

MEDIA RELEASE

(EMBARGOED UNTIL 25 JULY 2016)

HIGH COURT TO CONSIDER DEAF JURORS – BRISBANE

At 2.15pm, today at Commonwealth Law Courts in North Quay, Brisbane, Ms. Lyons case will be heard at the High Court in appealing against the State of Queensland in dismissing her case of discrimination.

Ms. Lyons alleges that she has been discriminated by the State of Queensland by refusing to provide her with an Auslan (Australian Sign Language) interpreter so that she can perform her civic duty as a juror.

She continues to challenge the Queensland Court of Appeal's decision that there was no discrimination by that conduct.

In March this year, Mr Dunning QC, a Solicitor General of Queensland, representing the State of Queensland confirmed that Ms Lyons could be an effective juror if an Auslan interpreter was provided. Consequently, Justice Susan Mary Kirfel AC and Justice Geoffrey Nettle granted Ms Lyons Special Leave to Appeal to the High Court.

The hearing today will determine whether if State of Queensland has discriminated against Ms. Lyon.

In a similar matter, in [April 2016](#), the United Nations' Human Rights Commissions has found that the Office of the Sheriff (NSW) violated the rights of two deaf persons by preventing them from serving as a juror. One requested an Auslan interpreter and the other requested real-time captioning where words are transcribed into text.

'In all states and territories Jury Acts, all people who are deaf or have disabilities are not assessed for their competency, but their disabilities', said Kyle Miers, Chief Executive of Deaf Australia. *'This must change'.*

This is why the State of Victoria is currently reviewing its Jury Act with a view to remove discriminatory practices and to enable people with disability to perform civic duties.

To date, the New South Wales Government has yet acted on the NSW Law Reform Commission's recommendations ([2006](#)) that deaf and blind people be allowed to serve as jurors.

'It is not about me', says Ms. Lyons, *'it is the principle of justice and quality for every citizen of Australia and deaf people should not be treated any differently'.*

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About Deaf Australia:

Deaf Australia is for all deaf, hard of hearing and non-deaf people and organisations (not-for-profit, for profit or government) that use and/or accept and respect Auslan (Australian Sign Language).

Deaf Australia is the deaf-led peak organisation representing deaf people in Australia. We promote the advancement of human rights and equality for deaf people by collaborating with our members and stakeholders in implementing the United Nations Conventions and the National Disability Strategy.

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