

O R I M A

R E S E A R C H

**Department of Family
and Community
Services**

**Supply and Demand for
Auslan Interpreters across Australia**

January 2004

This report was prepared by ORIMA Research on behalf of the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services.

ISBN 1 920851 33X

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Executive Summary

Background

Australian sign language – “Auslan” – is the predominant language of the Australian Deaf community. Auslan uses hand shapes and movements, and facial expression and orientation, and has its own syntax, grammar and semantics. It is not based on English.

Many Deaf Auslan users rely on interpreters in their day-to-day interactions with hearing people. However, to date there has been little information available to determine whether interpreting services facilitate adequate communication between Deaf Auslan users and hearing people. To increase the level of knowledge, the Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services commissioned ORIMA Research to undertake this study of the supply of, and demand for, Auslan interpreters across Australia.

Research objective

The objective of this project was to develop an understanding of:

- ◆ the activities for which people require and/or use Auslan interpreting services;
- ◆ the extent to which the current services meet the needs of Deaf people and the people/organisations with whom they need to communicate;
- ◆ training, accreditation and registration of Auslan interpreters;
- ◆ funding sources and costs of Auslan interpreting services across Australia; and
- ◆ the potential of innovative technology (such as video remote interpreting) to assist in the provision of Auslan interpreting services.

Research methodology

To assess the need (or demand) for, and supply of, Auslan interpreters and obtain the views of users and providers of Auslan interpreting services:

- ◆ a national survey of Deaf Auslan users was conducted;
- ◆ telephone interviews were conducted with family members of Deaf Auslan users from each State and Territory;
- ◆ interviews were conducted with Auslan interpreters and representatives from national peak bodies; and
- ◆ data were obtained from some State and Territory government agencies that purchase Auslan interpreting services.

To estimate the total cost of providing Auslan interpreters, efforts were made to obtain data relating to Auslan interpreting provision from major Auslan interpreting service providers in Australia.¹

¹ These Auslan interpreting service providers include the Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting services and private and public sector language service providers.

Profile of Deaf Auslan users

In the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2001 census data, 5,303 Australians identified that they use Auslan to communicate with others at home. Many people within the Deaf community estimate the Deaf Auslan using population to be much higher.

The most recent research on the size of the Deaf community, by Johnston (2003), concludes that it is approximately 6,500 individuals. Johnston's estimate is regarded as a robust measure of the population. Although the ABS 2001 census underestimates the size of the Deaf community, it would appear to provide a reasonable guide to the geographic distribution and demographic profile. The ABS 2001 census indicates that:

- ◆ 30% of signing Deaf completed year 12, compared with 41% of the general Australian population;
- ◆ the signing Deaf population is over-represented in the lower income ranges and under-represented in the higher income ranges compared to the general Australian population;
- ◆ the signing Deaf population is slightly over-represented in the unemployed and non-labour force categories. Forty two percent of the general Australian population are unemployed or not in the labour force compared to 47% of signing Deaf; and
- ◆ 47% of signing Deaf had not worked in the week preceding the census, compared with 44% of the general Australian population.

The Deaf Auslan user survey showed that most Deaf people (82%) use sign language every day to communicate.

Johnston (2003) considers medical advances, such as rubella vaccinations, cochlear implants, genetic screening and gene therapy, will result in a declining Deaf population in Australia. This decline is likely to have implications for future demand for Auslan interpreting services.

Auslan interpreters

This research identified 302 currently active Auslan interpreters across Australia. Of these active interpreters, 257 were accredited by the National Authority for Accreditation of Translators and Interpreters. The 35 interpreters interviewed for this research reported that there were very few full-time jobs for Auslan interpreters, low rates of payment, and limited training opportunities. The high risk of Occupational Overuse Syndrome was also raised as a potential limitation to the number of hours that a person could undertake work of this nature.

Auslan interpreting services

Auslan interpreters are typically booked via interpreting agencies (Auslan interpreting service providers). These agencies include the Deaf Societies in each State, Territory Auslan interpreting agencies (the Northern Territory Interpreting and Translating Service and the ACT Deafness Resource Centre), and others. Auslan interpreting service providers assist with interpreters in a range of settings such as health care, legal and financial appointments, education, employment-related matters and other life events, for example, weddings. Stakeholder feedback indicates that most active Auslan interpreters are registered with their local Deaf Society or Territory Auslan interpreting agency.

In most instances, the hearing person who requires an interpreter contacts the Auslan interpreting service provider to book and pay for an interpreter. The Auslan interpreting service provider should select an accredited interpreter whose skills and background are appropriate to the occasion of service. For example, a medical consultation requires an interpreter with a high level of interpreting skill (ideally a Level 3 interpreter), an understanding of medical terminology and often the same gender as the patient. To cover the administrative costs associated with operating the booking service, the Auslan interpreting service provider will charge a higher rate to the client than it pays to the interpreter. The rate paid by the hearing client can be as much as twice the amount paid to the Auslan interpreter, although rates and margins vary significantly across providers.

In 2002-03, the estimated total cost of providing Auslan interpreting services across Australia was at least \$6.3 million². The cost includes payments made to interpreters as well as administrative costs. Of this \$6.3 million, approximately \$3.0 million was the cost of Auslan interpreting services provided by Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting services.

Other Auslan interpreting service providers account for the remaining cost of \$3.3 million. The majority of this Auslan interpreting was for education and public medical consultations and was mostly government funded, either directly through publicly funded organisations such as universities and public hospitals or through agencies paid by government organisations to provide Auslan interpreting services.

The national estimate of the breakdown across service areas of the total cost of Auslan interpreting is as follows:

- ◆ 49% for interpreting in educational settings;
- ◆ 10% for interpreting related to employment;
- ◆ 9% for interpreting related to public medical consultations (such as in public hospitals);
- ◆ 8% for interpreting related to private medical consultations (such as with general practitioners, in private hospitals and with allied health practitioners);
- ◆ 6% for interpreting related to legal and financial matters (such as in courts, with the police or in private financial consultations); and
- ◆ 17% for interpreting in other contexts (these contexts cover a broad range of circumstances including events such as weddings and funerals).

² As it was impossible to obtain expenditure figures from all Auslan interpreting service providers, it is likely that the true figure is higher than \$6.3 million.

The proportion of cost in each service area varies widely between States and Territories.

Auslan interpreting services are funded from a combination of sources, including grants from State governments and fee-for-service charges. Table 1 shows the overall financial situation reported by State Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting services in 2002-03.

Table 1: Funding of State Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting services (2002-03), national aggregate

Cost of provision of Deaf Society Auslan interpreting services	\$2,955,114
Fee-for-service - public (Commonwealth and State)	\$1,410,260
Fee-for-service - private sector	\$621,448
Direct funding of Deaf Societies by State Governments	\$379,499
Deficit	\$543,907

The \$543,907 not covered by fees and government funding was paid for by the Deaf Societies through charitable fund raising or draw down of capital reserves. The operating deficit in the Northern Territory was met from the Territory government's consolidated revenue.

The mix of funding sources and operating deficits varies considerably across States and Territories. The policy of each Deaf Society with respect to the circumstances under which it provides interpreting without a direct fee-for-service has a large impact on the size of its overall operating deficit.

- ◆ For example, VicDeaf covered 94% of its expenditure through fee-for-service income. This resulted in a relatively small operating deficit of only 6%, despite the lack of direct Victorian Government funding to the organisation.
- ◆ Conversely, the Queensland Deaf Society covered only 71% of its expenditure through fee-for-service income. This resulted in an operating deficit of 26%, despite some funding support from the Queensland Government.

Nationally, the largest difference between the cost of provision and the fee-for-service recouped in 2002-03 was for interpreting in private medical settings, mostly in consultations with general practitioners and specialist doctors. The Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies reported a shortfall between the total cost of providing Auslan interpreting for private medical consultations and the total charges recouped for these services of \$480,000.

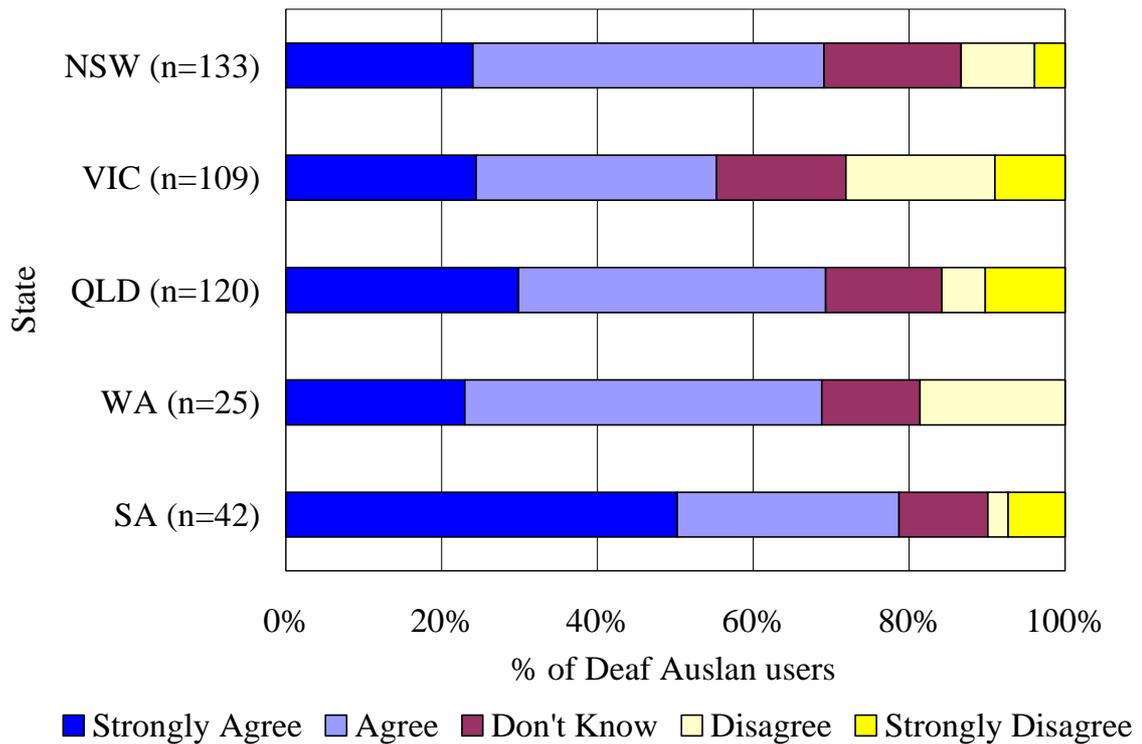
Direct funding from State and Territory governments (a total of \$379,499 in 2002-03) reduced the shortfall across all Auslan interpreting provision, but it is not possible to attribute this funding to particular areas of service.

In contrast to interpreting at private medical consultations, Auslan interpreting for employment-related matters was almost fully funded by fee-for-service arrangements.

Demand for professional Auslan interpreters

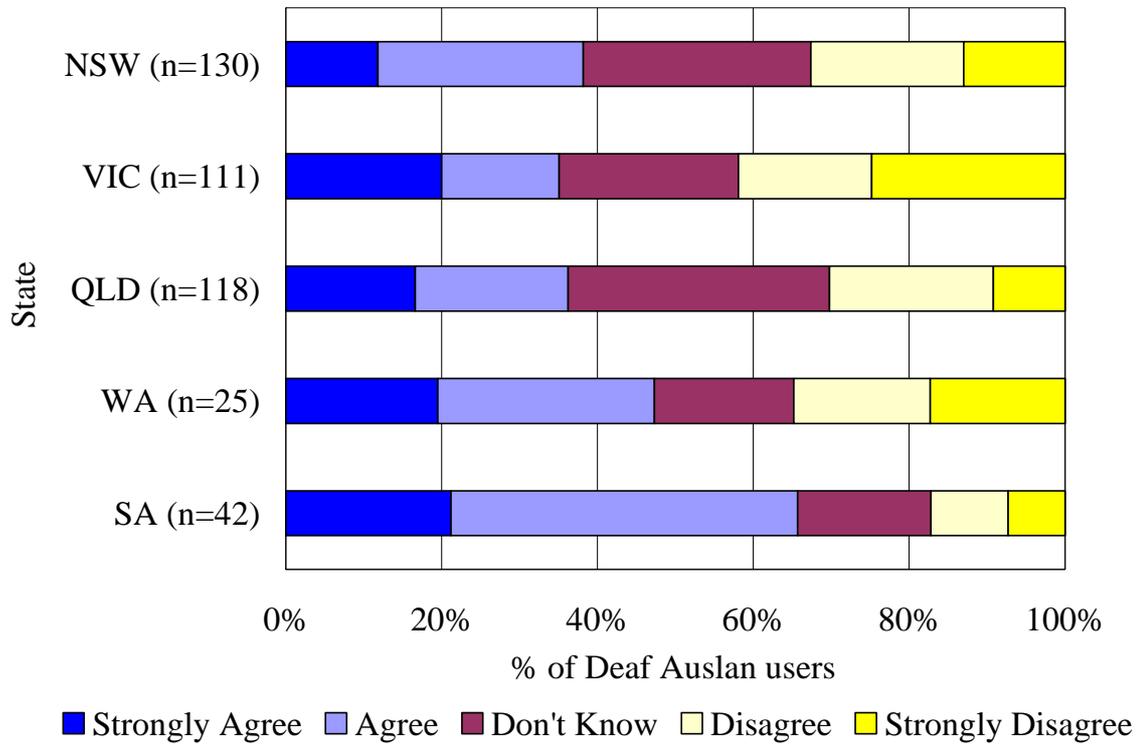
Overall, the Deaf Auslan user survey indicated that respondents were mostly satisfied that they could get an Auslan interpreter when needed (Figure 1), although satisfaction levels dropped when respondents were asked about whether they could access interpreters quickly (Figure 2).

Figure 1: Extent to which respondents agreed they could get an interpreter when needed, by State



Note: Tasmania, ACT and NT not included due to small sample size.

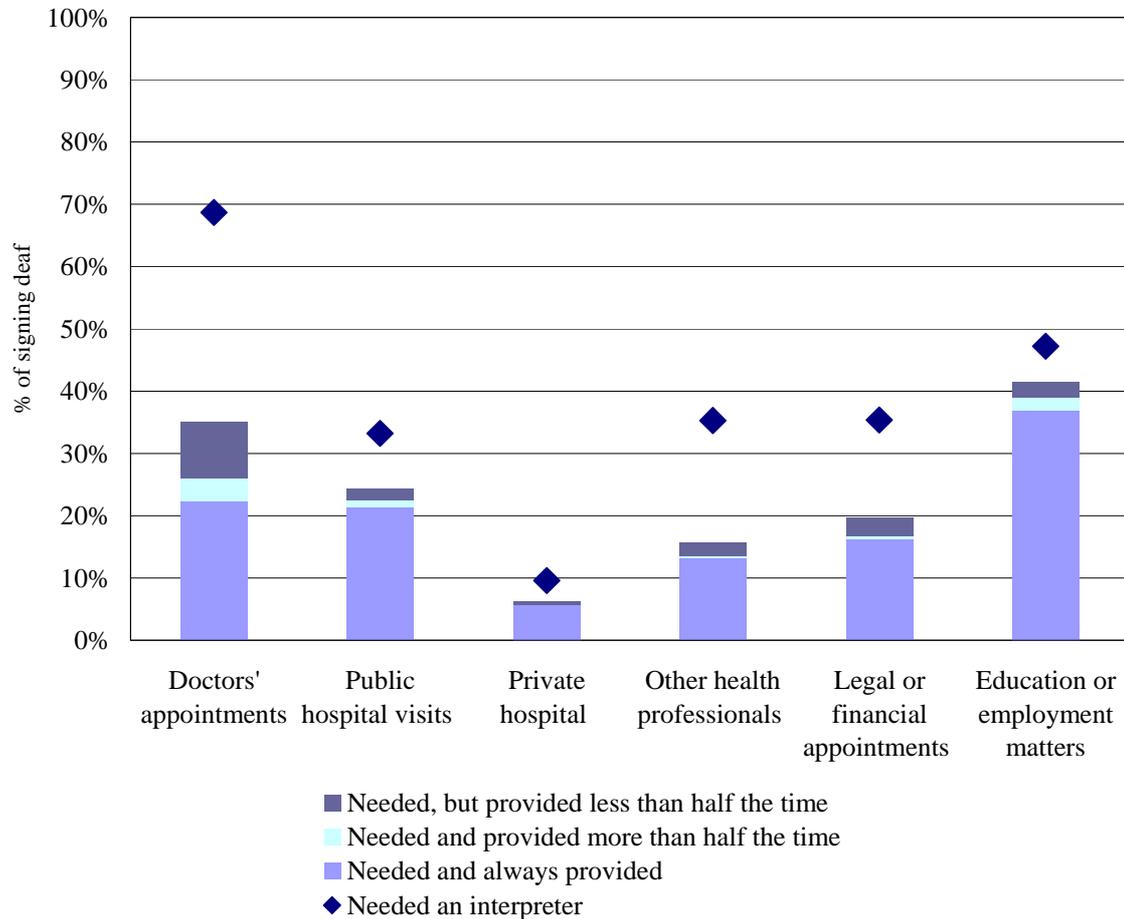
Figure 2: Extent to which respondents agreed they could get an interpreter quickly when needed, by State



Note: Tasmania, ACT and NT not included due to small sample size.

