



## **New Technology Removes Barriers for Student Participation**

A new Australian technology, Voice Intellect - will be made available to provide students with more solutions to increase accessibility in educational and other settings.

Through a strategic alliance between Expression Australia and local Australian company Sonnant, Expression Australia will leverage the new technology providing them with greater access to digital materials used in their lectures and other learning methods.

Students with barriers to participation often rely on notetaking, transcripts and other services to be able to access multidisciplinary learning options.

Students will now be able use the new Sonnant voice-to-text technology to access needed services quicker and more readily than what is currently available. This technology will include valuable search functionality to make the content easier to use and digest, providing enriched and blended learning experiences.

Expression Australia, a leading not-for-profit organisation which provides services to people who are deaf or hard of hearing, continually explores new ways to support its clients, and for new technologies to provide services in ways not previously possible. The use of technology will complement the existing services to provide a broader and more innovative service offering to its clients.

Expression Australia CEO, Ms Christine Mathieson explained,

*"We are focused on providing quality services to our clients, and ensuring they have the best services that are available. This is especially in regard to education access, where digital engagement has brought new challenges for many students with accessibility challenges but has also created new opportunities for them".*

*"We know that we have clients engaged digital learning, and we want to make their experience as inclusive as possible. The Voice Intellect product will achieve this through making digital learning and lectures accessible in new ways; and further increase the independence of learners in their education pursuits".*

Ms Mathieson said *"We are delighted to be working with Sonnant to provide this enhanced learning opportunity for learners to have the best experience they can. We are looking forward to seeing the impact that this technology can offer".*

Sonnant is a Melbourne-based company which has created unique transcription software that provides access to information that is presented in a manner that meets the needs of all students and is ideally suited to assist students with their learning – and especially those students with participation barriers who can access multi-dimensional learning in a way they have not previously had access.

Already the software has been trialled by leading Australian education providers including Swinburne University of Technology, RMIT University and Online Education Services.

A spokesperson for Sonnant, Mr Arnie Tuchtan said,

*“We know that future learning will have a strong digital approach and adapt to meet the demands of the modern learner; as well as to be able to cater for diverse groups and be accessible to all. Voice Intellect is a tool that assists to achieve this”.*

Sonnant Chief Technical Officer, Mr Paul Crump said,

*“The technology used for Sonnant Voice Intellect has many applications but is currently configured to optimise outcomes in the education fields for both educators and students in that it provides a better link to the manner in which students access and consume content in the modern age.”*

#### About Sonnant:

Sonnant Voice Intellect is a leading-edge technology that provides a complete learning experience, based on content learning principles, through the provision of AI led transcription, search, captioning and translation capabilities to video and audio content – giving a multi-dimensional learning experience.

#### About Expression Australia

Expression Australia (formerly Vicdeaf and Tasdeaf) is a not-for-profit organisation that has served the Deaf community since 1884. Today Expression Australia works to ensure that people who are Deaf, hard of hearing, LGBTIQ+ or experience other barriers to participation have equal access to opportunities. Expression Australia operates from 16 offices with over 300 staff in Australia. Its vision is to ensure that their clients and community live in an accessible, inclusive society with equal opportunity in all areas of life.

The MOU was signed between Sonnant Voice Intellect and Expression Australia on the 12<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

For more information:

[www.sonnant.com.au](http://www.sonnant.com.au)

Enquiries: peter\_krikstolaitis@sonnant.com.au

Telephone: +61 (0) 455 844 743

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