



# 1.

## What is an Auslan Interpreter?

An Auslan Interpreter is proficient in both Auslan and English and will use both languages to interpret for the deaf and hard of hearing (DHH) and hearing people. This is usually done simultaneously. Interpreters cannot add or omit information or modify the original message. They therefore interpret everything that is said. An Auslan interpreter must be NAATI certified to work as an interpreter.

### Meet with the interpreter beforehand

- Clarify unique vocabulary, technical terms, acronyms, jargon, seating arrangements, lighting and other needs.
- Provide interpreter with any written materials ahead of time.

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CONVERSATION  
ABOUT DEAF  
AWARENESS

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### Reserve seats for the Interpreter and DHH participants

- Provide a clear view of the speaker and interpreter.
- DHH participants may still choose to sit elsewhere.
- The interpreter needs to be positioned next to the speaker.

### Interpreter should be in the consumer's sight line

- This allows DHH participants to pick up visual cues and the expressions of the speaker.
- In small group discussions, consider using a circle or semi-circle seating instead of a theatre style arrangement.

### Be aware of lighting

- Provide good lighting so the interpreter can be seen.
- If lights will be turned off or dimmed, be sure the interpreter can still be seen clearly (use spotlight or small lamp to direct light toward the interpreter).

### Talk directly to the DHH person

- Maintain eye contact with the DHH person.
- Avoid directing comments to the interpreter (i.e. "Tell him..." or "Ask her..."), respond directly to the DHH person.

### Speak naturally

- Speak at your normal pace. Interpreters will ask you to slow down or repeat if necessary.
- Interpreters listen for concepts and ideas, not just words, to render an accurate interpretation.



# 2.

## What is an Auslan Interpreter?

### Avoid private conversations - everything will be interpreted

- Whatever the interpreter hears will be interpreted. Do not ask the interpreter to censor any portion of the conversation.
- Ask the DHH person directly if they are following the conversation.



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### One person should speak at a time

- An interpreter can only accommodate one speaker at a time. Encourage the group to follow this rule.
- If you are facilitating a group discussion, be aware that the interpreter will be several seconds behind. Pause before recognizing the next speaker to allow the interpreter to finish with the current speaker.

### Avoid asking the interpreter for opinions or comments regarding the content of the meeting

- Interpreters follow a code of ethics which requires impartiality and confidentiality with all assignment related information.
- Do not assume the interpreter has prior knowledge of the DHH person or will be interpreting future appointments.

### Provide a short break every hour

- Interpreting is mentally and physically taxing.
- If one interpreter is being utilised it is important to provide short breaks within the hour.
- Meeting or subject context is often dense or unfamiliar.
- Do not expect the interpreter to interpret during these breaks or to engage in dialogue with you.

ASLIA (Australian Sign Language Interpreters' Association) recommends that the above strategies be used, to maximize the effectiveness of the communication exchange when working alongside a professional interpreter.