Eighty seven percent of Deaf Auslan users surveyed had used a professional Auslan interpreter at least once in the last 12 months. Figure 3, below, illustrates the levels of supply and demand for Auslan interpreting across the key service areas reported in the Deaf Auslan user survey.

Figure 3: Proportion of Deaf people needing an Auslan interpreter vs. proportion provided with an interpreter across key service areas



The area in which most Deaf people (almost 70%) required professional Auslan interpreting services in the last 12 months was general practitioner and specialist consultations. However, around 35% of respondents (i.e. half of those who needed an interpreter for such consultations) reported that they had not been provided with an interpreter, and only 22% said they were always able to get an interpreter for general practitioner and specialist consultations.

In contrast, around one third of Deaf Auslan users required interpreters for public hospital visits in the last 12 months, and more than 20% were always able to get an interpreter. Fewer than 10% of Deaf Auslan users were not able to get an Auslan interpreter when needed for public hospital visits in the last 12 months.

The shortfall between demand and supply of Auslan interpreters for key service areas related to:

- ◆ shortages of qualified interpreters, particularly at short notice;
- ◆ affordability;
- ◆ awareness about the need to use interpreters and how to engage them; and
- ◆ booked interpreters failing to show up for appointments.

When they could not get a professional interpreter, Deaf Auslan users reported they used a family member or friend; cancelled or rescheduled their appointment; or proceeded with the appointment and communicated through the use of notes and/or lip-reading.

Using professional Auslan interpreters or family members and friends as interpreters

Around 70% of Deaf Auslan users said that they had used family or friends to interpret for them in the last 12 months. The main reasons for using family or friends to interpret were:

- ◆ convenience;
- ◆ lack of professional interpreters, particularly at short notice and in regional areas;
- ◆ inability to pay for a professional interpreter;
- ◆ a preference for someone they know to interpret for them;
- ◆ family members having a better understanding of their communication techniques; and
- ◆ lack of awareness of the availability of professional interpreters.

In contrast, the main reasons given by Deaf Auslan users for using professional interpreters rather than family members or friends were:

- ◆ professional interpreters provided a better interpreting service;
- ◆ family and friends were not always available or were unable to help;
- ◆ it enabled them to remain independent and not be a burden on family and friends; and
- ◆ they believed that Deaf people have a right to use professional interpreters rather than family and friends.

Deaf Auslan users cited a desire to protect their privacy as a reason both for using professional interpreters and for using family and friends to interpret.

Alternative technologies

The project briefly investigated technologies which could improve the provision of Auslan interpreting services. Video remote interpreting (also known as video relay interpreting) is one such technology which uses a video link to facilitate communication between a hearing person and a Deaf person through an Auslan interpreter in a different location. Responses to the Deaf Auslan user survey showed that many Deaf people (around 40%) have limited experience of this technology and are unsure of its benefits. However, a further 40% of Deaf people indicated they would use video remote interpreting if it were more widely available.

I. Introduction

A. Background

Australian sign language – “Auslan” – is the predominant language of the Australian Deaf³ community.⁴ Auslan is based on British Sign Language⁵. However, it is important to appreciate that Auslan is not based upon English. Auslan uses hand shapes and movements, facial expression and orientation and has its own syntax and grammatical and semantic systems. The national policy on languages recognises Auslan as a community language.

Many Deaf Auslan users rely on interpreters in their day-to-day interactions with hearing people. Auslan interpreters are accredited through the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd and are typically booked via interpreting agencies (Auslan interpreting service providers). These agencies include the Deaf Societies in each State, and a number of other Auslan interpreting service providers in some States and the Territories⁶. Auslan interpreting service providers deliver interpreting services in a range of settings, including health care (e.g. general practitioners, specialists and dentists), private legal and financial appointments, education, various employment-related activities and life important occasions such as weddings and funerals. The funding of Auslan interpreting service providers varies considerably across States and Territories, as does the range of activities for which Deaf people can access free or subsidised Auslan interpreters.

There are limited data to assess whether the available interpreting services allow adequate communication between Deaf Auslan users and hearing people. The Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services commissioned ORIMA Research to undertake a study of the supply of, and demand for, Auslan interpreters across Australia.

³ The use of a capital “D” in “Deaf” identifies a person or a group as sharing the language and culture of the Deaf community.

⁴ Members of the Deaf community may use a number of communication methods in addition to Auslan, including other sign languages and written English.

⁵ Ozolins and Bridge (1999) summarises the historical development of Auslan and outlines the different communication methods utilised by the Deaf community, including signed English, manually coded English, total communication and simultaneous communication.

⁶ There is no Deaf Society in the Northern Territory (NT), or the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). The main Auslan interpreting service providers in the NT and ACT are the NT Interpreting and Translating Service and the ACT Deafness Resource Centre, respectively. The NT Interpreting and Translating Service is a part of the NT Office of Ethnic Affairs and provides interpreters to NT government agencies across more than 50 languages, including Auslan. The ACT Deafness Resource Centre receives most of its funding from the ACT government, although it provides some interpreting to the private sector for a fee. For ease of expression, throughout this report the term “Territory Auslan interpreting agencies” denotes the ACT Deafness Resource Centre and the NT Interpreting and Translating Service.

B. Research objective

The objective of this project was to develop an understanding of:

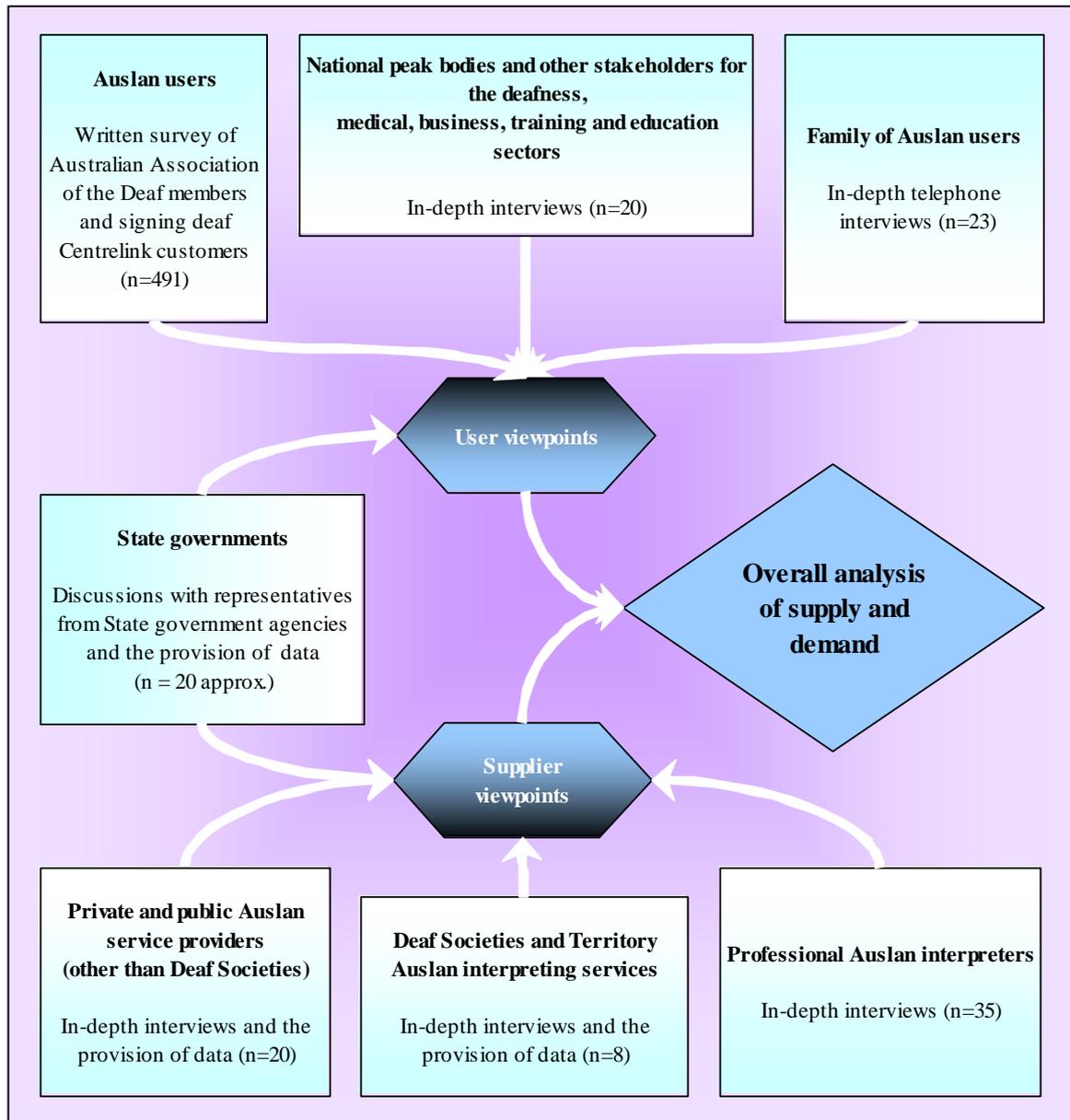
- ◆ the activities for which people require and/or use Auslan interpreting services;
- ◆ the extent to which the current services meet the needs of Deaf people and the people/organisations with whom they need to communicate;
- ◆ training, accreditation and registration of Auslan interpreters;
- ◆ funding sources and costs of Auslan interpreting services across Australia; and
- ◆ the potential of innovative technology (such as video remote interpreting) to assist in the provision of Auslan interpreting services.

This involved the collection of administrative and survey data as well as consultation with Auslan users, Auslan interpreters and people/organisations with whom Auslan users need to communicate. Data were collected, and consultations undertaken, in relation to all States and Territories and metropolitan, regional and remote areas.

C. Research methodology

Figure 4 shows the stakeholder groups consulted as part of the study.

Figure 4: Stakeholder groups consulted in relation to the supply and demand for Auslan interpreters across Australia (n = number of stakeholders who were interviewed or responded to surveys)



The Department of Family and Community Services established a reference group to guide ORIMA Research. Representatives of the Australian Federation of Deaf Societies, Australian Association of the Deaf, Deafness Forum of Australia and Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association participated in the reference group. Other reference group members included the ACT member of the National Disability Administrators, representing all State and Territory Disability Administrators, and representatives of the Australian Government Departments of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and Health and Ageing.

The Australian Federation of Deaf Societies, Australian Association of the Deaf, Deafness Forum of Australia and Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association provided input to the research methodology and assisted ORIMA Research in identifying and contacting other stakeholders for consultation as part of the research.

To assess the need (or demand) for Auslan interpreters and obtain the views of users of Auslan interpreting services:

- ◆ a national survey of Deaf Auslan users was conducted;
 - The survey was mailed to all adults registered with Centrelink as being sign language users and all individual Deaf members of the Australian Association of the Deaf.
 - To protect the privacy of respondents, the user survey was independently sent by the Department of Family and Community Services and the Australian Association of the Deaf. ORIMA Research collected and collated the data, but was not provided with personal details that could have identified individual survey respondents.
 - Respondents could complete the survey in writing, either online or by mail or fax, or by phone using a telephone typewriter and the National Relay Service.⁷
 - A copy of the survey instrument can be found at Attachment A.⁸
- ◆ telephone interviews were conducted with family members of Deaf Auslan users from each State and Territory;
- ◆ interviews were conducted with representatives from national peak bodies; and
- ◆ data were obtained from some State and Territory government agencies that purchase Auslan interpreting services.

To assess the current provision (or supply) of Auslan interpreters and obtain views of Auslan interpreting service providers:

- ◆ telephone interviews were conducted with a sample of professional Auslan interpreters from each State and Territory;
- ◆ data on the provision and funding of Auslan interpreting services were obtained from Deaf Societies and interviews were conducted with representatives from each Deaf Society and the Territory Auslan interpreting agencies;
- ◆ face-to-face and telephone interviews were conducted with Auslan interpreting service providers (other than Deaf Societies) and administrative data were obtained from some of these providers; and
- ◆ data were obtained from State government agencies that provide Auslan interpreting services directly (i.e. agencies that do not book interpreters through external Auslan interpreting service providers).⁹

⁷ Randomised individual passwords were given with each survey to prevent people from responding more than once by using the paper and online surveys.

⁸ Associate Professor Merv Hyde (Director of the Centre for Applied Studies in Deafness at Griffith University) provided valuable assistance in commenting on the draft Deaf Auslan user survey.

⁹ Chapter III (Section A) describes the role of Auslan interpreting service providers.

In order to estimate the total cost of providing Auslan interpreters, efforts were made to obtain data relating to Auslan interpreting provision from every major Auslan interpreting service provider in Australia.¹⁰ Specifically, these service providers were asked for data on the total amount (in hours) and cost of Auslan interpreting they provided in 2002-03 and, where possible, for total amounts related to: medical, legal/financial, education, employment, government and other matters. Service providers were also asked how Auslan interpreting in each of these areas was funded.

As major employers of Auslan interpreters in each State, Deaf Societies were also asked to provide data on the number of Auslan interpreters they engage, their level of accreditation, their conditions of employment and their geographic distribution.

D. Profiles of respondents

Deaf Auslan user survey

As discussed in Chapter II, the most recent estimate of the number of Deaf Auslan users is around 6,500. In the absence of a comprehensive listing of Deaf Auslan users, a survey of Deaf Auslan users (the “user survey”) was mailed to:

- ◆ all adults registered with Centrelink as being sign language users (N=1542); and
- ◆ all members of the Australian Association of the Deaf (N=288)¹¹.

Five hundred and fifty one people responded to the survey. Of these, 491 were within the scope of the study.¹² Allowing for out-of-scope respondents, the response rate was around 30%. Given that written English is a second language for many people in the Deaf community, this is a good response rate.¹³

¹⁰ These Auslan interpreting service providers include the Deaf Societies and private and public sector language service providers and are profiled in more detail on page 30.

¹¹ There may have been some overlap between the Centrelink and Australian Association of the Deaf sample frames (with some people being sent two surveys). Conservatively, the actual number of in-scope recipients of the survey was probably around 1,650.

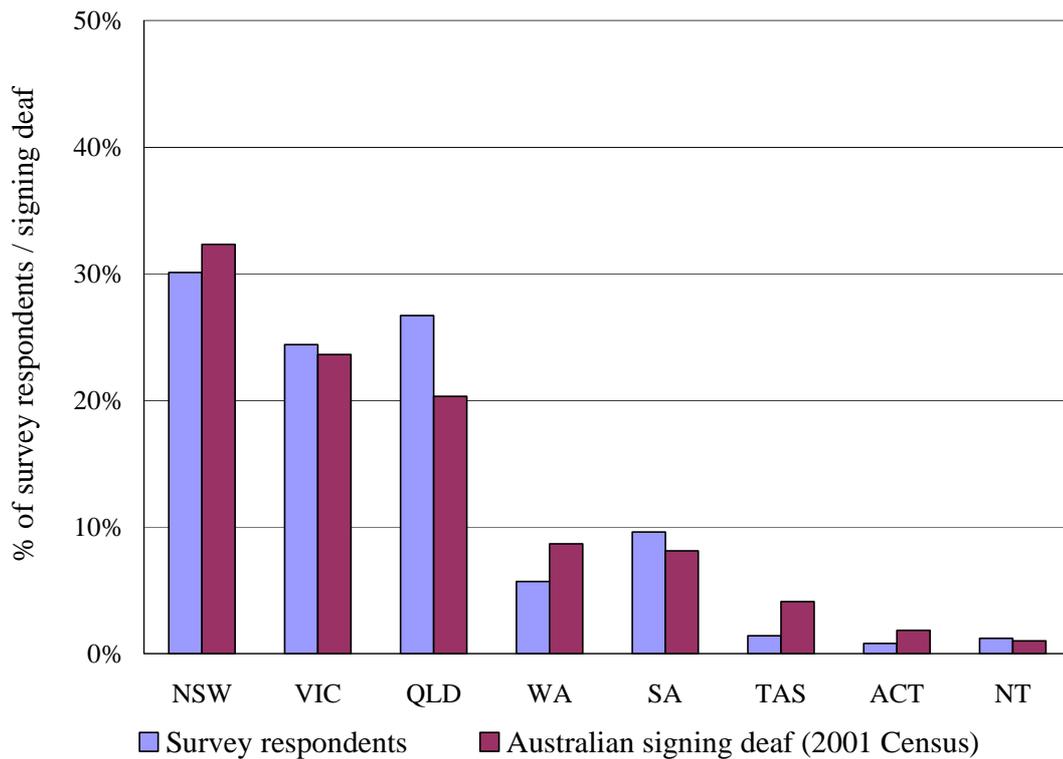
¹² Some respondents did not provide a postcode as requested in the user survey and so it was not possible to assign their survey responses to a region for quantitative analysis. Consequently, 491 responses were available for quantitative results. Around 5% of respondents indicated that they were not Auslan users and therefore not a member of the target population.

