

Please find below issues and concerns of the people in Gippsland, Victoria (short and succinct due to short time lines for submissions):

- **Access to Australian Hearing's Services cease for Deaf and hard of hearing young people when they 18 years of age.** This leaves young people without a continuum of service and no access to meet their ongoing needs. Those diagnosed with profound hearing loss and those with hearing diagnosed at birth or an early age need all possible supports to assist them as they move into adult life which provides many challenges due to their hearing loss. **Australian Hearing needs further funding to provide the resources and supports to Deaf and hard of hearing people throughout the life span.**
- **Access to Audiological Services in the Regional areas is very difficult.** There are long waiting lists as there are too few audiologists to meet the demand. **Audiological services must be increased in Regional Victoria by training regional people in these skills and assist regional people to acquire qualifications in this field.**
- **Hearing rehabilitation is an important when people acquire hearing aids and assistive listening devices.** Clients of hearing services receive very little counselling and rehabilitation support to become accustomed to the new hearing devices and receive very little support with regard to access to and purchasing of equipment to support their every day life i.e. telephones, alerting devices etc. **Adequate training should be provided to Audiologists in this area and emphasis placed on this as an essential aspect of the response to overcoming the effects of hearing loss.**
- **Auslan is the Visual Language of the signing Deaf community in Australia and is indigenous to Australia.** A basic knowledge of Auslan is an important skill for all the community. **The Australian community would benefit if Auslan was a LOTE Language recommended as part of the curriculum for all primary schools in Australia.**
- **Limited or no access to Auslan Interpreting for the signing Deaf community.** In regional areas of Australia there is great difficulty accessing Auslan interpreters. There are too few qualified Auslan Interpreters and most are based in the metropolitan areas. Accessing Interpreters from the Cities is costly as the minimum appointment time is 2 hours and travelling time is charged as well as kilometres travelled. **Auslan Interpreting services must be increased in Regional Victoria by training regional people in these skills and assist regional people to acquire qualifications in this field.**

- **Inadequate funding to Services supporting the needs of Deaf and hard of hearing people.** In Victoria, vicdeaf provided services to Adults and young people in transition and Deaf Children Australia provide services to young Deaf and hard of hearing children of school age, Aurora provide Early Intervention. These services are stressed and inadequately funded to meet the needs of Deaf and hard of hearing people in regional Victoria. Where support services exist in Regional Victoria they are stretched and, the signing Deaf community in particular, frequently are at crisis point or beyond before service is accessed. **Services for Deaf and hard of hearing people require increased resourcing to meet the needs of the community.**

Warm Regards

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