**Transcript - Blacktown full length version**

Mikaylah:

I got my cochlear when I was five, and got my hearing aids when I was three. When my friends ask me questions about me being deaf, I feel like they are very interested about it, and I don't mind telling them how it works and everything.

Sian:

So Mikayla is quite deaf, almost profoundly deaf, and she has mild cerebral palsy, and she suffers from epilepsy, and she also struggles to retain information.

Rebecca Simm:

Here at Blacktown Girls High School, we like to ensure that all students have access to every single opportunity that we can provide for them. So we celebrate the wonderful diversity of our students, and our staff, by including all students. The ethos for a school is that everyone belongs, whether it be from a culturally diverse background or whether it be students who have a hearing impairment, or vision impairment, or any disability. They're all very much part of the wonderful fabric of this school.

Mikaylah:

Me and Mrs. Burke have been working together for 10 years now.

Jennifer Burke:

I've been an Itinerant Support Teacher Hearing for 30 years. It’s a privilege to have worked with Mikaylah, from three years of age to now.

Mikaylah:

Mrs. Burke is very helpful because I'm not getting so stressed with all the homework at once, and not knowing what to do in class. Starting high school was very scary, and a little bit nervous because I had no friends that I was starting with.

Sian:

She still turned up, and she still walked in that gate with tears, but she came, and she made it happen.

Mikaylah:

And how it is now, is I've made friends, and it's not so scary. My favourite subjects are HSIE and Music. The things I like most about school are seeing my friends and hanging out with them.

Jennifer Burke:

They're excellent support buddies. They're prepared to put in that extra time to help her hear the things that they hear easily. The gossip, the jokes, the banter. For supporting Mikaylah at Blacktown Girls High, I have suggested many things, and the school has been very accepting of those suggestions.

Rebecca Simm:

Part of Jennifer's professional development of Mikaylah's class teachers have been looking at the usage of the Wireless Communication Device and how to best use it in the classroom.

Mikaylah:

Just pull this up.

Male Teacher:

Okay.

Mikaylah:

And then you just have to do that.

Male Teacher:

Is that okay?

Mikaylah:

Me trying to listen in class, it’s hard because most of the time, my class is noisy. It’s helpful with the WCD, but it can be a bit hard.

Jennifer Burke:

Making sure that her technology’s working and it’s being used correctly, that’s vital.

Rebecca Simm:

Even something as simple as when you are writing on the whiteboard, not to have your back facing Mikaylah. To ensure that in some classes, Mikaylah is seated at the front of the classrooms.

Jennifer Burke:

Because she also needs to lip-read, as well as use her technology. They also provide written scaffolds. They also provide links on Google Classroom, so that she can preview or review material that’s been presented. One of the important supports within schools for children with a hearing impairment are school SLSOs, our School Learning Support Officers. Their role involves note-taking, oral interpreting.

Jennifer Burke:

The teachers are very helpful.

Sian:

If I have an issue, I can contact the school, and they'll drop everything to speak to me. Mrs. Burke and I are in constant communication.

Jennifer Burke:

We make all sorts of adjustments in all the school environments, not just in the classroom.

Sian:

They're doing a really good job in encouraging her to grow and be a good person.

Rebecca Simm:

I think that education’s for everyone. I think we all have a right to be included in public education, and I also think it’s our responsibility, as public educators, to include all students in our schools.