¹³ Over one third of survey respondents received assistance in completing the survey, indicating that the survey results incorporate the views of Deaf Auslan users who have difficulty communicating in English.

Comparison of Deaf Auslan user survey respondents to ABS 2001 census figures for the overall signing Deaf community

Figure 5 shows the distribution of respondents to the user survey across States and Territories, compared with the State and Territory distribution of signing Deaf according to the ABS 2001 census¹⁴. Compared to the ABS 2001 census data, Deaf Auslan users from some States and Territories, particularly Tasmania and the ACT, were under-represented in the user survey response sample.

Figure 5: State and Territory distribution of Deaf Auslan user survey respondents compared to the ABS 2001 census signing Deaf population



¹⁴ ABS Catalogue No. 2001.0. Census of Population and Housing: Basic Community Profile. Released on 19/11/2002, the publication can be downloaded from <http://www.abs.gov.au/Ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookupMF/A2A48BD5C22B5999CA256B2B0080E9E0>

Figure 6 shows the distribution of respondents to the user survey across metropolitan, regional and remote areas, compared with the regional distribution of signing Deaf people according to the ABS 2001 census. Signing Deaf people living in regional and remote areas were under-represented by the user survey sample compared to the ABS 2001 census data.

Figure 6: Regional distribution of Deaf Auslan user survey respondents compared to the ABS 2001 census signing Deaf population

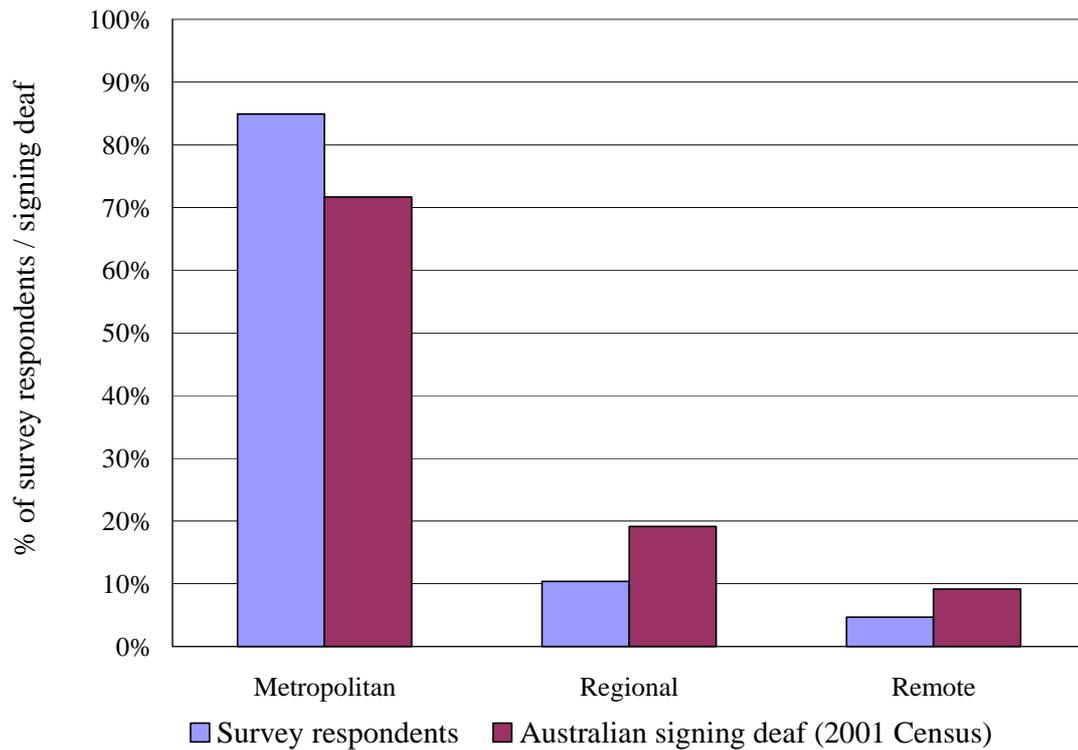
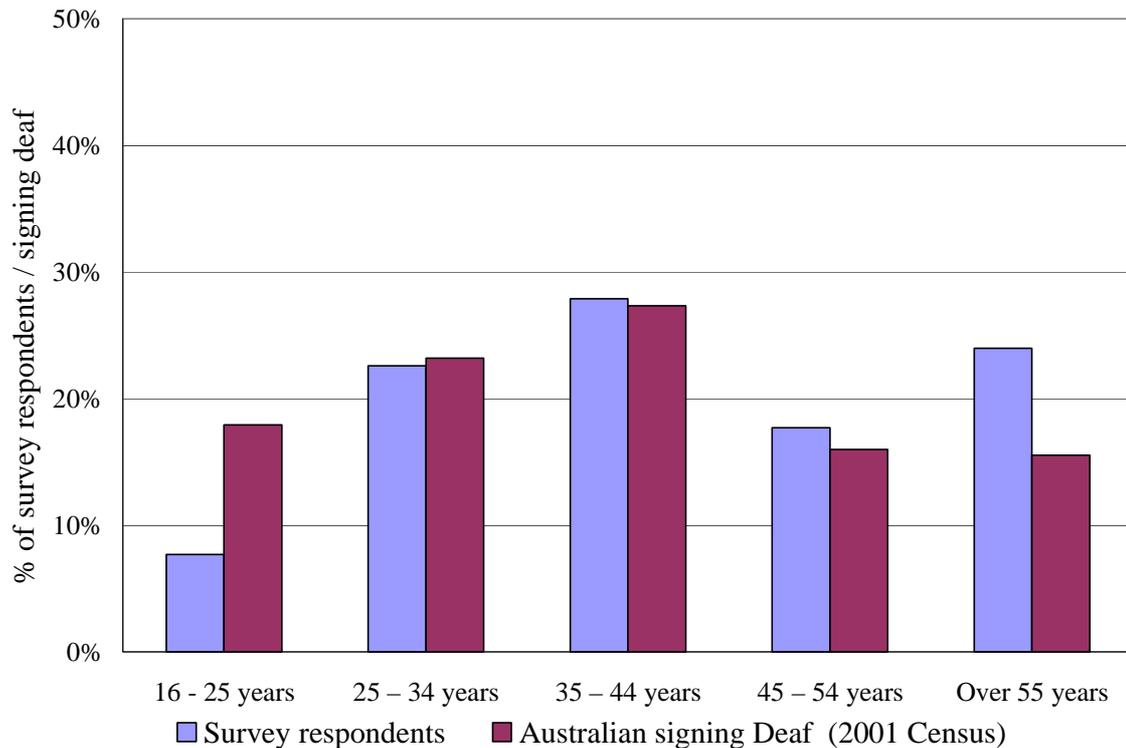


Figure 7 shows the age distribution of respondents to the user survey and the signing Deaf population aged 16 or over according to the ABS 2001 census. Compared to the ABS 2001 census data, signing Deaf people aged 16 to 25 years were under-represented by the Auslan user survey sample.

Figure 7: Age profile of Deaf Auslan user survey respondents compared to the ABS 2001 census signing Deaf population aged 16 and over



The divergences between the geographic and age distribution of the survey sample and Deaf Auslan population estimated by the ABS 2001 census largely reflect the composition of the Centrelink customer and Australian Association of the Deaf membership databases.¹⁵ To account for this, the Deaf Auslan user survey results presented in Chapters III through IX have been weighted to reflect the geographic and age distribution of signing Deaf people as estimated by the ABS 2001 census. Given the small number of survey respondents from regional and remote areas, survey results for regional and remote areas have been amalgamated and reported as “non-metropolitan” results.

¹⁵ For example, the Centrelink customer database and the Australian Association of the Deaf membership lists do not include persons under the age of 16 years. The Centrelink database included few Deaf Auslan users from Tasmania.

Figure 8 shows that more females responded to the user survey than males, although the ABS 2001 census indicates that this partly reflects the gender composition of the underlying Deaf population.

Figure 8: Gender of Deaf Auslan user survey respondents compared to the ABS 2001 census signing Deaf population

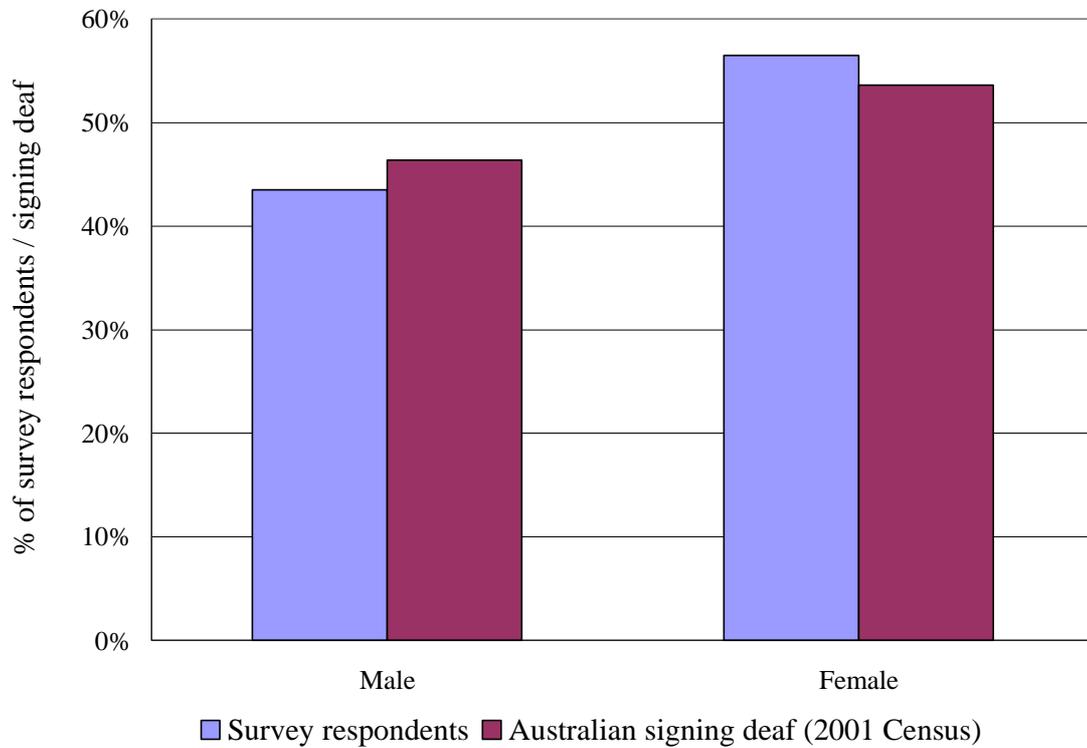
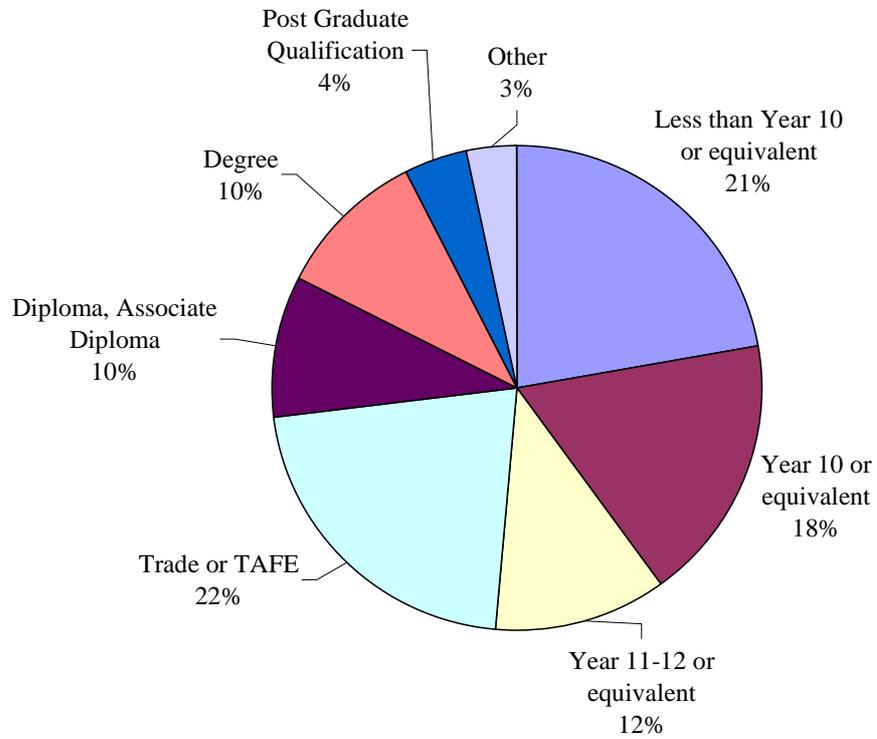


Figure 9 shows the highest level of educational attainment of respondents to the Auslan user survey.

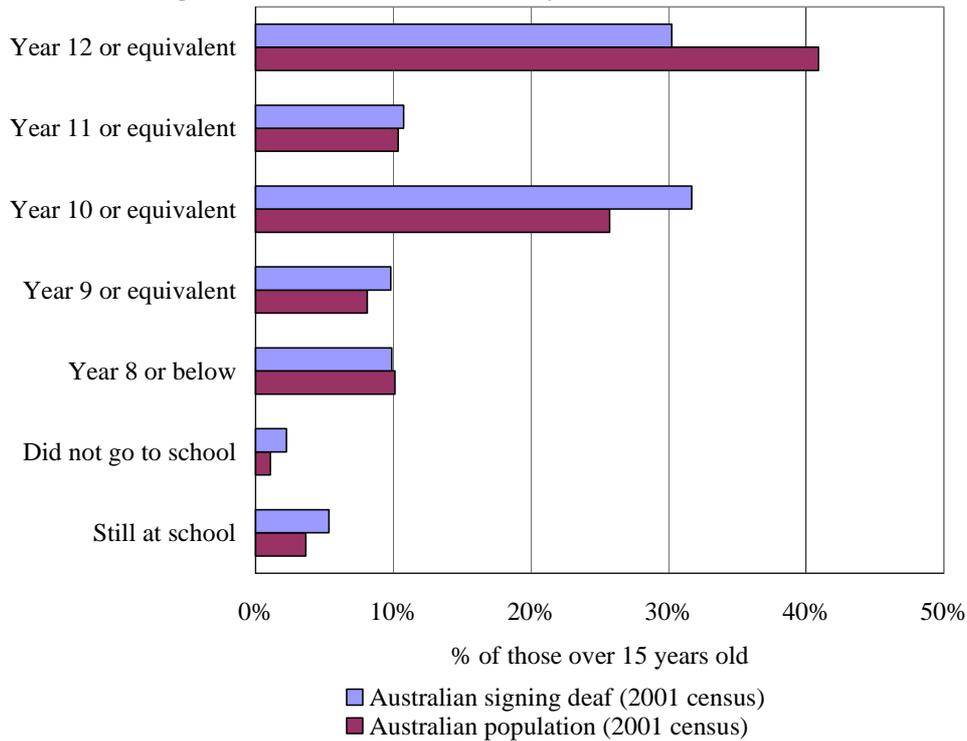
**Figure 9: Highest qualifications held
(percentage of Auslan user survey respondents)**



There is no educational attainment data available from the ABS 2001 census with which to compare the Auslan user survey results presented in Figure 9. However, the census indicates that:

- ◆ 30% of signing Deaf people aged over 15 years completed year 12, compared with 41% of the general Australian population; and
- ◆ 54% of signing Deaf people aged over 15 years had left school at year 10 level or below, compared to 45% of the general Australian population.

Figure 10: Level of secondary education achievement



Note: Figure 10 differs from Figure 9 in that the ABS 2001 census does not ask respondents about their 'highest level of educational attainment' but their highest level of primary or secondary schooling. Tertiary and further educational qualifications are not included in Figure 10.

Figure 11 shows ABS 2001 census data comparing the weekly incomes of the signing Deaf and general Australian populations aged over 15 years.

- ◆ The signing Deaf population is over-represented in the lower income ranges and under-represented in the higher income ranges compared to the Australian population.

