



Position Statement on Media Interviews of Interpreters

The Australian Sign Language Interpreters' Association (ASLIA) is a not-for-profit body and is the national peak organisation representing the needs and interests of Auslan-English Interpreters and Deaf Interpreters in Australia.

Interpreters working in the media are employed to enable information presented by English speaking presenters to be broadcast in Auslan to members of the Deaf community. The provision of this service ensures that Deaf people, alongside other community members are able to effectively access vital information (for example, in health or natural disaster emergencies).

Alongside the need to get important information disseminated as clearly as possible, ASLIA interpreters aim to work in partnership with deaf people and support the Deaf community's request for "nothing about us, without us". Auslan-English interpreters and Deaf Interpreters working in the media are necessarily highly visible and can therefore become a focus of interest to the wider community and the media.

Sometimes the resulting media coverage and social media content end up highlighting the interpreter without any reference to the community we are working with and for. Deaf people, their language and culture are therefore talked about, rather than talked to, and remain invisible to the mainstream audience.

In order to encourage more inclusive media coverage of the issues affecting deaf people and to work as an ally of the Deaf community, ASLIA recommends that interpreter booking agencies and individual interpreters who are approached for media interviews consider the following questions and raise them:

- What is the purpose of the media interview, and who benefits?
- Who is best placed to respond to the interview questions?

- How to demonstrate cultural respect of the Deaf community and be an ally to the Deaf community?
- Will the interview be conducted alongside and together with Deaf people who have the lived experience of utilising interpreters?
- Do they hold the credentials to represent the industry appropriately including being a member of the professional organisation of interpreters in Australia (ASLIA)?
- Will interviews that are shown on broadcast media or social media be made accessible by captioning and interpreting?

Interpreting agencies, and interpreters themselves, need to be aware of the effect of exclusive (interpreter-spotlight) coverage, and how that inadvertently impacts on the continuing silencing of deaf peoples' lives and experience. While ASLIA acknowledges that sometimes decisions need to be made at short notice, and that balanced media coverage is not always possible or practical, we encourage all members to take the chance to broaden the focus.



This statement is endorsed by Deaf Australia.