

Media Release

Friday 25 June 2010

Speech Pathology welcomes Australia's new Prime Minister

Speech Pathology Australia (SPA) congratulates the Hon Julia Gillard MP for becoming Australia's 27th Prime Minister and looks forward to working with her to improve the lives of all Australians living with communication and swallowing difficulties.

President of SPA, Ms Chris Stone, said she welcomes the appointment of Ms Gillard and is looking forward to working with Australia's first female Prime Minister.

"It's a great day in Australian politics and a brilliant opportunity to ensure all Australians have access to affordable, adequate speech pathology services," said Ms Stone.

In her maiden speech as Prime Minister, Ms Gillard outlined what she aims to achieve while in the top job, including ensuring access to quality health services for all Australians and the commitment to provide more health professionals.

Ms Stone urged Ms Gillard to include allied health professionals in this commitment, stating that this is the only way that the one in seven Australians living with a communication difficulty will receive the care they deserve.

"Unless speech pathology is included as part of primary health care services, the needs of individuals most requiring intervention are not met," said Ms Stone.

"Not only this, but if speech pathology isn't recognised as part of the Early Years Learning Framework and speech pathologists employed in all schools, we risk letting the 25 per cent of Australian pre-school children with a speech or language disorder fall through the cracks and suffer educational and vocational disadvantage."

"We welcome the opportunity to work with Ms Gillard and her government to ensure all Australians have appropriate and timely access to speech pathology services, regardless of location and age."

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