



DEAF INTERPRETERS

What is a Deaf Interpreter?

A Deaf Interpreter (DI) is an individual who is usually deaf, fluent in Auslan, written English and may have additional familiarity with a foreign sign language or pidgin. A DI may work in tandem with Auslan-English (hearing) interpreters and can provide a unique language or communication bridge for deaf individuals whose communication mode cannot be adequately accessed by a standard Auslan-English interpreter. An example of this may be to interpret for a person who is deafblind, or a deaf person from overseas who has not acquired Auslan or a deaf person that requires additional accommodation in interpreting.

A DI is a native, or native-like, user of Auslan and understands the complex cultural experience of growing up deaf. A DI has an innate ability

to adapt his/her sign language style to accommodate the broad variety of Auslan users and users of gestural pidgins, or a sign language mixing strategy that may incorporate some features of Auslan. The term DI may also be known as a Deaf Relay Interpreter (DRI). Either term typically refers to a deaf person who has been trained to work as a specialised interpreter.

Deaf Interpreters are required to abide by the ASLIA Code of Ethics in the same manner that Auslan Interpreters are, ensuring confidentiality, accuracy and impartiality is adhered to during their work.

How do Deaf interpreters work with Auslan interpreters?

The Auslan interpreter interprets an English



speaker’s message into standard Auslan, and then the DI uses Auslan, International Sign (a gestural system used by deaf people who do not share a common sign language), gesture, mime, idiosyncratic signs, even drawing, to convey that message to the deaf customer. The system works in reverse when the deaf customer expresses themselves.

Who requires a Deaf interpreter?

The person who potentially could benefit from a DI is a person who is deaf and is not fluent in English or Auslan and may:

- Use idiosyncratic non-standard signs or gestures such as those commonly referred to as “home signs” which are unique to a family or original village community.
- Have a cognitive disability (mild or more severe) or multiple disabilities that

compromise communication and result in dysfluency.

- Be linguistically and/or socially isolated with limited conventional language proficiency.
- Be deaf and blind or deaf with low vision, using tactile or visually modified sign language.
- Use signs particular to a given region, ethnic or age group that are inaccessible by other qualified interpreters, for example Indigenous deaf people.
- Be experiencing complex trust issues where cultural sensitivity/comfort factor is paramount, for example, trauma counselling.
- Use a foreign sign language and there are no certified foreign sign language interpreters available.
- Be users of a pidgin or contact variety of sign languages or a common international lingua franca known as “International Sign” (I.S.)

How is the need for a Deaf Interpreter identified?

The need for a Deaf interpreter could be identified by the Auslan interpreter originally booked if they identify that the deaf person is not understanding the discussion. It could also be identified by the deaf person themselves if they know they require additional support to access communication. Additionally, it could be identified by the agency if they have provided interpreters for the deaf person in other contexts and are already aware of their language needs.

BOOK A DEAF INTERPRETER

Phone: 1300 773 803 | SMS: 0476 857 251 | Email: interpreting@deafconnect.org.au