

**Australian Federation of Deaf Societies**  
**Employment: Increasing participation in paid work**

The following information is provided as requested in the public hearing attended by AFDS representatives on Wednesday 28 January 2004 and to supplement the written submission by AFDS dated 9 January 2004.

**The Australian Deaf community**  
(Transcript page 36)

The size of the signing Deaf community is not well documented in Australia or, in fact, in most other countries. The Australian Deaf community is generally estimated to consist of 15,000 to 20,000 individuals, a figure extrapolated from a study conducted by Hyde and Power in 1991. A more recent study (Johnston, in print) has suggested there are 7,000 Deaf people in Australia who use Auslan. Only 5304 people indicated that they used Auslan in the 2001 census, although this figure is also problematic. Auslan was not included as an option on the census form and many Deaf people would not know that they could include Auslan as a language.

**Employment and the Deaf community**  
(Transcript pages 36 and 38)

Attachment 1 is a compilation of occupations secured by Deaf job seekers using the employment services provided by Deaf Societies. As many Deaf job seekers independently find employment in the open employment market, the list is not definite but it does reveal the range of occupations and industries in which Deaf people may be found. A publication recently produced by the Tasmanian Deaf Society is also attached (Attachment 2) and highlights the experiences of Deaf people in education and employment. This publication aims to provide young Deaf people and potential employers with positive role models. Similar publications have been produced by other state Deaf Societies.

However, as raised in our submission, this does not mean that Deaf are always successful in finding employment. Only 40% of respondents in the 2001 Census who stated they used Auslan advised they were working (Attachment 3, Table 1).

Finally, as already discussed, the Department of Family and Community Services recently completed a study into the supply, demand and funding of sign language interpreting services in Australia. Members of the Deaf community were surveyed as part of this research. Chart 1 in Attachment 4 provides the industry in which survey respondents were employed. This chart shows a clear concentration of employment in the government sector, a situation at least partly due to the barriers to employment in the private sector raised in our submission.

**Funding of Auslan interpreting services in Australia**  
(Transcript page 39)

The funding of interpreting services is complex and it may therefore be useful to summarise the situation as follows:

*1. Fee for service*

All Deaf Societies and private interpreting agencies charge a fee where a service provider or employer accepts responsibility for the provision of an Auslan interpreter.

## *2. State government funded interpreting services*

All state governments have accepted responsibility for the provision of Auslan interpreters for Deaf people using public hospitals, clinics and community health services as well as for police and court matters. In some cases such interpreting requests are still booked through the state Deaf Society on a fee for service basis. In some cases these services have been mainstreamed. In NSW, for example, the NSW Health Care Interpreter Service provides Auslan interpreters for the state public health system and the Community Relations Commission supplies interpreters for police and court matters.

## *3. State government funding for Deaf Societies*

As stated in our submission, the governments of the Australian Capital Territory, South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia also provided funding for Auslan interpreting services in 2002-03 to supplement the cost of interpreting appointments where a fee for service could not be charged. This includes some employment, education and training situations, as well as private medical, dental and mental health appointments. It should be noted that Deaf Societies were still required to meet a significant portion of the cost of these services from their own resources. No such funding was provided by the governments of the Northern Territory, New South Wales, Queensland or Victoria. Arrangements with the South Australian government also changed as of 1 July 2003. The reasons cited for the lack of funding include the view that employment and private health care, for example, are a Commonwealth responsibility. Auslan interpreting also does not fit easily within any one portfolio as deafness is generally seen to be a disability issue but has more in common with services for other linguistic minority groups in Australia.

### **Additional funding required for no fee interpreting services** (Transcript page 42)

It may also be useful to explain that the \$767,000 in funding for Auslan interpreting services referred to in the hearing is the amount of funding AFDS requested in a submission to the Department of Family and Community Services in February 2003. This estimate was based on the combined deficits incurred by Deaf Societies in 2001-02 with a ten percent increase to account for anticipated growth in demand. AFDS was advised by the Department that such funding requests would not be considered until the completion of research into the supply, demand and funding of Auslan interpreting services.

### **References**

Hyde, M. and Power, D. (1991) *The use of Australian sign language by Deaf people*. Brisbane: Centre for Deafness Studies and Research, Griffith University.

Johnston, T. (in print) *W(h)ither the Deaf community? Population, genetics and the future of Auslan (Australian Sign Language)*, University of Newcastle.

## Attachment 1: Occupations secured by Deaf job seekers

List compiled by the Western Australian Deaf Society employment program from national data.

