

BS:JO

27th August, 1985.

The Editor,
Border Morning Mail,
P.O. Box 346,
ALBURY. N.S.W. 2640

Dear Sir,

In a recent article in your paper (The Silent Act, 16.8.85) members of Australia's Theatre of the Deaf were referred to as 'deaf and dumb'.

It is a great shame that this archaic phrase is still so widely used, as it is both inaccurate and potentially insulting to members of the modern deaf community of Australia.

To quote several members of our company:

"They think that I can't talk, as if I am stupid".

"It sounds like I am helpless and need to be lead around all the time. I am very independent. People should know that I can read and write, communicate easily in shops or go overseas by myself. I can communicate with sign language, gestures, mime, my voice, or write things down. Deaf people get angry about that word 'dumb'".

"We can do everything hearing people can do - except hear".

As more and more Australians become aware of the talents and creativity of these expressive people, we hope that this unfortunate phrase is replaced quickly by something more accurate. 'Hearing impaired' or perhaps 'deaf and bright'.

Yours sincerely,

The Theatre of the Deaf