

I am a profoundly deaf person. I was born Deaf to hearing parents. My Parents owned a farm in Country Victoria. I attended the Victorian School for deaf children in Melbourne.

Being forced to leave my parents home to attend School in Melbourne because of my hearing loss at the age of 6 was a difficult time for me. I returned to my Parents farm each weekend but missed the bonding parental support and family gatherings that take place within families. From that age I felt an outcast to my own family. I was one of many throughout the country where education was directed to the cities and many young profoundly deaf people like myself were institutionalized because I was seen as being different, and the only course of action was to be with people of my own kind. Communication with my family was mainly through my mother who learnt to communicate in sign. I have one brother who grew up on the family home and also he learnt to communicate with me.

I was given hearing aids and attempted to wear them but the pain I suffered from them was too much. I discarded them. I cannot lip read and I am non vocal. My only form of communication is by way of AUSLAN. I am 31 years old now and work Casually at a local Shire Council Office.

I live in isolation from the hearing world and the deaf community. I am a victim of bullying and assault from past deaf school mates. Deaf organizations have failed to protect my individuality, when I have attempted to be involved in the deaf gatherings.

Looking back over the years the two main things that I see from my perspective on being deaf, and what can Governments do to assist all deaf people is as listed below:-

- (1) More needs to be done to educate, teach and train young people at a young age through the Education system to learn AUSLAN/sign Language throughout all Australian Schools, so as to alleviate the segregation of deaf people in their own Communities. AUSLAN as a second Language as I find it odd that living in Australia, we have a Language that not all Australians know.
- (2) Interpreter services throughout the country, are centrally based in City Regions and country deaf have trouble obtaining an Interpreter on short notice. The cost of this often falls on Organizations to pick up the cost, that can deter or put off immediate assistance when required.

Thank you