

Auslan Interpreting at Press Conferences

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Auslan Translation Video: <https://vimeo.com/607033584>.

We at Deaf Australia wish to highlight the lack of Auslan interpreters used at the Prime Minister Scott Morrison's press conferences. Most state premiers have had Auslan interpreters at their COVID-19 press conferences daily, which is acknowledged and appreciated. The same standard should apply to the Prime Minister: we expect no less.

Auslan interpreting at press conferences is crucial to ensuring that Deaf, Deafblind and hard of hearing people can comply with urgent directions and help save lives. Auslan-users have had to rely on state premier's updates, and have not been able to follow any of the vaccination roll-out plans.

To those who argue that live captioning is provided, there is current research from ACCAN to suggest the quality of live captioning is questionable. The quality of live captions depends on the provider, the technology used and the personnel and can vary greatly across both broadcaster and program genre. Nuance is lost when watching programs exclusively with live captions. Captions are not always verbatim, so the possibility of critical information lost is high. Any prior access to content does not necessarily improve the quality of captions and indeed tended to introduce new errors such as captions preceding content. Many Deaf, Deafblind and hard of hearing people are not fluent in English, which makes reaching them in emergencies difficult or impossible.

Deaf Australia urges for the presence of qualified, experienced, and appropriate Auslan interpreters, including Deaf interpreters, at all press conferences with the Prime Minister. Regardless of whether the topic is urgent such as COVID-19, vaccine roll-out plan, the fall of Afghanistan, or the Women's Summit that was recently announced, qualified and appropriate Auslan interpreters should be present and seen. This expectation is the same for the Opposition party.

Deaf Australia advocates for the right of Deaf, Deafblind and hard of hearing people to participate fully in their communities and to achieve a full social, economic and civic life, as per the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities' Articles 9: *Accessibility* and 21: *Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information*. Auslan interpreters at press conferences on a daily basis should be the norm, not the exception.

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About Deaf Australia

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. 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).