Figure 11: Weekly income bracket

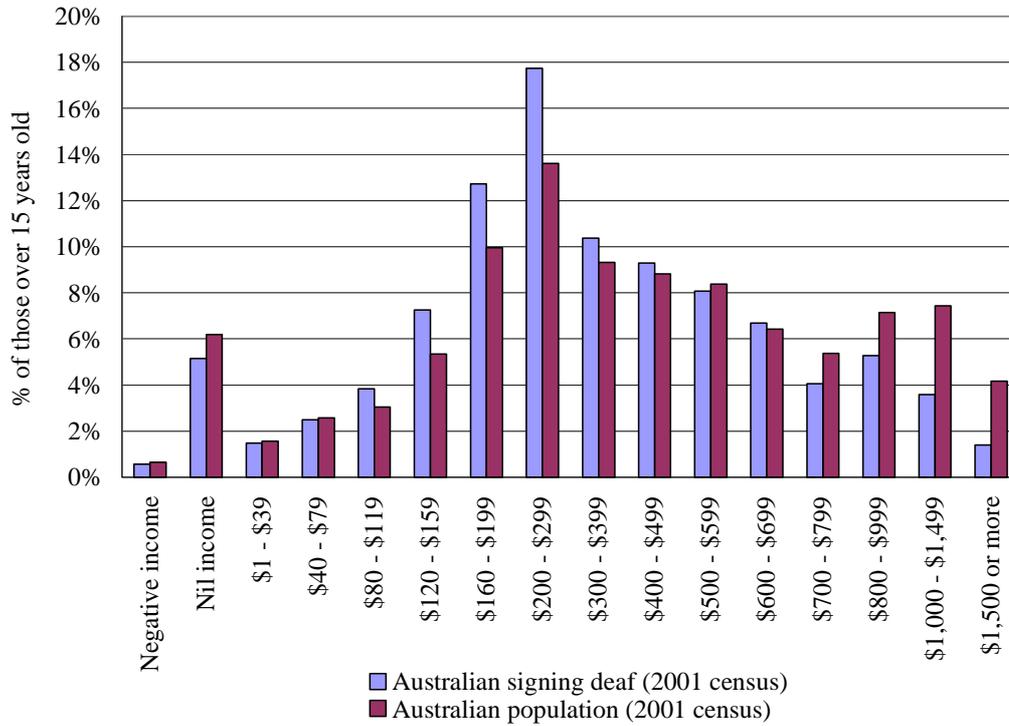
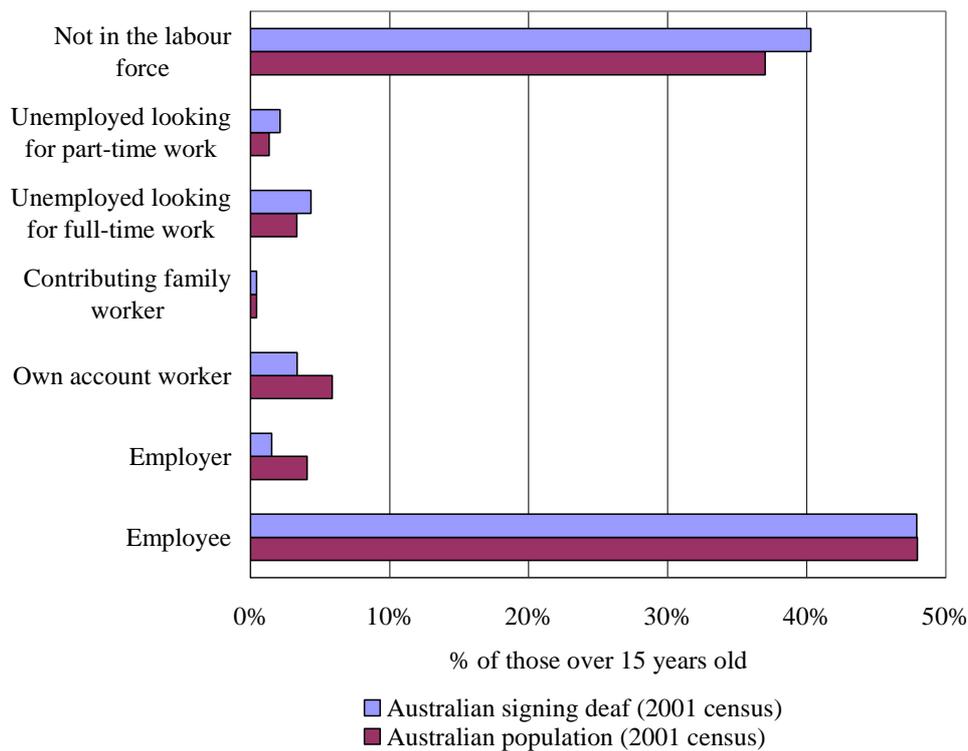


Figure 12 shows ABS 2001 census data comparing the employment status of the signing Deaf and general Australian populations.

- ◆ The signing Deaf population is slightly over-represented in the unemployed and non-labour force categories. Forty two percent of the general Australian population are unemployed or not in the labour force compared to 47% of signing Deaf people.

The higher unemployed and non-labour force status proportions of signing Deaf people shown in Figure 12 are consistent with the higher representation of signing Deaf people in the lower income ranges in Figure 11.

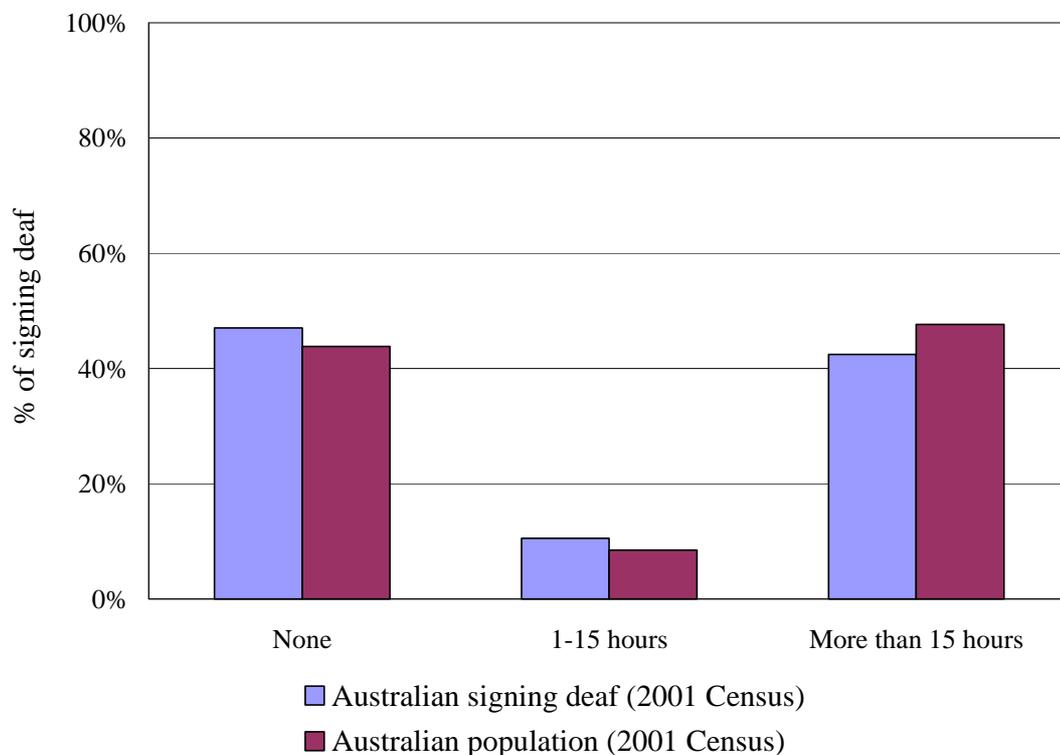
Figure 12: Employment status



Employment in terms of hours worked was collected through the Deaf Auslan user survey. Employment status is a characteristic of interest because it may affect demand for Auslan interpreting in the workplace, as well as the ability of the Deaf person to pay for interpreting services. Figure 13 compares hours worked by the signing Deaf population and the general Australian population as indicated by ABS 2001 census data¹⁶:

- ◆ 47% of signing Deaf had not worked in the week preceding the census, compared with 44% of the general Australian population;
- ◆ 11% of signing Deaf had worked less than 15 hours in the week preceding the census, compared with 8% of the general Australian population; and
- ◆ 42% of signing Deaf had worked more than 15 hours in the week preceding the census, compared with 48% of the general Australian population.

Figure 13: Hours worked by the ABS 2001 census signing Deaf population compared to the general Australian population



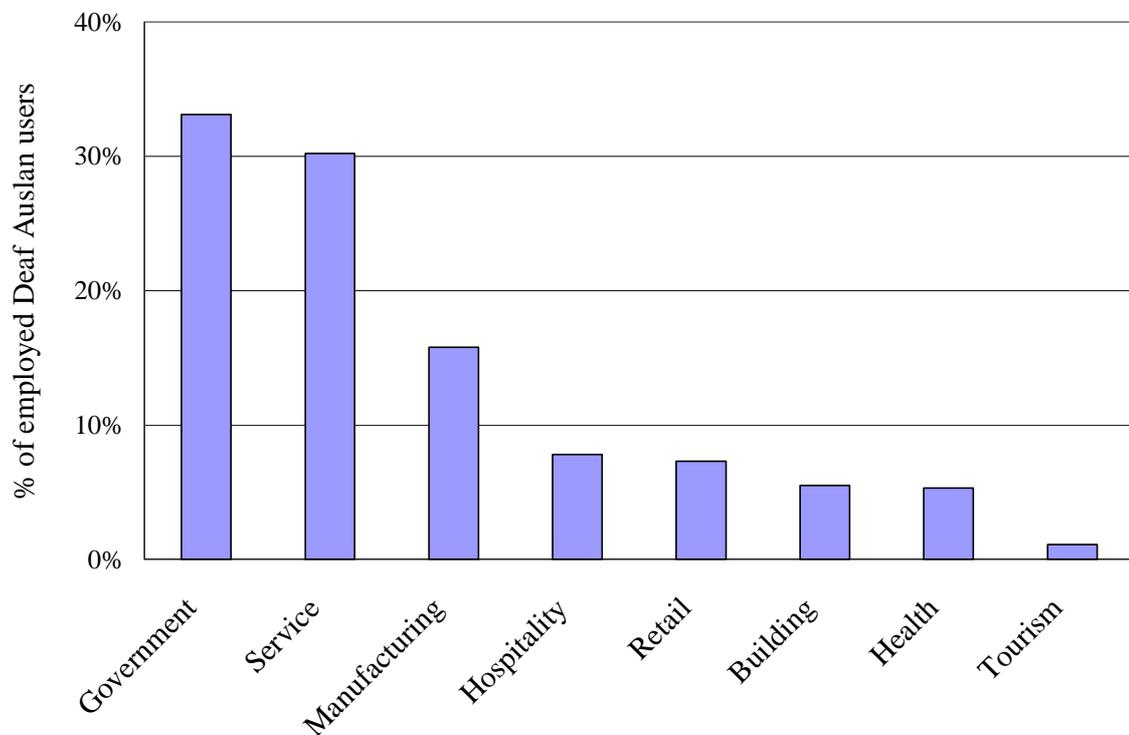
¹⁶ The information on hours worked collected through the Deaf Auslan user survey is not directly comparable with ABS 2001 census data. For this reason, only the census data are presented.

Stakeholders consulted during the research considered that Deaf people were significantly more likely to work in the public sector than hearing people due to, amongst other things, the greater willingness of government bodies to provide Auslan interpreters in the workplace. Consistent with this:

- ◆ Figure 14 shows the Auslan user survey suggests that at least one third of employed Deaf Auslan users are employed within the public sector;¹⁷ while
- ◆ ABS data indicate that around 16% of the overall Australian workforce is employed in the public sector.¹⁸

However, it is unclear to what extent the estimates presented in Figure 14 may have been affected by the use of Centrelink customer and Australian Association of the Deaf membership databases as sampling frames for the Deaf Auslan user survey.

Figure 14: Industry of employment



Note: Weighted survey results.

¹⁷ Thirty three percent of Deaf Auslan user survey respondents stated that they worked in the government sector, which covers Australian, State, Territory and local government employees. In addition, some of those employed in other sectors (such as health) are likely to be public sector employees.

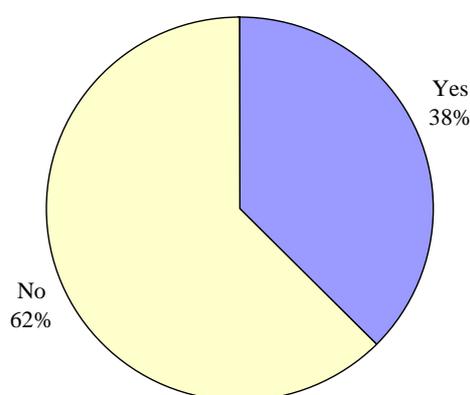
¹⁸ ABS *Australian Labour Market Statistics* (6105.0), published in May 2003 reported that the Australian workforce totalled 9,496,100 persons, of which 1,515,300 (16%) were public sector employees.

Respondents who needed assistance with the survey

Figure 15 shows that over one third (38%) of respondents obtained help to complete the survey. These respondents were asked to explain why they had sought help. Most indicated they sought assistance because they had difficulty reading or understanding English.

- ◆ A significant proportion of respondents indicated that they had received assistance from family or friends or Deaf Society staff.¹⁹ This made a positive contribution to the response rate of the survey.

**Figure 15: Did someone help you complete this survey?
(percentage of Deaf Auslan user survey respondents)**



A key issue associated with using a written survey to assess the views of the Deaf community was whether it would be accessible to Deaf people who have difficulty communicating in written English. This is a group of particular interest within the study as people who have difficulty communicating in written English might be expected to have a relatively high need for Auslan interpreting services²⁰. However, the above results suggest that the survey results do incorporate the views of such Auslan users. Moreover, the sample is broadly reflective of other demographic factors (such as educational attainment and employment status) that are generally correlated with literacy.

- ◆ Less than one half (44%) of those who obtained help with the survey had completed schooling beyond year 10, compared to 60% of those who did not obtain help with the survey.

¹⁹ Respondents were not asked to state who had assisted them with the survey. Nevertheless, of the respondents that required assistance around 20% indicated that they were assisted by family or friends, and almost 10% indicated they were assisted by Deaf Society staff.

²⁰ Efforts were made to organise face-to-face focus groups with low-literacy Deaf Auslan users. However, it was not possible to recruit sufficient numbers of participants for these groups within the project timeframe.

Families of Deaf Auslan users

ORIMA Research interviewed 23 family members of Deaf Auslan users. These were parents of Deaf children and children of Deaf adults from all States and Territories. Table 2 shows the numbers and geographic distribution of the family members. Thirteen of these interview participants were also accredited Auslan interpreters.

Table 2: Profile of Deaf Auslan user family member survey respondents

State or Territory	Child of Deaf adult(s)	Parent of Deaf Child	Both
New South Wales	2	1	
Victoria	2	2	
Queensland	3		1
Western Australia	3	1	
South Australia	2	1	
Tasmania		1	
Australian Capital Territory	1	1	
Northern Territory		2	
TOTAL	13	9	1

Auslan interpreter interviews

As part of the stakeholder consultations, 35 Auslan interpreters were interviewed in relation to their views on the profession. The people interviewed were a mix of interpreters from Deaf Societies and other private and public sector Auslan interpreting service providers from all States and Territories. Thirty female and five male interpreters were interviewed.²¹ There were 32 accredited²² interpreters (19 Level 3 Interpreters and 13 Level 2 Para-professionals) and three unaccredited interpreters.

²¹ No information is available about the overall gender distribution of the population of Auslan interpreters. However, stakeholders typically noted that the vast majority of Auslan interpreters are female.

²² Accreditation is undertaken by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd.

Auslan interpreting service provider interviews and data

Major Auslan interpreting service providers were requested to provide relevant data for 2002-03 to assist in quantifying the cost of Auslan interpreting provision across States and Territories. Auslan interpreting service providers contacted were:

- ◆ the Deaf Societies in each State;
- ◆ the two Territory-based Auslan interpreting agencies;
- ◆ commercial language service providers:²³
 - Auslan Interpreting and Note Taking Service (VIC);
 - Central Health Interpreter Service (VIC);
 - Deaf Education Network (NSW);
 - On-call interpreters (NSW and VIC);
 - Sensewide (VIC);
 - Victorian Services for Deaf Children (VIC); and
- ◆ government funded language service providers²⁴ for:
 - universities;
 - hospitals/public medical services; and
 - government agencies.

National peak body interviews

A number of national peak bodies were interviewed in order to obtain their perspective on Auslan interpreting. These were:

- ◆ Adult Learning Australia;
- ◆ Australian Association of the Deaf;
- ◆ Australian Division of General Practice;
- ◆ Australian Federation of Deaf Societies;
- ◆ Australian Institute of Translators and Interpreters;
- ◆ Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association;
- ◆ Deafness Forum of Australia;
- ◆ Employers Making a Difference;
- ◆ National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters; and
- ◆ Tertiary Education Disability Council of Australia.

²³ Commercial language service providers in States other than NSW and Victoria provide some Auslan interpreting services. However, the cost of these services is a very small proportion of their overall interpreting provision.

²⁴ Data for State government funded language service providers were generally obtained via National Disability Administrator representatives from each State and Territory. Not all States and Territories were able to provide these data within the timeframes of the research.

