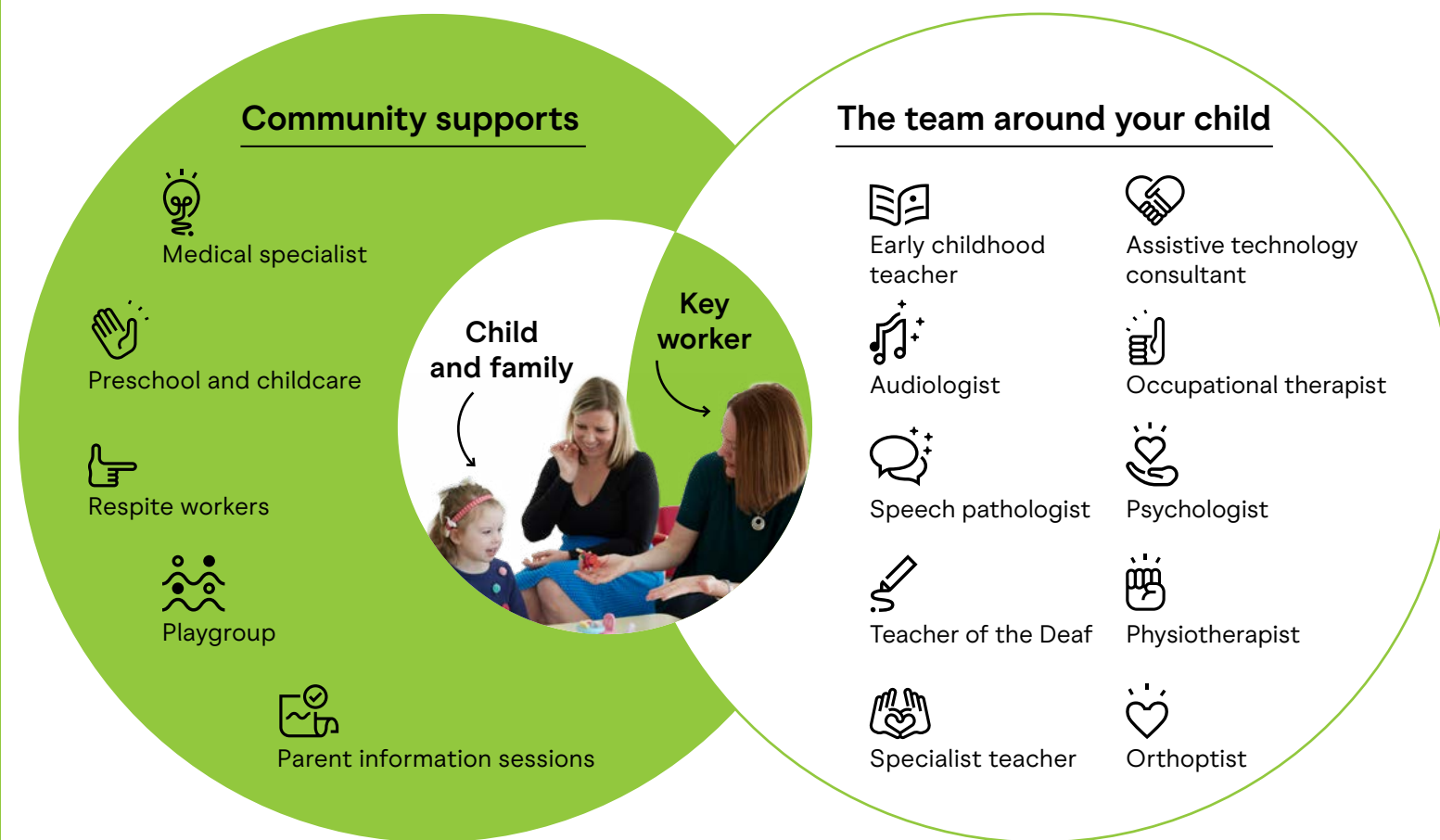
A key worker

To make sure you experience the best possible early intervention for your child a member of our team, known as your key worker, will work with you and your family. They will provide early intervention and coordinate your child's support, care and expert NextSense team.

Your key worker will be a teacher of the deaf, early childhood educator or speech pathologist that can help you to understand your child's early development and learning needs. They work with your family, other NextSense team members that are experts in their fields as well as your child's community supports to ensure your child can achieve their personal potential.

What your key worker does

-  Provides early intervention and a plan tailored to your child's needs to help your child have a range of experiences in everyday life
-  Assists with coordination of the information, services and supports around your child and family
-  Helps your family to implement strategies from the team around your child into your daily routines
-  Supports your child and family every step of the way
-  Helps your child get ready for big school.

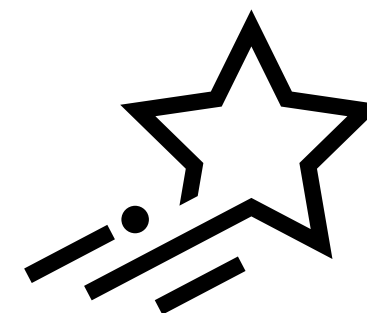


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We're thankful to everyone at NextSense. Not only did the team of professionals deliver exceptional service to Callie, but the coordinated approach provided the support Callie needed to thrive. Today, she's a confident and bubbly little girl with the world at her feet.

