

POLICY



Terminology

Purpose	<p>Deaf Australia's terminology policy aims to promote clear and consistent usage of terminology for all stakeholders in Australia. This policy endorses terms that identify the different groups of Australians with varying degrees and types of deafness or hearing loss.</p> <p>Deaf Australia strongly supports and promotes the "deaf", "Deaf" and "hard of hearing" terms and that these terms only are to be used in documentation, all forms of communication and media.</p>
Overview	<p>Deaf Australia believes that incorrect terminology used by stakeholders, who themselves are not affected by a hearing loss, has a detrimental and long lasting impact on a deaf person's cultural and linguistic identity and wellbeing. Negative terms such as "Deaf and Dumb" and "Deaf-Mute" are unacceptable and discriminatory.</p> <p>An agreement (1991) between the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) and the International Federation of the Hard of Hearing (IFHOH) recognises and respects the right of individuals with a hearing loss ranging from mild to severe to regard themselves as either "deaf" or "hard of hearing". These organisations have endorsed the "deaf" or "hard of hearing" terms.</p> <p>Deaf Australia endorses the three terms "deaf", "Deaf" and hard of hearing" which are used to describe distinct groups of people with varying degrees of deafness or hearing loss in Australia. This policy defines the terms used to describe such people correctly and consistently for all stakeholders.</p>
Scope	<p>Various Government agencies and departments (Local, State/Territory, and Federal), media, employers, educational institutions, service providers, community organisations and individuals.</p>
The Policy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Terminology used by Deaf Australia to describe people with different degrees and types of deafness or hearing loss: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. Deaf (with a capital D) is used to describe those people who use Auslan (Australian Sign Language) to communicate, and identify themselves as members of the signing Deaf community. These people may also identify themselves as

	<p>"Culturally Deaf." They are more likely to have been born deaf or become deaf early in life, are pre-lingually deaf and use sign language as a primary or preferred communication mode.</p> <p>B. deaf (with a small letter, d) is a general term used to describe people who have a physical condition of hearing loss of varying degrees irrespective of which communication mode they use such as Auslan and lip reading for example.</p> <p>C. Hard of hearing is the term used to describe those who have a hearing loss, usually acquired post-lingually and whose communication mode is usually by speech. This term also covers those people who have become deafened later in their life.</p> <p>D. A hearing impairment (HI) is a full or partial decrease in the ability to understand sounds. The term "hearing impaired" is often used to refer to those who are deaf but it is viewed negatively by members of the Deaf community who prefer the terms "Deaf" and "hard of hearing". The "hearing impaired" term is incorrectly intended to cover Deaf and hard of hearing individuals under a single category. Deaf and hard of hearing persons in many countries reject this definition because it fails to recognise any distinction between these two groups. Deaf Australia uses the "hard of hearing" term in this case.</p> <p>2. Deaf Australia respects the right of individuals to choose whichever term they personally prefer in documentation and in communication about themselves.</p> <p>3. Deaf Australia however highly recommends that organisations and other stakeholders use the "Deaf", "deaf" or "hard of hearing" terms when referring to individuals or to a particular group.</p> <p>4. Deaf Australia also recommends that organisations and other stakeholders use the "deaf" or "Deaf and hard of hearing" terms when referring to all people of varying degrees and types of deafness or hearing loss whether they can use Sign Language or not.</p> <p>5. Using the wrong term to label a person with deafness or hearing loss (for example calling a Deaf person "deaf and dumb" or "hearing impaired") can be highly offensive. Deaf people generally do not like to be labelled "hearing impaired", as they perceive this term as negative and clinical. Hard of hearing people generally do not like to be identified as "Deaf" or "deaf".</p> <p>6. Unacceptable terms include "deaf –mute" and "deaf and dumb". These terms are discriminatory and are not to be used in documentation, communication forms and by media of any form.</p> <p>7. When referring to a group people with varying degrees or types of deafness or hearing loss and who use different communication</p>
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	<p>modes, it is appropriate to use the following terms: “deaf people” or “Deaf and hard of hearing people”. For example "Television shows with subtitles are enjoyed by Deaf and hard of hearing people throughout Australia." or “Television subtitles are enjoyed by deaf people throughout Australia”.</p> <p>8. Documentation and communications produced and used by Deaf Australia in the past used the terms “Deaf and hard of hearing” and “Deaf and hearing impaired” terms.</p> <p>From 19th November 2010 Deaf Australia’s documents and communications will use the following terms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) “deaf” when referring to all Deaf and hard of hearing groups at once; b) “Deaf” when referring to culturally Deaf people who use Auslan and identify the Deaf community; c) “hard of hearing” when referring to people whose primary communication mode is speech.
Keywords	Terminology, definitions, Deaf, deaf, hard of hearing, hoh, hearing impaired, HI, people, disability, hearing loss, deafness.

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Date of Commencement	<i>19/ 11/ 2010</i>
Amendment Dates	
Date for Next Review	<i>November 2013</i>
Related Policy, Procedure and Guidelines	WFD/IFHOH Agreement: http://www.ifhoh.org/wfd.htm
Policies Superseded by this Policy	<i>Guidelines on the portrayal of deaf people in the media</i>