State and Territory government representative interviews and data

A questionnaire was sent to State and Territory representatives of the National Disability Administrators seeking:

- ◆ data on total State/Territory government funding of Auslan interpreting services and the nature of these arrangements;
- ◆ information on the range of interpreting services offered to Auslan users in the State/Territory and the cost of providing these services;
- ◆ information on training, accreditation and registration of Auslan interpreters within the State/Territory;
- ◆ information on institutional arrangements governing administration and delivery of Auslan interpreting services (e.g. the relationship between the State/Territory government and Auslan interpreting service providers).

Interviews were sought with relevant State and Territory government representatives.

Not all States and Territories were able to provide the requested data within the research timeframes. Consequently, data in relation to State and Territory government provision are partial in many areas and this is reflected in the analysis presented in this report.

E. Use of interview data

The qualitative data obtained from stakeholder interviews were useful for identifying and illustrating issues relevant to both users and providers of Auslan interpreting services.

The interviews were not designed to draw quantitative inferences. The interview samples were neither sufficiently large nor representative to support quantitative inferences.

F. Statistical precision of Auslan user survey results

As noted in Section D, results of the Auslan user survey have been weighted to reflect age and geographic distribution of the Deaf Auslan user population as estimated by the ABS 2001 census. The weighted results are estimates of the views of the Deaf Auslan user community aged 16 and over. These estimates are subject to selection bias and statistical sampling error.

- ◆ Selection bias is error arising from a systematic difference between surveyed respondents and the population in general. This may be due to differences in the sampling frames (here, the Centrelink Deaf customer and Australian Association of the Deaf full membership databases) or a tendency of a particular group of respondents to refuse to participate. While it is not possible to quantify the extent of selection bias, weighting should reduce any such bias in the Auslan user survey.
- ◆ Statistical sampling error is the chance of randomly selecting a sample significantly different from the population. This form of error can be measured and expressed as a confidence interval. Overall proportion estimates from the user survey are subject to a 90% confidence interval of not more than ± 4 percentage points (pp). This means

that we can be 90% confident that results from the Auslan User survey are within ± 4 pp of the result that would have been obtained if we had surveyed all Deaf Auslan users. Table 3 (next page) shows the maximum confidence intervals for estimates relating to individual States and Territories and for metropolitan, regional and remote areas.

Table 3: Confidence intervals for specific groups in the Auslan user survey

Area	Estimated Population ²⁵	Sample	90% Confidence Interval
New South Wales	1584	148	6 pp
Victoria	1158	120	7 pp
Queensland	995	131	7 pp
Western Australia	424	28	16 pp
South Australia	397	47	12 pp
Tasmania	201	7	n/a*
Australian Capital Territory	89	4	n/a*
Northern Territory	50	6	n/a*
Metropolitan	3512	417	4 pp
Regional and Remote (Non-metro)	1387	74	9 pp
Total	4899	491	4 pp

* It is not possible to draw robust quantitative inferences in relation to the views of Deaf Auslan users in Tasmania, ACT or the NT due to the small sample of users from these areas.

Note: The total number of Deaf Auslan users, 4,899 is the estimated number of adult (16 years and over) Deaf Auslan users. The total number of Deaf Auslan users including children is estimated to be 6,500 based on Johnston (2003).

²⁵ Estimated populations are arrived at by using ABS census data for 2001 to determine the distribution of Deaf Auslan users across areas and Johnston's (2003) estimate of the total Deaf community.

G. Presentation of Deaf Auslan user survey results

The Deaf Auslan user survey results have been weighted to produce estimates of the proportion of the Deaf Auslan user population aged 16 and over holding particular views. As noted in the preceding section, these estimates are subject to measurement and statistical error. These estimates are typically presented as “X% of Deaf Auslan users held a particular view”.

When reporting on user survey results, percentages are based on the total number of valid responses made to the particular question.

- ◆ In most cases, results reflect those respondents who expressed a view and for whom the questions were applicable. ‘Not applicable’ and ‘don’t know’ responses have only been presented where this significantly aids in the interpretation of the results.
- ◆ Percentage results throughout the report may not add up to 100% due to rounding.
- ◆ Questions that allow respondents to give more than one answer may add up to more than 100% since there may be more answers than respondents. These instances are clearly noted as ‘multiple response questions’ throughout this report.

The Deaf Auslan user survey also contained a number of open-ended questions that provided respondents opportunity to expand on their answers or to make general comments. Such comments have been used through this report to illustrate issues and are denoted by the use of *italicised* text.

II. Numbers of Deaf Auslan users and Auslan interpreters across Australia

A. Number and geographic distribution of Deaf Auslan users

Current size and distribution of the Deaf community

The ABS 2001 census asks “Does the person speak a language other than English *at home*?”. In response, 5,305 people reported that they used some form of sign language.²⁶ Many researchers consider that this significantly under-estimates the size of the Deaf community because:

- ◆ some Deaf people may not be aware that Auslan is a ‘language’;
- ◆ Auslan is signed not ‘spoken’; and
- ◆ some Deaf people who regularly use sign language to communicate do not use sign language at home (e.g. with hearing parents).

In light of this, a number of estimates of the size of the Deaf community in Australia have been produced and published, ranging from 7,000 persons²⁷ to 15,400.²⁸ The most recent research on this issue, by Johnston (2003), provides an estimate of the size of the Deaf community based on enrolments in schools for the Deaf, relevant ABS 2001 census, and extrapolations based on recent universal neonatal screening programs. Johnston (2003) concludes that:

...using this method, one arrives at an estimated minimum signing deaf population in 2001 of approximately 6,500 individuals... This lends further support to the reliability of the [ABS] census figures – though somewhat conservative, they may not greatly underestimate the true size of the signing deaf community after all.

It would appear that although the ABS 2001 census underestimates the size of the signing Deaf population (by around 20%), it provides a reasonable guide to the geographic distribution and demographic profile of the Deaf community. Throughout this report, estimated Deaf populations for geographic regions, age groups and by other demographic factors have been calculated by applying the demographic proportions indicated in the ABS 2001 census to Johnston’s estimate of the overall signing Deaf community of around 6,500.²⁹ Table 4 shows the estimated number of Deaf Auslan users across metropolitan, regional and remote areas of each State and Territory derived using this methodology, as well as the number of responses received to the Auslan user survey in each of these categories.

²⁶ 3,292 people indicated that they used Auslan and 2,013 indicated they used a sign language.

²⁷ Power, D. (1986).

²⁸ Hyde M., and Power, D. (1991).

²⁹ Johnston’s methodology yields an estimate of 6,434 signing Deaf individuals. This represents 0.034% of the overall Australian population.

**Table 4: Estimated Deaf population,
based on Johnston (2003) and ABS 2001 census data**

		Metropolitan	Regional	Remote	Total	% of total
New South Wales	Population	1559	454	89	2102	32%
	<i>Survey Sample</i>	<i>123</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>148</i>	<i>30%</i>
Victoria	Population	1189	291	56	1536	24%
	<i>Survey Sample</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>24%</i>
Queensland	Population	875	236	209	1320	20%
	<i>Survey Sample</i>	<i>106</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>131</i>	<i>27%</i>
Western Australia	Population	450	38	75	563	9%
	<i>Survey Sample</i>	<i>25</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>6%</i>
South Australia	Population	469	32	27	528	8%
	<i>Survey Sample</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>10%</i>
Tasmania*	Population	—	193	73	266	4%
	<i>Survey Sample</i>	—	<i>7</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1%</i>
Australian Capital Territory*	Population	119	—	—	119	2%
	<i>Sample</i>	<i>4</i>	—	—	<i>4</i>	<i>1%</i>
Northern Territory*	Population	—	—	66	66	1%
	<i>Survey Sample</i>	—	—	<i>6</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>1%</i>
Total	Population	4661	1244	595	6,500	100%
	<i>Survey Sample</i>	<i>417</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>491</i>	<i>100%</i>
% of total	Population	72%	19%	9%	100%	
	<i>Survey Sample</i>	<i>85%</i>	<i>10%</i>	<i>5%</i>	<i>100%</i>	

* Based on the ABS Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia, Tasmania is deemed to be completely regional and remote, ACT is deemed to be completely metropolitan and NT is deemed to be completely remote.

Population of Deaf Auslan users aged over 16 years

As noted in Chapter I, the Deaf Auslan user survey was sent to all Centrelink customers recorded as requiring sign language interpreters and all individual Deaf members of the Australian Association of the Deaf. Neither covers Deaf people aged under 16 years.

According to the ABS 2001 census, 76% of the signing Deaf community are aged 16 years or older and so the user survey results relate to the estimated 4,900 Deaf signers who are aged 16 years and over. As noted in Chapter I, the survey results have been weighted to reflect the estimated age profile of these Deaf Auslan users, as well as their geographic distribution.

Likely future trends in the size of the Deaf community

Johnston (2003) considers the likely impact of medical advances (such as rubella vaccinations, cochlear implantation, genetic screening and gene therapy) on the future size of the Deaf signing community. He concludes that:

...the signing deaf community is likely to begin contracting in the near future as births would not compensate for the (increasing) death rate in an ageing and already small community.

This has implications for potential future demand for Auslan interpreting assistance.

B. Number and geographic distribution of Auslan interpreters

Accreditation of Auslan interpreters

The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd is responsible for setting and monitoring translation and interpreting standards for the State, Territory and Australian governments. Government agencies generally require the accreditation of interpreters, including Auslan interpreters. There are two levels of accreditation for Auslan interpreters.

- ◆ “Level 3 – Interpreter” is the minimum level of accreditation for professional interpreting and requires interpreters to be able to interpret across a wide range of subjects and situations, such as specialist consultations and presentations. The skills cover areas such as law, health, business, banking and social and community services.
- ◆ “Level 2 – Para-professional” covers general conversations and non-specialist interpreting.

Distribution of Auslan interpreters across Australia

National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters data indicate that there are around 450 accredited Auslan interpreters across Australia. However, not all accredited interpreters are active practitioners. Many have left the industry for a variety of reasons (e.g. for family reasons or to find other work).

Most practising Auslan interpreters are registered with the Deaf Society in their State or with their Territory Auslan interpreting agency. However, some interpreters are solely

engaged by other Auslan interpreting service providers or operate independently as freelancers. It is difficult to gauge the number of Auslan interpreters working outside of the Deaf Societies and Territory agencies. Most stakeholders consulted considered 80% to 90% of Auslan interpreters would be registered with a Deaf Society or Territory interpreting agency.

Table 5 shows the distribution of accredited versus active interpreters using Deaf Society and Territory Auslan interpreting agency data across all States and Territories at each accreditation level.³⁰

Table 5: Number of Auslan interpreters, by State/Territory and accreditation level³¹

State	Level 3 (Interpreter)		Level 2 (Para-professional)		Unaccredited
	Accredited (NAATI data)	Active (Deaf Society and Territory agency data)	Accredited (NAATI data)	Active (Deaf Society and Territory agency data)	Active (Deaf Society and Territory agency data)
New South Wales	18	15	120	66	17
Victoria	19	18	104	64	0
Queensland	10	12	50	26	9
Western Australia	6	5	65	14	0
South Australia	5	3	22	9	3
Tasmania	0	2	15	19	9
ACT	1	0	14	2	5
NT	0	0	0	2	2
Total	59	55	390	202	45

³⁰ Auslan interpreters accredited by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters in one State may be practising in another State.

³¹ Note that stakeholder advice suggests that an additional 10% to 20% of active Auslan interpreters may work as freelancers or with providers other than the Deaf Societies and territory interpreting agencies. This would take the estimated national number of active accredited Auslan interpreters to around 350.

Table 6 shows the number of active Auslan interpreters in metropolitan, regional and remote locations for each State and Territory, based on data provided by Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies.

Table 6: Number of active³² interpreters by State/Territory and region

State	Metro	Regional	Remote	Total
New South Wales	60	38	0	98
Victoria	80	2	0	82
Queensland	35	5	7	47
Western Australia	16	2	1	19
South Australia	15	0	0	15
Tasmania*	-	26	4	30
ACT*	7	-	-	7
NT*	-	-	4	4
Total	213	73	16	302

* Based on the ABS Accessibility and Remoteness Index of Australia, Tasmania is deemed to be completely regional or remote, ACT is deemed to be completely metropolitan and NT is deemed to be completely remote.

Combining the data on regional distribution of Auslan users and Auslan interpreters indicates that:

- ◆ in metropolitan areas, 213 active Auslan interpreters service the needs of an estimated 4,661 Deaf Auslan users, i.e. 46 per 1000;
- ◆ in regional areas, 73 active Auslan interpreters service the needs of an estimated 1,244 Deaf Auslan users, i.e. 59 per 1000; and
- ◆ in remote areas, 16 active Auslan interpreters service the needs of an estimated 595 Deaf Auslan users, i.e. 27 per 1000.

These figures are a guide only. They would appear to show similar availability of interpreters in metropolitan and regional areas but lower coverage in remote areas. The figures may overstate availability in regional and remote areas in that they treat all Auslan interpreters as being equally available. Interpreters in regional and remote areas are likely to spend more time travelling between jobs and are less likely to work full-time hours than their metropolitan counterparts³³. However, some interpreters in metropolitan centres travel to regional areas when needed.

To measure the extent to which interpreting needs are being met across Australia, the Deaf Auslan user survey sought direct input from Auslan users in metropolitan, regional and remote areas as to their level of demand for interpreting services and the extent to which they were able to access professional interpreters.

³² Based on Deaf Society and Territory Auslan interpreting agency figures.

³³ Interview feedback with Deaf Societies and interpreters was consistent about the amount of travel required in regional and remote areas and that almost all full-time interpreting positions were in metropolitan areas.

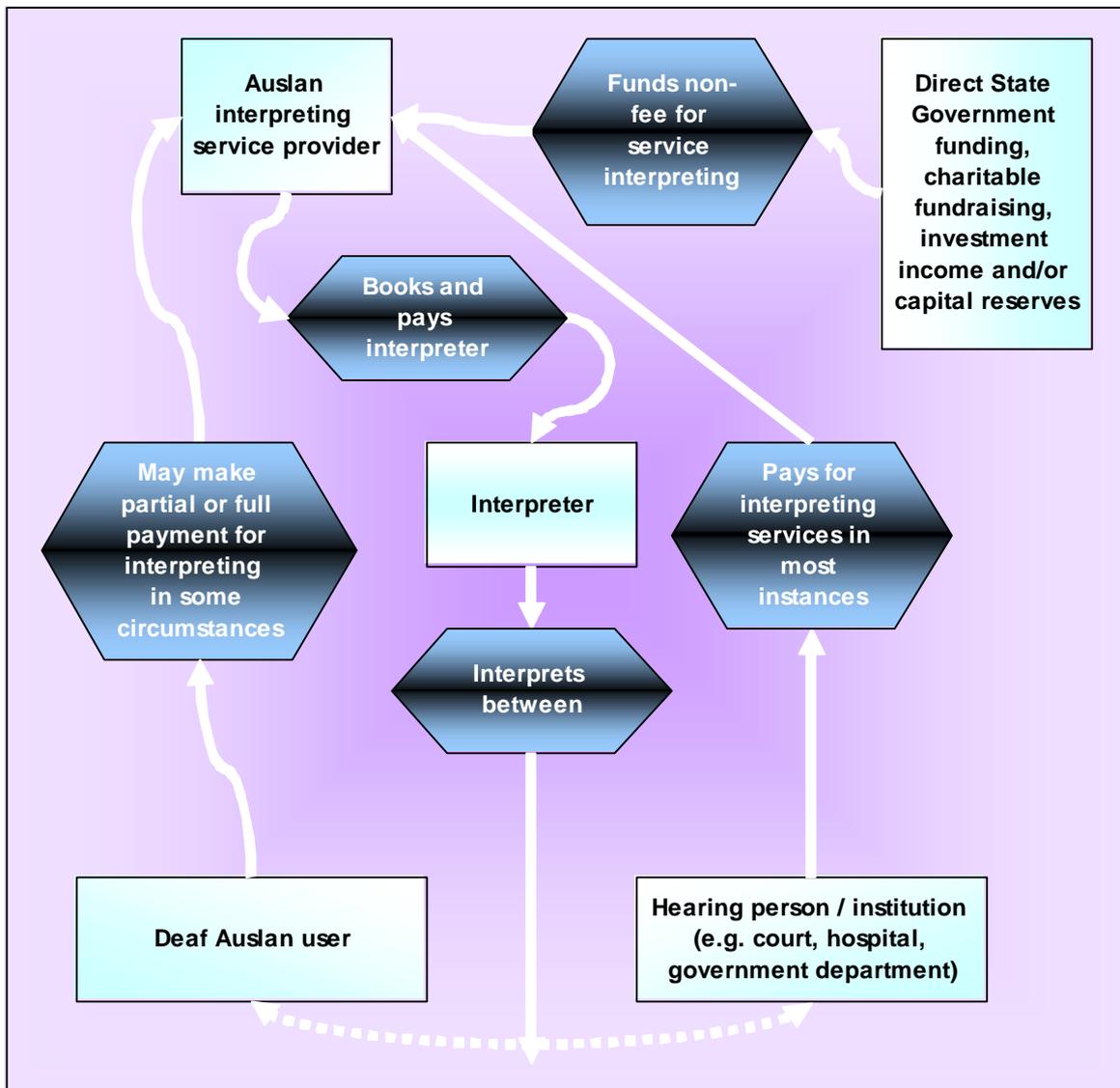
III. Supply of Auslan interpreters

A. Auslan interpreting service providers

Role of Auslan interpreting service providers

Auslan interpreters are typically booked via interpreting agencies (Auslan interpreting service providers). The role of Auslan interpreting service providers is illustrated in Figure 16.

