

# Auslan Interpreting at David Pocock's maiden speech

**Government and Opposition refusal due to potential setting of precedent**

28 July 2022

Deaf Australia was honoured to be invited to Independent ACT Senator David Pocock's maiden speech which was going to be interpreted in Auslan from the floor in the Senate Chamber – a first for Australia.

As part of a longstanding requirement of Senate convention, the Senator had to seek permission from leaders of the Government, the Opposition, and the Greens in the Senate to have "a stranger on the floor".

While it is understood that the Greens gave their immediate consent to having an Auslan interpreter on the floor, the Government and the Opposition have both refused the request as **"they are concerned about the precedent this will set"**.

Senator Pocock is exploring other options to provide access to the Deaf community, including remote interpreting during the broadcast. We thank Senator Pocock for his commitment to ensure accessibility is prioritised, however this a disappointing outcome for our community.

Deaf Australia is deeply concerned and disappointed by the Government and Opposition's lack of foresight and regard for accessibility.

The Government and Opposition have proven that inclusion and accessibility is never a certainty in political settings.

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## About Deaf Australia:

Deaf Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands on which we work and pay our respects to Indigenous Elders past and present. Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.

We recognise the past atrocities against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this land and that Australia was founded on the genocide and dispossession of First Nations people. We acknowledge that colonial structures and policies remain in place today and recognise the ongoing struggles of First Nations people in dismantling those structures; and especially that of Deaf, Deafblind and hard of hearing First Nations peoples.

Deaf Australia was founded in 1986 as a not-for-profit organisation that represents all Deaf, Deafblind, and hard of hearing people, and others who are fluent and knowledgeable about Auslan. The focus has and continues to be on developing access to information and accessible communication. We work with Australian governments and collaborate with key stakeholders to make sure that Australia complies with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The UN Convention and the National Disability Strategy guides our work; we aspire to achieve equity for Deaf people across all areas of life.

Deaf Australia advises that this document may be publicly distributed, including by placing a copy on our website.