



Language and Culture Working with an Auslan (Sign Language) Interpreter

What is Interpreting?

Interpreting is the act of transferring a message from one language to another, in this case from Auslan to English and vice versa utilising one's linguistic and cultural knowledge in both languages.

Auslan interpreting was originally done by helpful friends and family of Deaf people, however, knowing both sign language and English does not qualify a person as an interpreter. Interpreters are now professionally qualified people who have completed a course of study in a highly specialised field.

Interpreters work in a variety of settings and situations, many of whom have additional skills and qualifications and work in specialised areas.

Qualifications of an Interpreter

Sign language interpreters are accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI), as are all language interpreters in Australia.

There are currently two different levels of interpreter accreditation. A paraprofessional interpreter is accredited at the first level and is suitable for job interviews, Centrelink appointments and some medical appointments. When a paraprofessional interpreter has been working for a number of years and has developed excellent knowledge and skills, he or she may be tested and if successful will be accredited at the interpreter level. An interpreter at this level is able to interpret in court, at mental health appointments and conferences and is able to adjust to a broad range of Deaf consumer preferences and/or needs for interpretation.

The Role of an Interpreter

- The interpreter will facilitate communication between two parties who do not share the same language.
- The interpreter will sign what is spoken and speak what is signed, conveying meaning and intent.
- The interpreter will not add, embellish or delete information.
- The only time the interpreter should be involved in the discussion is when a word or phrase needs to be clarified from either the hearing or Deaf person. Web: www.listeningearth.com.au
- Interpreters are bound by a code of ethics that, among other things, stipulates that all content of an assignment is confidential.

Working with an Interpreter

The interpreter works with both parties and is accustomed to working with a variety of interdisciplinary teams.

- Ensure lighting and seating arrangements are appropriate for clear communication to take place. The Deaf person, hearing person and the interpreter should consult about this first. It is normally best if the interpreter is seated next to the main speaker and opposite to the Deaf person.
- The interpreter does not give a literal word for word interpretation, but rather conceptual meaning. Be aware that this may take more or less time, depending on the differences between the two languages.
- The Deaf person will look at the interpreter and also at the person speaking when appropriate. The speaker should look at the Deaf person, not the interpreter.
- If written material is present, please allow time for the Deaf person to read before continuing. Deaf people are unable to watch the interpreter and read at the same time. It is important to remember this if overheads or presentations are being used or notes need to be taken.
- In accordance with Occupational Health and Safety issues and the quality of interpreting, regular breaks should be negotiated prior to the commencement of the appointment.
- Sometimes it is necessary to have two or more interpreters working in tandem. This usually occurs if the appointment is longer than one hour. The need for tandem interpreting can be clarified with the Interpreting and Notetaking Service at the Victorian Deaf Society, SLC VIC.

Deaf Interpreters

There are times when it is appropriate or necessary to include Deaf interpreters as part of an interpreting assignment. Deaf interpreters are specially trained and certified users of Auslan who are able to convey meaning from standard Auslan to a highly visual form of gesture often better understood by some Deaf people who have non-standard Auslan.

Booking an Auslan Interpreter

Sign Language Communications Victoria (SLC VIC) is a Victorian based Auslan Interpreter, Notetaking, and Relay Interpreting booking service. SLC VIC is part of Sign Language Communications, a nation wide interpreter booking service. You can access the booking system for each state by visiting www.slcommunications.com.au

If this is your first time booking an interpreter in Victoria or Tasmania, you may like to contact SLV VIC first to discuss your options.

Phone. 1300 123 752

Email. slvic@vicdeaf.com.au (Victoria/Tasmania only)

Related Information Sheets

- Communicating with People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing
- Deaf Interpreters – A Part of the Interpreting Team
- Manual Communication and Sign Language

For more information speak to an expert at:



Expression
Australia

Expression Australia

Email. info@expression.com.au

SMS/FaceTime. 0402 217 586

Skype. [expression.australia](https://www.skype.com/en/contacts/voice/expression-australia)

Phone. (03) 9473 1111

expression.com.au

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