Figure 16: Relationship between Auslan interpreting service providers, interpreters and consumers and funders of Auslan interpreting services



In most instances, the hearing person who requires an interpreter contacts the Auslan interpreting service provider to book and pay for an interpreter. Ideally, the Auslan interpreting service provider will select an interpreter whose skills and background are appropriate to the occasion of service. For example, a medical consultation will require an interpreter with a high level of interpreting skill (Level 3 interpreter), an understanding of medical terminology and often the same gender as the patient. To cover the administrative costs associated with operating the booking service, the Auslan interpreting service provider will charge a higher rate to the client than it pays to the interpreter. The rate paid by the hearing client can be twice the amount paid to the Auslan interpreter, although rates and margins vary significantly across providers.

Minimum interpreter call-out fees charged by State Deaf Societies and the Territory Auslan interpreting agencies are based on a two hour appointment time. This equates to a charge of \$165 in NSW; \$123.20 in Victoria; \$114.40 in Queensland; \$110 in South Australia; \$110 in Western Australia; \$82.50 in Tasmania; \$132 in the ACT and \$66 in the NT.

Deaf Auslan user views on the effectiveness of Auslan interpreting service providers

From an Auslan user perspective, the key services delivered by interpreting agencies are:

- ◆ finding interpreters that meet their needs (e.g. have the necessary skills and background to effectively interpret in the particular setting for which they are being engaged); and
- ◆ booking Auslan interpreters (e.g. being able to provide an interpreter when and where required).

Figure 17 shows how surveyed Deaf Auslan users rated the effectiveness of interpreting agencies on these two dimensions of service.

Figure 17: How good are interpreting agencies (e.g. Deaf Societies) at:

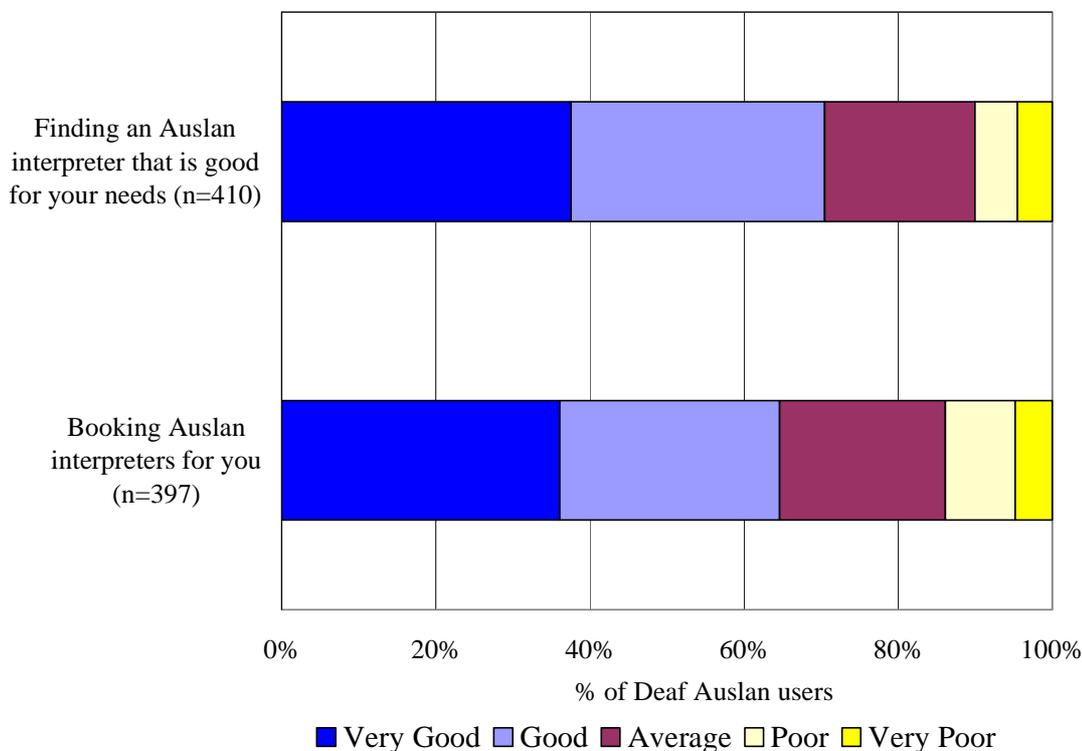


Figure 17 shows that nearly three quarters of Deaf Auslan users rated interpreting agencies as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ in relation to finding an interpreter that met their needs and only 10% indicated they were dissatisfied with this aspect of service (by giving a “poor” or “very poor” rating). Comments from surveyed Auslan users indicate that the key areas of dissatisfaction are:

- ◆ the quality of interpreters from Auslan interpreting service providers;

They never send interpreters that suit my needs. They use unqualified interpreters.

- ◆ lack of interpreter choice and matching to individual needs; and

Where we live doesn't have a lot of choices. There are only a couple of interpreters so we take what we can get and when we can get it.

- ◆ difficulties in finding interpreters for rural areas.

Very difficult to book interpreter to travel to country.

Figure 17 (previous page) shows that two thirds of Deaf Auslan users rated interpreting agencies as ‘good’ or ‘very good’ in relation to booking an interpreter, while 15% indicated they were dissatisfied with this aspect of service. Comments indicate that the key areas of dissatisfaction are:

- ◆ inability to book interpreters at short notice;

Often had to wait at least 2 weeks to make an appointment - none available for emergency.

- ◆ interpreters not being available when needed;

Sometimes booked out! Not enough interpreters.

- ◆ some lack of organisation skills by interpreting agencies; and

Their agencies systems are very slow. They use paperworks instead of computers (which they can't afford) can mess up with the date or time.

- ◆ interpreters cancelling at the last minute or not showing up to the appointment.

Once booked, it can be cancelled at short notice by interpreters themselves.

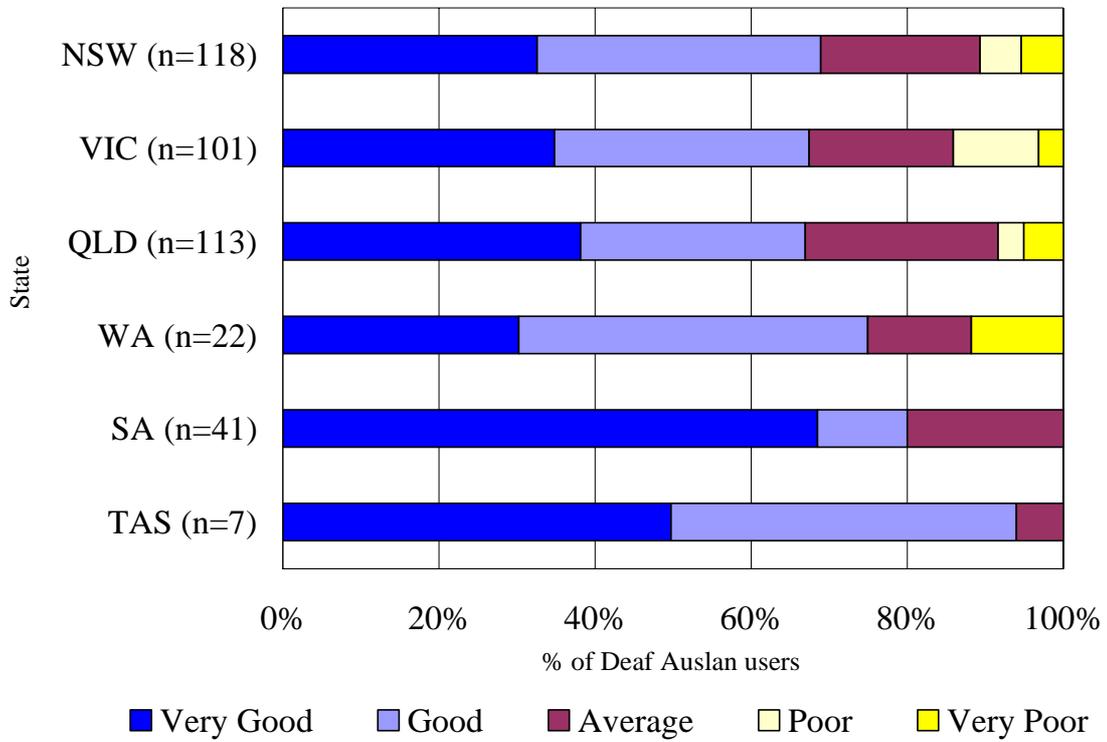
Since the user survey cited Deaf Societies as an example of an interpreting agency, Auslan user views probably largely reflect Deaf people’s experiences with the Deaf Societies, rather than other service providers. Interpreters who worked for multiple agencies typically indicated that, amongst service providers, the Deaf Societies were best at effectively matching and booking interpreters with the appropriate level of skill and background. A number indicated that some Auslan interpreting service providers (particularly providers who catered for a broad range of languages) did not prioritise matching users’ needs with interpreter skills and that this adversely affected the quality of interpreting provided. Some stakeholders considered that some public sector language service providers provided a poor quality service (including using under-qualified interpreters) compared with the Deaf Societies.

Against this, some public sector language providers (such as those servicing public hospitals) noted that the Deaf Society interpreter fees were considerably higher (sometimes two to three times higher) and that public sector agencies had established their own panels of interpreters to reduce operating costs, and in an attempt to ensure availability. Some Auslan users also commented on high interpreter fees and that this presented a barrier to access.

Not enough competitive agencies - one agency has the monopoly therefore service not always best, cheapest etc.

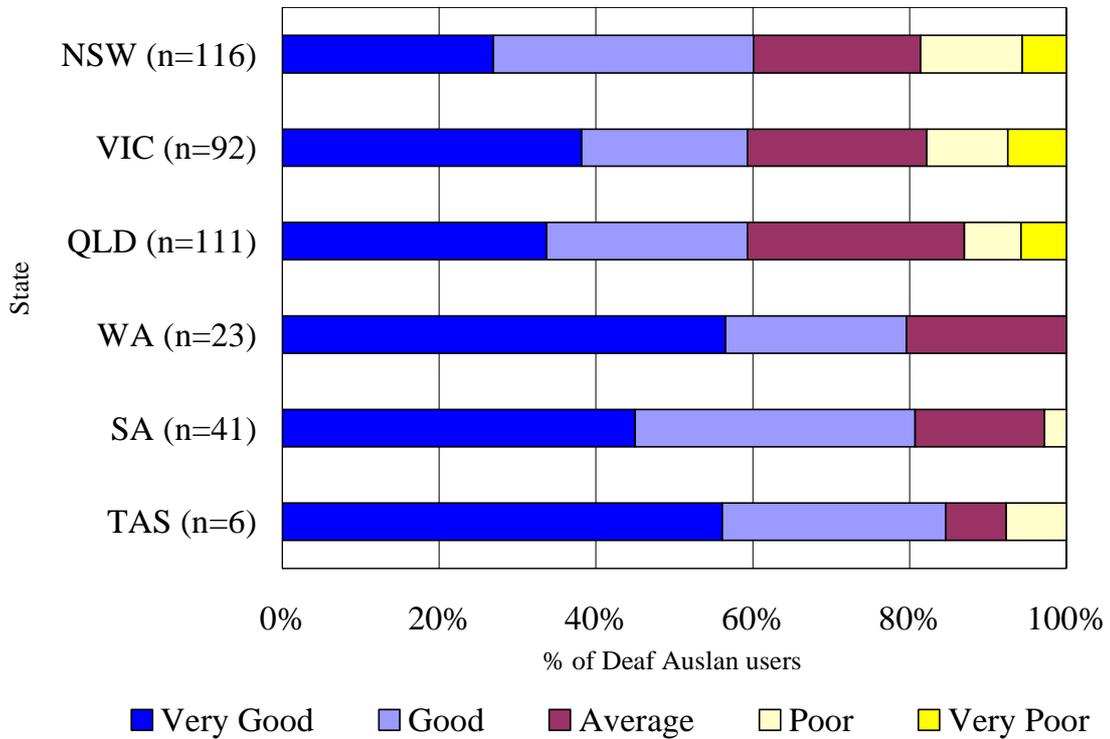
Figure 18 and Figure 19 show the Auslan user ratings of interpreting agencies across States.

Figure 18: How good are interpreting agencies (e.g. Deaf Societies) at finding an Auslan interpreter that is good for your needs?



Note: ACT and NT not included due to small sample size.

Figure 19: How good are interpreting agencies (e.g. Deaf Societies) at booking Auslan interpreters for you?

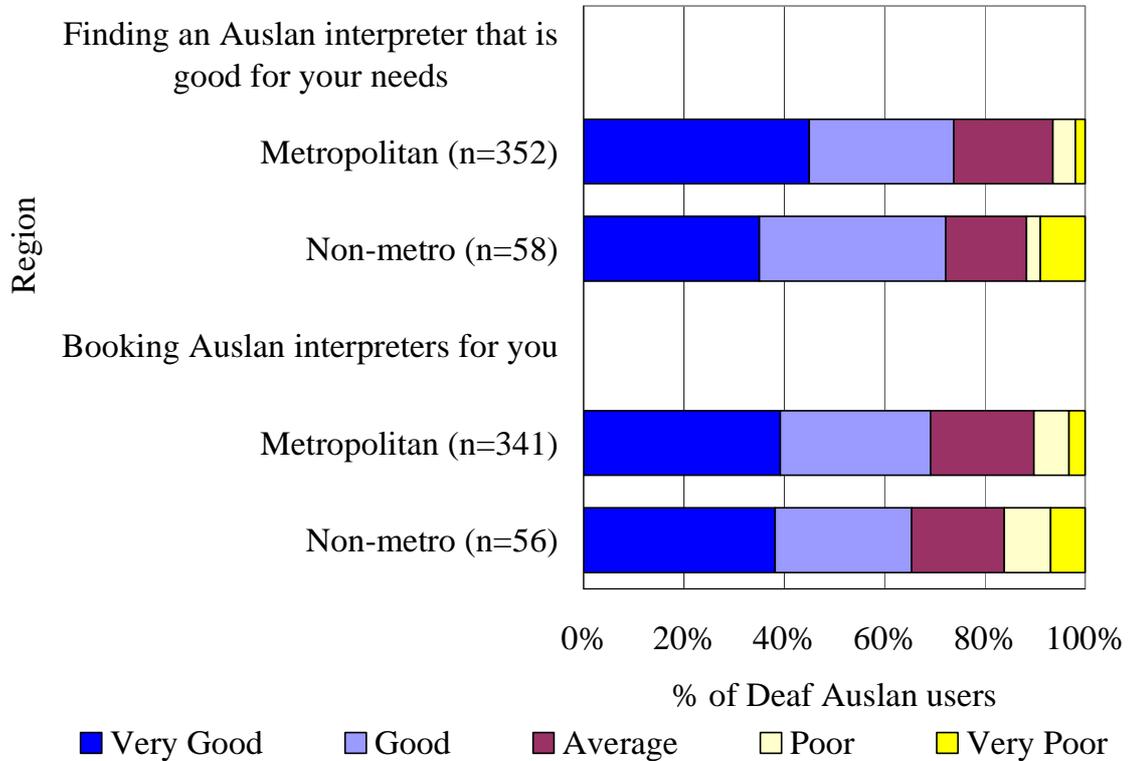


Note: ACT and NT not included due to small sample size.

Interpreting agencies in NSW, Victoria and Queensland are generally rated less favourably than those in Tasmania, South Australia and Western Australia.

Figure 20 shows the Auslan user ratings of interpreting agencies in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. While ratings of interpreting agencies were slightly lower in non-metropolitan areas, this difference is not statistically significant.

Figure 20: Respondent ratings of interpreting agencies (e.g. Deaf Societies)



B. Issues influencing the supply of professional Auslan interpreters

Telephone interviews were conducted with 35 Auslan interpreters, raising issues that may affect the number of people entering and remaining in the profession. These issues are outlined below.

Nature of employment for Auslan interpreters

Interpreters interviewed reported that there were very few full-time jobs available for Auslan interpreters. At the same time, some stakeholders identified the high level of repetitive actions involved in Auslan interpreting and the associated risk of Occupational Overuse Syndrome as a potential limitation to the number of hours that a person could undertake work of this nature.

