

INTERPRETER ON BROADCAST NETWORKS

Deaf Australia and the members of the Deaf Community in Australia wish to express sincere appreciation for the Australian government (both state/ territory and Federal) providing Auslan interpreters during COVID-19 briefings and announcements.

Having accurate knowledge ensures Deaf people can make informed decisions and take appropriate action to protect themselves, their family and the community. Deaf people as citizens, have helped to flatten the curve and been part of assisting to get Australia back on its feet.

This is not the time for Government to become complacent regarding the provision of Auslan interpreters during important briefing to all citizens of Australia. As restrictions are slowly being eased, everyone, including Deaf people, need to know what is happening. When an Auslan interpreter is not provided, the Government is perceived as being discriminatory to Deaf citizens.

Governments have the responsibility to ensure every citizen in Australia is informed, including Deaf people. This occurs through media conferences and briefings. Information delivered to all Australian citizens takes place on a number of important topics in addition to updates on the COVID-19 pandemic.

On behalf of the Deaf citizens in Australia we request that the government consider the communication needs of Deaf people in a proactive manner, not as an afterthought. This provision requires planning and processes that are clear and mandated. This provision of services needs to be imbedded into each government's communication strategy.

Broadcasters share the responsibility for ensuring interpreters are displayed appropriately. Broadcasters are returning to their pre-COVID-19 processes where Auslan interpreters (when present) are cut out of the footage displayed on the TV screen, on social media postings and the internet, leaving deaf people without access to Auslan interpreted briefings. This needs to be addressed urgently. The current situation in many cases is that broadcasters are actively discriminating against Deaf people.

Deaf Australia calls on the Australian and state/territory Governments to ensure all media briefings and announcements are accessible to all citizens which requires the inclusion of Auslan interpreters and captions.

Deaf Australia calls on Broadcasters to ensure that the Auslan interpreters are included in all media footage and are able to be viewed clearly at all times. This requires at least 1/3 of the TV screen displaying the Auslan interpreter and is unobstructed from all network banners and captioning displays.

We request these changes in good faith and recognise that in order to regulate this service, legislation may need to be introduced to ensure compliance. We request this be investigated and actioned to ensure the rights to media access are afforded to Deaf citizens as is the case for all others.

On behalf of Deaf citizens, Deaf Australia request an urgent common-sense approach to this issue that ensures Deaf people are afforded dignity. Deaf Australia believes that all levels of government are responsible to provide duty of care to all citizens of this great country.

References:

[Broadcasting of Auslan Interpreter on Broadcast and Digital Networks](#)
[Provisioning of Accessible Emergency Announcement and Disaster Support](#)

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About Deaf Australia:

Deaf Australia is for all deaf, hard of hearing and non-deaf people and organisations (not-for-profit, for profit or government) that use and/or accept and respect Auslan (Australian Sign Language).

Deaf Australia is the deaf-led peak organisation representing deaf people in Australia. We promote the advancement of human rights and equality for deaf people by collaborating with our members and stakeholders in implementing the United Nations Conventions and the National Disability Strategy.

Deaf Australia is a national representative member to the World Federation of the Deaf (www.wfdeaf.org).

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