Submission Cover Sheet

Inquiry into access to services and information in Auslan

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Submission to Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion
Inquiry into access to services and information in Auslan
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I am retired from the public service after 30 years of working. I was previously a business analysist.

I am now coaching volleyball. I frequently use whiteboards to communicate in writing with the team.

I have a long list of matters relating to employment that I would like to discuss, including meetings and confrontation in the workplace, lights, and equipment. Addressing these issues are all part of allowing me and other Deaf people to work comfortably.

Fire alarms are an issue for me and others in the Deaf community. For example, in one instance I was working at my desk, and other members of staff left the room—leaving me alone. There were flashing lights, and I was unsure of what to do. At the time, the technology for portable alerts and other warning systems was not available.

Another issue is that I was not able to hear public announcements—for example that water pipes had burst and facilities were not operational. I was able to get a sense of the announcement but had to ask others for further information. I should have been emailed or messaged about the announcement.

A disability officer with whom I spoke did not seem to understand my needs. They asked if I had a 'problem' with work. After I explained some of the issues with the fire alarm and other alerts, they investigated putting systems in place. However, the systems were basic, and required the use of too many devices. For example, some alerts used a pager rather than a mobile phone. Systems should be simple to be accessible.

I would suggest that organisations use existing signage to alert deaf people to emergencies and incidents (for example, use flashing lights under exit signs).

It is sometimes very hard to communicate with managers and others. Senior staff use overly complex words to explain tasks and expectations. This is not useful. I can write well, but do not often use complex words or phases. Government jargon is unhelpful.

Interviews are often confusing. For example, when I interviewed for a job, the interviewer indicated that I had answered each question well. However, after the interview I was told that I should have provided more information. This was very frustrating.

Often other staff at work would talk in a way that I cannot hear or use terminology that I cannot understand. Further, terminology often seems to change.