Interpreters also identified limited opportunities for ongoing part-time employment within the industry. As a result, over 90% of Auslan interpreters work on a casual basis. Almost all have multiple employers to ensure they receive enough work, particularly if interpreting is their primary source of income.

The demand for interpreting was reported as being seasonal, reflecting the fluctuations in demand for interpreting in educational institutions over the academic year. Many interpreters described the work as better suited to being a hobby or to 'top up' other income.

There are no award conditions for Auslan interpreters and as casual or contract workers, many do not receive paid leave. While generally Auslan interpreters must be booked for a two hour minimum period, some interpreters indicated that travel expenses and time taken to prepare for complex matters are often unpaid.

Factors affecting entry into the profession

Interpreters and some Auslan interpreting service providers identified the limited availability of training opportunities for current and potential Auslan interpreters as a major issue affecting the supply of interpreters. A large number of interpreters indicated they had learnt Auslan through family or friends and that there are limited courses available for people who want to study Auslan. Courses are usually only available in capital cities and are held infrequently.

- ◆ The Queensland Deaf Society indicated up until last year there had been no interpreter courses run in Queensland for 10 years.
- ◆ In New South Wales, courses in basic Auslan conversational skills are organised by the Deaf Education Network on an ongoing basis at a number of evening colleges. More comprehensive courses are available through TAFEs. An Auslan Bridging Course has also been offered in one TAFE region approximately six times since 1995. It focuses on extending Auslan and English vocabularies and is intended as preparation for undertaking a Diploma of Interpreting.
- ◆ Diploma and advanced diploma courses in Auslan interpreting are offered depending on demand by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology and Macquarie University (which also offers a post-graduate diploma).

Government agencies generally require that interpreters be accredited. Auslan interpreters obtain accreditation either by completing an approved course or by passing an examination held by the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters. Some stakeholders identified the cost of gaining accreditation – either through sitting the examination or undertaking an approved course – as a disincentive.

Factors affecting ongoing participation in the profession

Once accredited, Auslan interpreters are not required to undertake ongoing assessment or training. This allows people to retain accreditation and continue in practice even though they may not have maintained their skills. Some interpreters interviewed indicated that this meant there was little incentive to attend professional development training and

workshops.³⁴ As discussed above, other disincentives for ongoing skills development include limited opportunities for training and professional development (as well as the costs associated with undertaking this). For most interpreters, there is little recognition through salary of experience and/or commitment to upgrading through professional development.³⁵

Interpreters also noted that, in some cases, interpreting that should be undertaken by Level 3 interpreters – such as court proceedings, conferences and high-level negotiations – is undertaken by Level 2 interpreters. This was often due to the lack of availability of Level 3 interpreters. Some instances were also cited of unaccredited interpreters doing complex interpreting.

Although there are several fields that call for interpreters with specialised skills and knowledge (e.g. medical, legal, tertiary education), none of the interpreters interviewed worked only in one field. Most reported interpreting across numerous fields – although each had their likes and dislikes. This generalisation of skills and inability to specialise was seen by some interpreters to be a barrier to developing a career within the industry.

Professional development is a key focus of the Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association, which is the main professional body for Auslan interpreters. The Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association also writes guidelines for codes of ethics, interpreting in educational settings (TAFEs and universities) and occupational health and safety. Recently the Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association has been developing closer links with the Australian Institute of Interpreters and Translators, expanding opportunities for Auslan interpreters to undertake small business training and workshops on interpreting in different industry sectors, such as health and business.

³⁴ The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters has published a discussion paper on its website which seeks comments on its proposed plans for continued accreditation/reaccreditation. Under the proposal, interpreters would need to renew their accreditation every 3 (Level 2) or 5 (Level 3) years. If persons seeking continuing accreditation were unable to show evidence of regular and frequent practice, as well as attendance at appropriate professional development courses, they could be required to sit an examination. In addition, there would be greater emphasis on encouraging Level 2 para-professionals to upgrade to Level 3 interpreters.

³⁵ The WA Deaf Society recognises experience and qualifications in its interpreter pay rates.

C. Cost of providing Auslan interpreting services

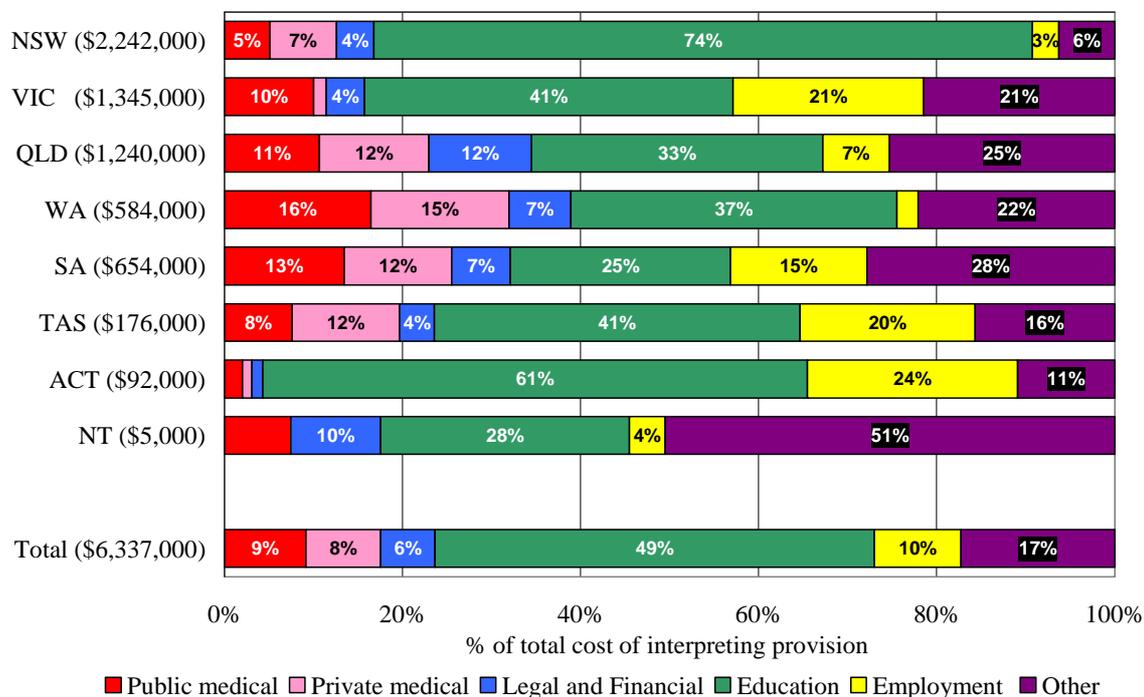
In 2002-03, the estimated total cost of provision of Auslan interpreting services across Australia was at least \$6.3 million.

- ◆ Auslan interpreting service providers were asked for information on the cost of providing Auslan interpreting services. These costs include payments to interpreters and administrative costs incurred in providing the service. Administrative costs were not specified and would vary across service providers, but would typically include costs of booking interpreters, a portion of rent and other overheads for the service providers' premises and the goods and services tax (GST). However, the Victorian, South Australian, and Western Australian Deaf Societies advised that they did not include GST when calculating their costs or revenues and the New South Wales and Tasmanian Deaf Societies did not include GST in their costs.
- ◆ It is difficult to arrive at an exact figure because there are numerous purchasers and providers of Auslan interpreting services and State and Territory government agencies were not able to provide complete data in relation to Auslan interpreting provision.
- ◆ The estimates of total provision presented below and throughout this report are based on a combination of data received from Auslan interpreting service providers and State and Territory and Australian government agencies and, where data were unavailable, estimates based on average per capita spending in key service areas.³⁶ These estimates do not include interpreting provision by freelance interpreters, relatively small Auslan interpreting service providers and some larger Auslan interpreting service providers who were not able to provide data within the research timeframes.

³⁶ Around \$5.7 million (91%) of this total cost of provision estimate is based on data provided by Auslan interpreting service providers and State government agencies. The remainder has been estimated based on average per capita provision levels in other States and the estimated population of Deaf Auslan users in the State for which data are unavailable.

Figure 21 shows the cost of providing Auslan interpreting services in the key service areas in each State and Territory.

Figure 21: Cost of Auslan interpreting in Australia by State and Territory and interpreting context³⁷



Notes: The \$6.3 million estimate is approximate only as it was not possible to obtain data from all Auslan interpreting service providers. The true figure is likely to be higher. Some amounts in this Figure have been derived. “Employment” includes interpreting at work and interpreting while looking for work. “Other” includes interaction with government departments (such as Centrelink) and interpreting at community and social events.

As illustrated in Figure 21 (above), there is considerable variation across States and Territories in relation to the share of expenditure in different service areas. For example, education accounted for around half of all Auslan interpreting expenditure nationally, but ranged from 25% of expenditure in South Australia to 74% in New South Wales. This variation reflects both differences in priorities between States and the different fees charged in some States for interpreting in particular types of services. Auslan interpreting in each of the service areas covered in Figure 21 above is discussed in Chapters V through VII of this report.

³⁷ ‘Public medical’ includes public hospitals, community health centres and mental health counselling. ‘Private medical’ refers to services provided by general practitioners and medical specialists, private hospitals and consultations with other health professionals.

D. Funding of Auslan interpreting services

Auslan interpreting services are variously funded through a combination of:

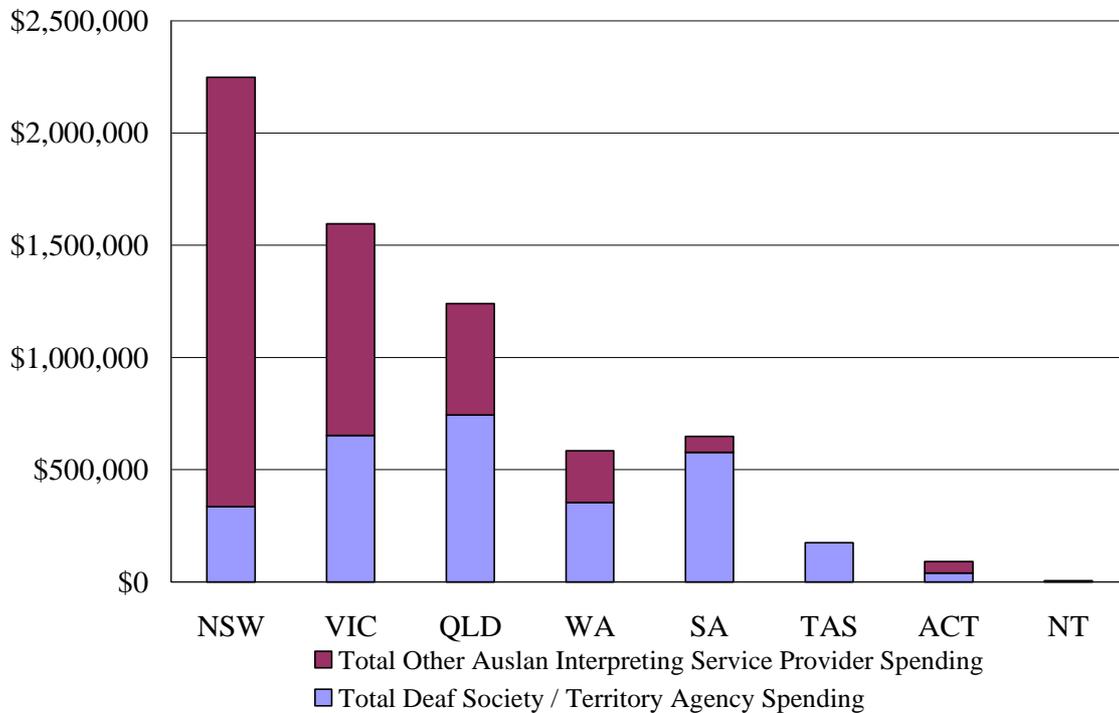
- ◆ direct State government funding of Deaf Societies and other Auslan interpreting service providers;
- ◆ fees charged by Auslan interpreting service providers to government and private users of interpreting services;
- ◆ direct purchasing of interpreting services (from freelance interpreters or via panel arrangements) by government agencies (e.g. many TAFEs, universities and public hospitals) drawing upon Commonwealth and State government funding for accessibility purposes;³⁸ and
- ◆ some charitable fund raising by Deaf Societies, and investment income and/or charitable reserves.

Most Deaf Societies provide some interpreting free-of-charge or at reduced rates in circumstances where there is no full fee paying client. In these circumstances, the cost of interpreting is met (or partially met) from direct funding from the State government (where available), charitable fund-raising, investment income and/or capital reserves. As discussed in Chapter V, free Deaf Society interpreting accounts for the bulk of interpreting at private medical appointments. To some extent, Deaf Societies charge higher fees to paying clients to cross-subsidise free or reduced-rate services.

³⁸ The Commonwealth, State and Territory governments fund agencies to provide accessible services (e.g. health, education) to the public. Accessibility includes provision of aids, equipment, interpreters or other assistance an individual may require (e.g. an Auslan interpreter for a Deaf person).

Figure 22 provides a State/Territory breakdown of the total cost of Auslan interpreting during 2002-03 according to whether it was by the Deaf Society or Territory Auslan interpreting agency, or another organisation.

Figure 22: Estimated total cost of Auslan interpreting (2002-03)



Of the approximately \$6.3 million³⁹ spent on providing Auslan interpreting services across Australia in 2002-03, approximately \$3.3 million was provided by Auslan interpreting service providers other than Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies. The majority of this was interpreting in the areas of education and public medical consultations. This expenditure was largely funded by State and Commonwealth governments, either directly through publicly funded organisations such as universities, TAFE colleges or public hospitals, or through agencies that were paid by government organisations to provide Auslan interpreting services.

³⁹ Note that as it was impossible to obtain expenditure figures from all Auslan interpreting service providers it is likely that the true figure is higher than \$6.3 million.

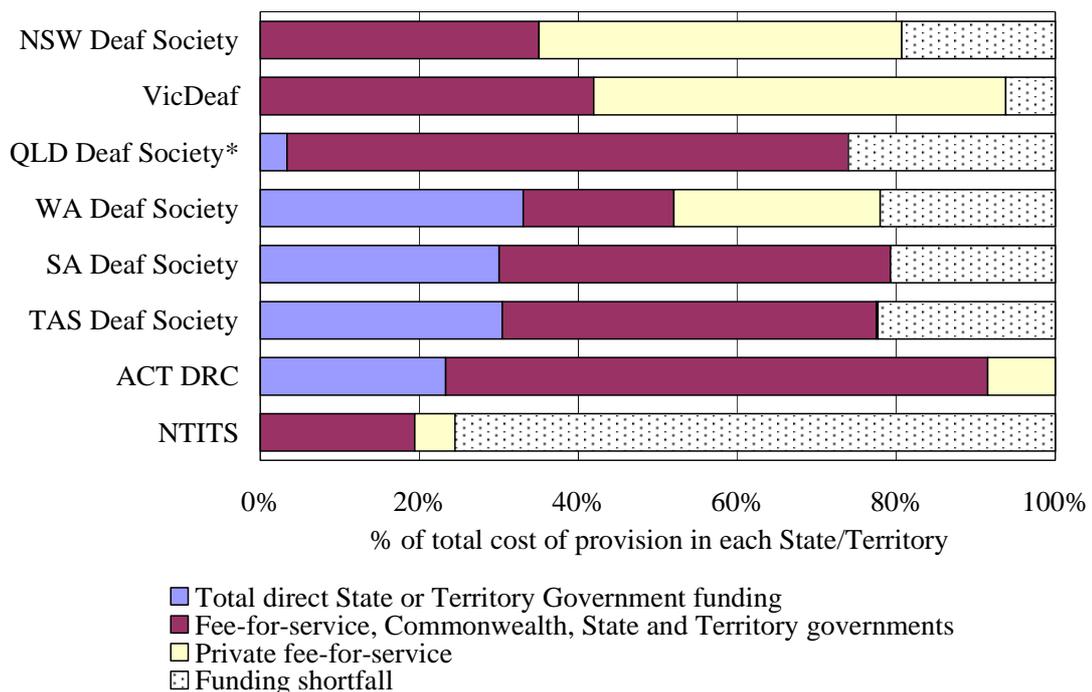
Table 7 shows the overall financial situation reported by State Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting services in 2002-03.

Table 7: Funding of State Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting services (2002-03)

	Total
Cost of provision of Deaf Society Auslan interpreting services	\$2,955,114
Fee-for-service - public (Commonwealth and State)	\$1,410,260
Fee-for-service - private sector	\$621,448
Direct funding of Deaf Societies by State Governments	\$379,499
Deficit	\$543,907

Figure 23 shows the financial situation of individual Deaf Societies and the ACT Deafness Resource Centre (ACTDRC) and the NT Interpreting and Translating Service (NTITS).

