

MEDIA RELEASE

AUSLAN SANTA IS COMING TO WESTFIELD THIS CHRISTMAS

Westfield offers the Deaf and hard of hearing community the chance to meet and sign with Santa



Westfield today announced the launch of Auslan Santa, a pilot program offering children who use Auslan as their primary form of communication, the chance to share their Christmas wish-list directly with an Auslan-fluent Santa. Developed in collaboration with Deaf Australia, the sessions will be longer and will have helpers and an interpreter on hand to facilitate.

The introduction of Auslan Santa follows the national launch of the Sensitive Santa initiative in 2019, a unique and tailored experience for children with sensory processing challenges, that is still available today. This year, our Deaf and hard of hearing community will have the opportunity to visit select Westfield Living Centres in New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland to enjoy their own dedicated Auslan Santa session.

Scentre Group National Community Experience Manager, Pam Wilson, said: "Auslan Santa continues our commitment to make the magical Santa experience more accessible to more of our customers. We are very proud to launch this pilot initiative in selected Westfield Living Centres this year, with a view to launch it more widely in 2023 and beyond."

Deaf Australia is a peak Deaf-led advocacy body that represents Deaf, Deafblind and hard of hearing people who use Auslan in Australia. In addition to supporting the development of Auslan Santa at Westfield, Deaf Australia and event service providers, Scene to Believe, have also been working to educate and train all Westfield Santas to better interact with Deaf and hard of hearing children.

Deaf Australia Chief Executive Officer, Jen Blyth said: "A Deaf Santa contributes to the magic of the Christmas experience for Deaf and hard of hearing children who can communicate with them in their own language, so we are delighted to work with Westfield on this experience. We cannot wait for our children to meet a Santa who is just like them and who can finally answer important questions about the North Pole!"

Auslan Santa follows the success of Sensitive Santa, a tailored experience available for those with sensory challenges, anxiety, disabilities, or families who simply require more time. Sensitive Santa started as a trial concept in one centre in 2017 before being rolled out to all 42 Westfield centres in 2019 across Australia and New Zealand.

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Bookings are open for Auslan Santa in New South Wales at Westfield Parramatta on Saturday 26 November, Victoria at Westfield Southland on Sunday 27 November, and in Queensland at Westfield Chermside on Friday 02 December. Customers can find out more and book sessions by visiting the website of each of these centres.

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Bookings for Auslan Santa Photography are available at the following centres and can be made online [here](#).

New South Wales

Westfield Parramatta

Date: Saturday 26 November

Time: 3pm – 6pm

Victoria

Westfield Southland

Date: Sunday 27 November

Time: 3pm – 6pm

Queensland

Westfield Chermside

Date: Friday 02 December

Time: 3pm - 6pm

Santa Photography Key Dates:

Bookings open to Westfield Plus members: 12 October 2022

Santa's arrival in Westfield Centres: From 12 November 2022

Photography dates: From 12 November (may vary by centre) until 24 December 2022