Jordanna,
Callie's mum

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Support at every stage



We can support children from their first weeks of life, through their schooling and teenage years, into young adulthood and beyond.

Alongside early intervention, NextSense provides a range of hearing, allied health and education services to support children, adults and their families at every stage.

Specialist preschools and school services

We operate specialist preschools and schools for children with hearing or vision loss. We also provide specialist school support services within childcare centres, preschools and independent schools.

Cochlear Implant Services

We deliver Australia's largest and most comprehensive cochlear implant program, with care and support at every stage of the cochlear implant journey. Children's cochlear implant services are integrated in their early intervention program.

Allied Health

We provide a range of allied health services for children and adults with hearing or vision loss, including diagnosis, functional assessments, speech pathology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and psychology. Therapy services are holistic in focus and can address additional disabilities.

Paediatric Audiology

We offer hearing assessments at three of our sites for children from three weeks of age, including those with special needs. Hearing assessments are delivered by experienced audiologists in a child-friendly environment.

Support wherever you are

—Connected Services

We can come to you in any corner of Australia

We've been connecting with families this way for many years so that those living outside of our service locations can still work with our education specialists.

Just like an in-person session, these virtual sessions provide individualised support from experienced NextSense therapists and teachers, including:

- individual and group sessions
- tools for listening and spoken language development
- Auslan support
- braille tuition and vision loss support
- transition to preschool, school and school support
- a lending library with child and parent resources
- residential programs
- parent networking and information.

Learn more at nextsense.org.au



For families living outside our service locations, accessing vital early intervention, school support and therapy services can be challenging.

Our Connected Services bring an expert team to you via video conferencing or telepractice.



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We feel incredibly lucky to access NextSense's services. Not long after Henry received his cochlear implant, Craig came home from work through the back door and up behind Henry. He called Henry's name and Henry heard him and turned around with a big smile for his Daddy. We also recently attended a residential camp which allowed us to connect with other families whose children have a hearing impairment.

Michelle,
Henry's mum

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What you need to know



NextSense is an NDIS Registered Provider

We're here to support you to navigate the NDIS, so you can receive the services and resources you and your family need.

Funding


If your child is deaf or hard of hearing, you may be able to receive support from the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

The NDIS supports families to help children develop the skills they need to take part in daily activities and achieve the best possible outcomes throughout their life.

You can access the right support for you, your child and your family, using your NDIS funding with NextSense Early Intervention services. An NDIS Early Childhood Partner will discuss your child's individual circumstances and help you with NDIS access and a plan.

Contact our dedicated client care team to find out more:



 1300 581 391

 hello@nextsense.org.au



Your rights

We aim to provide the very highest level of care, support and respect for people with hearing or vision loss, their families and the community.

As a client of NextSense, you have the right to:

- be treated with respect and courtesy
- stay informed and be consulted
- have a say in decisions made about your care and make informed choices
- receive quality services and receive information in alternate formats on the same basis as your peers
- expect privacy and confidentiality and access to all personal information held
- have another person of your choice support you and advocate (speak up for you) on your behalf
- have comments and feedback valued
- make a confidential complaint if you are not happy with the services you receive
- be supported through your journey with NextSense.

Share your feedback

We always welcome feedback. You can share yours at any one of our centres or email us at hello@nextsense.org.au

To find out more, visit our website

nextsense.org.au

NextSense Institute

Research for today and tomorrow

To bring you and your family the best possible support and tools that enrich your child's experiences and your family's communication, we partner with leading practitioners and researchers.

NextSense Institute is Australia's leading centre for research and professional studies in the field of education for children with sensory disabilities.

We're always pushing ourselves to go further, enhance our thinking, and better our clients' experience.

We're committed to research and innovation, harnessing the latest technology and new ways of thinking, and educating the next generation of experts to lead the way.

Parents of children with hearing or vision loss, carers, educators, and health professional can access our webinars, short courses, and degree programs.

NextSense Institute conducts world-leading research in affiliation with Macquarie University, along with our postgraduate program.

Go to nextsense.org.au to find out more about our research and professional education opportunities.



1000+

professionals from around the world have received qualifications through **NextSense** Institute.



The NextSense difference

Advancing 160 years’ experience

We’ve been providing services since 1860, with an eye on the innovation of tomorrow.

For everyone, right across Australia

No matter your age, your needs, or where you live, we reach people who need us.

Not-for-profit service

We’re not for profit. That means we can focus on your needs.

Care for children, individuals, and families

We pride ourselves on collaborating with families, building relationships, and supporting a whole community.

Holistic support from an expert team

Our wide range of experts work holistically to create your unique program of care, coordinated by a key worker, who ensures your services, care and goals are integrated across your team.

Registered NDIS provider

We partner with you on your NDIS journey.

Australia’s largest cochlear implant program

We provide access to leading professionals and ongoing care for thousands of Australians.

World leading research and education

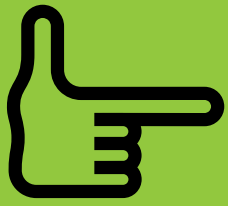
Discover our specialist postgraduate and continuing professional education programs.



Our purpose

We exist to enhance lives by working with people who have hearing and vision loss, so together we can redefine what’s possible.





Take the next step



1300 581 391



hello@nextsense.org.au

We'll connect you with an
experienced team member
to discuss your needs.