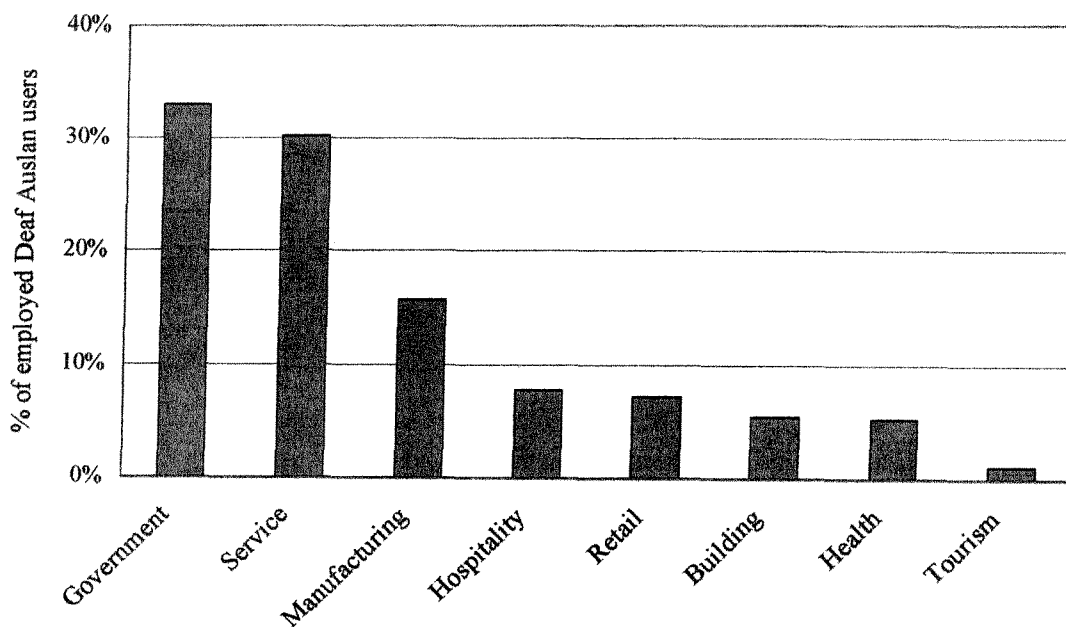
- Accountant
- Accounts Assistant
- Accounts Officer
- Actor
- Admin Assistant
- Administration Officer
- Apprentice
- Assembler
- Auslan Lecturer
- Auslan Tutor
- Bakers Assistant
- Bank Clerk
- Bricklayer
- Bus Driver
- Butcher
- Cabinet Maker
- Car Detailer
- Caretaker
- Carpenter & Joiner
- Carpet Layer
- Cartographer
- Case Manager
- Ceiling Plasterer
- CEO
- Chef
- Chef De Partie
- Child Carer
- Child Care Assistant
- Children's Development Officer
- Cleaner
- Clerical Trainee
- Clerk
- Commercial Artist
- Community Worker
- Computer Operator
- Computer Programmer
- Concreter
- Coordinator
- Courier
- Court Officer
- Data Entry Operator
- Deaf Awareness Tutor
- Delivery Driver
- Dental Technician
- Detailer
- Dog Groomer
- Drafter
- Drafting Assistant
- Dry Cleaner
- Electrician
- Employment Officer
- Factory Hand
- Farm Hand
- File Clerk
- Fitter & Machinist
- Floor Tiler
- Florist
- Food Coordinator
- Fork Lift Driver
- French Polisher
- Fruit & Veg Packer
- Fund Raiser
- Furniture Assembler
- Gang Nail Truss Press Operator
- Gardener
- General Hand
- Geophysical Splicer
- Graphic Designer
- Green Keeper
- Hairdresser
- Hairdresser Assistant
- Handyman
- Hospital Orderly
- Hospital Service Assistant
- Housekeeper
- Information Officer
- Interpreter Trainer
- Illustrator
- Jeweller
- Job Club Leader
- Kitchen Hand
- Kitchen Porter
- Labourer
- Landscape Gardener
- Laundry Hand
- Lawn Keeper
- Lawn Mowing
- Lawyer
- Leading Hand
- Learning Support Clerk
- Librarians Assistant
- Live-in Caretaker
- Machinist
- Mail Room Clerk
- Manager
- Metal Spinner
- Microfilm Processor
- Milliner
- Motor Mechanic
- Nurse
- Nursery Hand
- Nursing Aide
- Packer
- Packing Machine Operator
- Painter & Decorator
- Panel Beater
- Parcel Sorter
- Paste Up Artist
- Pastry Cook
- Photographic Printer
- Plasterer
- Plastics Manufacturing Welder
- Plumber
- Postal Officer
- Printer
- Processing Assistant
- Production Clerk
- Process Worker
- Project Officer
- Property Manager
- Radio Technical Officer
- Records Clerk
- Records Officer
- Relay Interpreter
- Reprographic Artist
- Research Assistant
- Research Officer
- Research Scientist
- Resource Manager
- Resource Officer
- Retail Assistant
- Scientist
- Screen Printing
- Sewing Machinist
- Sheet Metal Worker
- Ship & Boat Builder
- Shoe Repairer
- Social Worker
- Solicitor
- Solid Wall Plasterer
- Spray Painter
- Stablehand
- Steel Worker
- Store Assistant
- Storeman
- Storeman/Packer
- Sub Editor
- Supervisor
- TAFE Lecturer
- Table Hand
- Taxi Driver
- Teacher
- Teacher's Assistant
- Timber Worker
- Timber Tester
- Tracer
- Trades Labourer
- Trades Assistant
- Trainee Floor Sander
- Truck Driver
- Typesetter
- Typist
- Upholsterer
- Veterinary surgeon
- Vet Assistant
- Warehouse Assistant
- Welder
- Window Dresser
- Wood Machinist
- Wood Packer
- Wood Turner

### Attachment 3: Hours and industry of employment for Auslan users\*

**Table 1: Australian Bureau of Statistics  
2001 Census of Population and Housing  
HRSP Hours Worked by LANP Language Spoken at Home for Deaf persons**

	Auslan	Sign Lang, nec	Sign Languages, nfd	Total	%
14 hours and under	281	28	107	416	8%
15 hours and over	1139	93	449	1681	32%
Not stated	61	0	17	78	1%
Not applicable	1811	194	1124	3129	59%
				5304	100%

**Chart 1: Industry of employment for Auslan users responding to Department of Family and Community Services survey, October 2003.**



\* Table 1 and Chart 1 included with permission from the Department of Family and Community Services.