Figure 23: Funding of Deaf Society and Territory Auslan interpreting services, 2002-03



Note: Total provision of Auslan interpreting by the Northern Territory Interpreting and Translating Service in 2002-03 amounted to less than \$5,000. All but \$350 of this was funded by the Territory government. Unlike other States and Territories, the operating deficit for the NT interpreting service is met out of NT government consolidated revenue.

* Figures for the Queensland Deaf Society do not include around \$100,000 in State government funding given to the Far North Queensland Interpreting Service, which, at the time of writing, is merging with the Queensland Deaf Society.

Figure 23 shows that the mix of funding sources and operating deficit varies considerably across Australia.

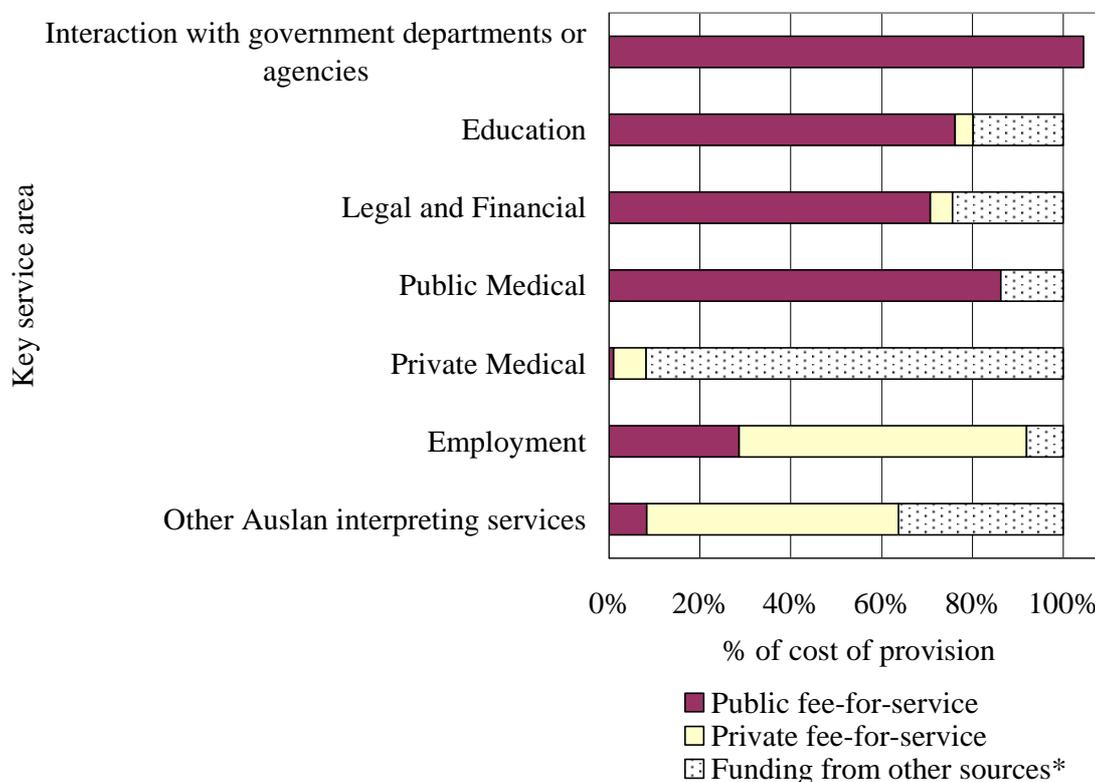
- ◆ Victoria and New South Wales — no direct State government funding was received by Deaf Societies, with all income being received through fees charged for services provided to private or public organisations. Slightly more than half of these fees were received from private organisations.
- ◆ South Australia and Tasmania⁴⁰ — direct State government funding accounted for around one third of expenditure in 2002-03, while no fees were recouped from private organisations for the provision of interpreting services.
- ◆ Queensland — the picture is similar to South Australia and Tasmania but with a smaller proportion of direct State government funding.
- ◆ Western Australia and the ACT — direct State or Territory government funding accounted for around one third of the expenditure in 2002-03. Some income was obtained from fees charged to private organisations.

All of the State-based Deaf Societies recorded deficits in 2002-03. Deficits were funded from capital reserves, with some resources coming from charitable fund raising and also cross-subsidy using revenue raised from other activities. The level of deficits was generally around 15% to 20% of expenditure, except for Victoria. The Victorian Deaf Society deficit was lower as a result of its practice of only providing very limited free interpreting services.

⁴⁰ The Tasmanian Deaf Society received direct funding of \$243,301 from the Tasmanian State government in 2002-03 to cover a range of services including: providing counselling support for Deaf adults; providing interpreter support for Deaf people; producing pamphlets and brochures for Deaf people, their families and the community; maintaining a range of assistive devices and technologies for short term loan; facilitating peer support and other social activities; and promoting and publicising issues affecting the Deaf community. The Tasmanian Deaf Society estimated that \$53,000 related to its interpreting activities based on the percentage of staff-time spent on interpreting.

Figure 24 shows how interpreting is funded across key service areas and, in particular, the percentage funded through public or private fee-for-service charges. The remainder must be funded from other general funding sources (including direct State government funding, cross-subsidies from other Deaf Society activities or out of Deaf Society capital reserves).

Figure 24: Funding for each key service area by Australian Deaf Societies⁴¹



* Funding from others sources may include cross-subsidisation from other interpreting contexts, funding from State or Territory governments, charitable fundraising or Deaf Society capital reserves.

Figure 24 shows that, with the exception of interactions with government agencies, interpreting in most key service areas requires additional funding beyond fee-for-service charges.

- ◆ The largest shortfall between the cost of provision and the fee-for-service recouped in 2002-03 was for interpreting in private medical settings.
- ◆ Interpreting in employment-related matters is almost fully funded by fee-for-service arrangements.

The funding of interpreting in individual service areas is discussed in more detail in Chapters V to VII of this report.

⁴¹ Interpreting for government departments and agencies is an area where Deaf Societies charge higher fees to cross-subsidise free or reduced-rate services for other matters requiring Auslan interpreting. The cross-subsidies cannot be attributed directly to other key service areas, but are taken into account to reduce the shortfalls between the total cost of provision and amount collected through fees.

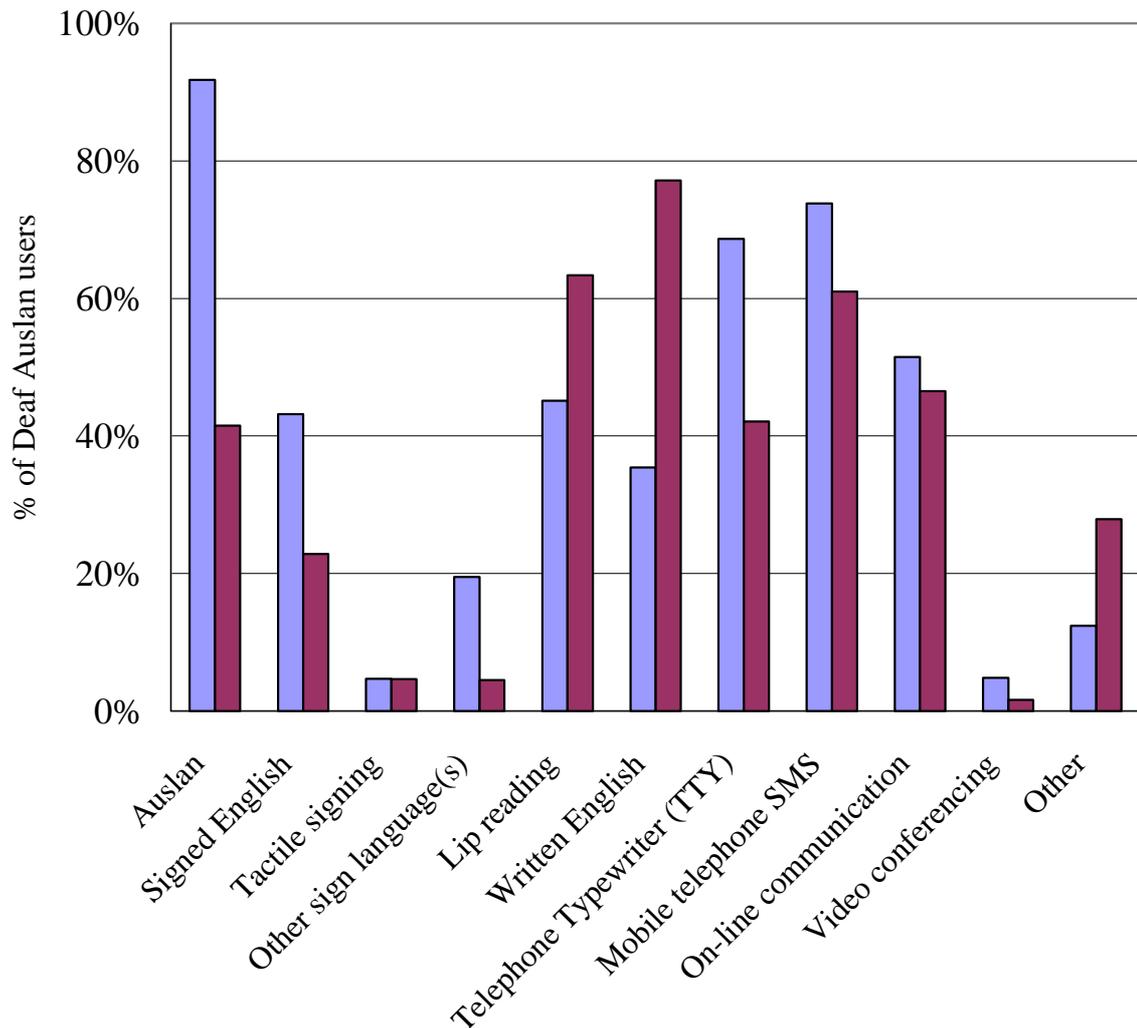
IV. Demand for Auslan interpreting services

A. *Communication methods used by Deaf people*

Deaf people typically use a number of communication methods, with the choice of method strongly influenced by whether they are communicating with another Deaf person or a hearing person. Figure 25 (following page) shows Deaf Auslan user survey results on methods of communication used by Deaf people when communicating with other Deaf people and with hearing people.

- ◆ When communicating with other Deaf people, 92% use Auslan. Over two thirds use mobile phone short message service (SMS) followed by 42% who use telephone typewriters (TTY) to communicate with other Deaf people.
- ◆ When communicating with hearing people, over three quarters (77%) of Deaf people use written English, with lip-reading and SMS being the next most commonly used communication methods (used by 63% and 61%, respectively). Around half indicated that they used sign language to communicate with hearing people. (The most commonly cited ‘other’ communication method was by fax.)

Figure 25: Which of the following do you use to communicate?⁴²



- Which of the following do you use to communicate with **deaf** people?
- Which of the following do you use to communicate with **hearing** people?

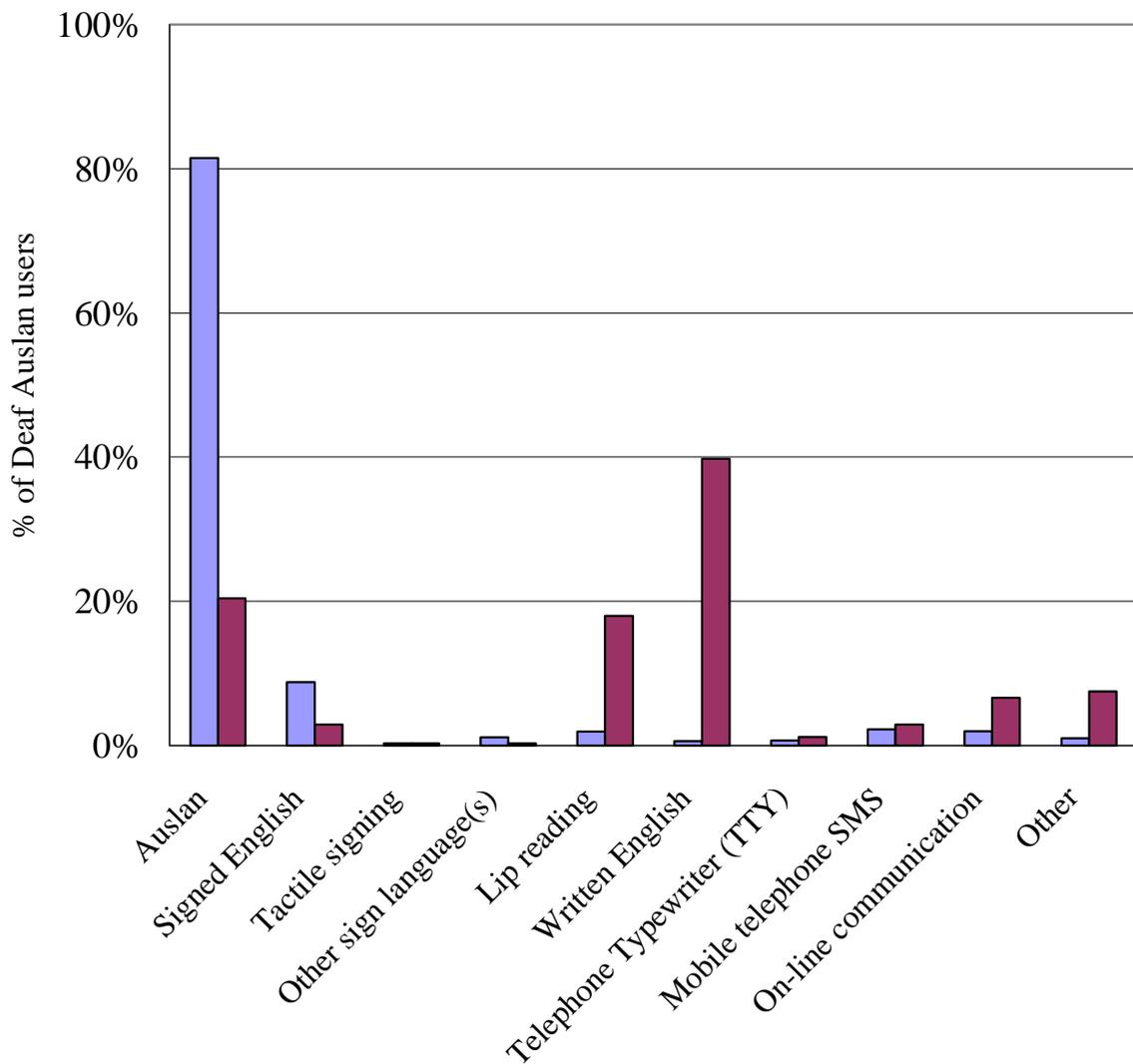
Note: Multiple response question

⁴² Note: Tactile interpreters interpret between Deaf and blind and hearing people. Tactile signing is where the person who is Deaf and blind places their hands over the hands of someone who is communicating using Auslan or signed English and receives the signed information through their hands. Some signs may need to be adapted to enable clear communication.

Proficiency and effectiveness in communication is a key issue for Deaf people. Figure 26 shows what Deaf people consider to be their best communication method.

- ◆ In communicating with other Deaf people, 82% stated that Auslan was their best way of communicating (that is, 89% of those who actually use Auslan considered this to be the best way to communicate).
- ◆ With hearing people, 40% stated that written English was their best way of communicating, followed by Auslan and lip-reading (cited by 20% and 18% of Deaf people respectively). These views may reflect the availability and/or accessibility of Auslan interpreters – many Deaf people indicated that written English was their ‘best’ way of communicating with hearing people because Auslan interpreters were not available or affordable.

Figure 26: Which of the following is your best way of communicating?



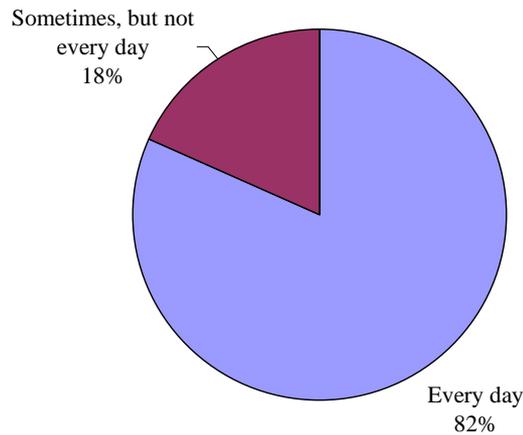
■ Which of the following is your best way to communicate with **deaf** people?

■ Which of the following is your best way to communicate with **hearing** people?

Note: Around 30% of respondents chose multiple responses for this single response question. Data from these respondents has not been used in this chart.

The Deaf Auslan user survey asked how frequently respondents used sign language to communicate. One percent indicated that they never used sign language to communicate. Such respondents are not Deaf signers and so were asked to skip all questions related to their need for Auslan interpreting and were excluded from the analysis of demand for Auslan interpreting services contained in this report. Figure 27 shows that most (82%) Deaf people use sign language every day to communicate.

Figure 27: How often do you use Auslan or other sign languages to communicate? (% of Deaf Auslan users)



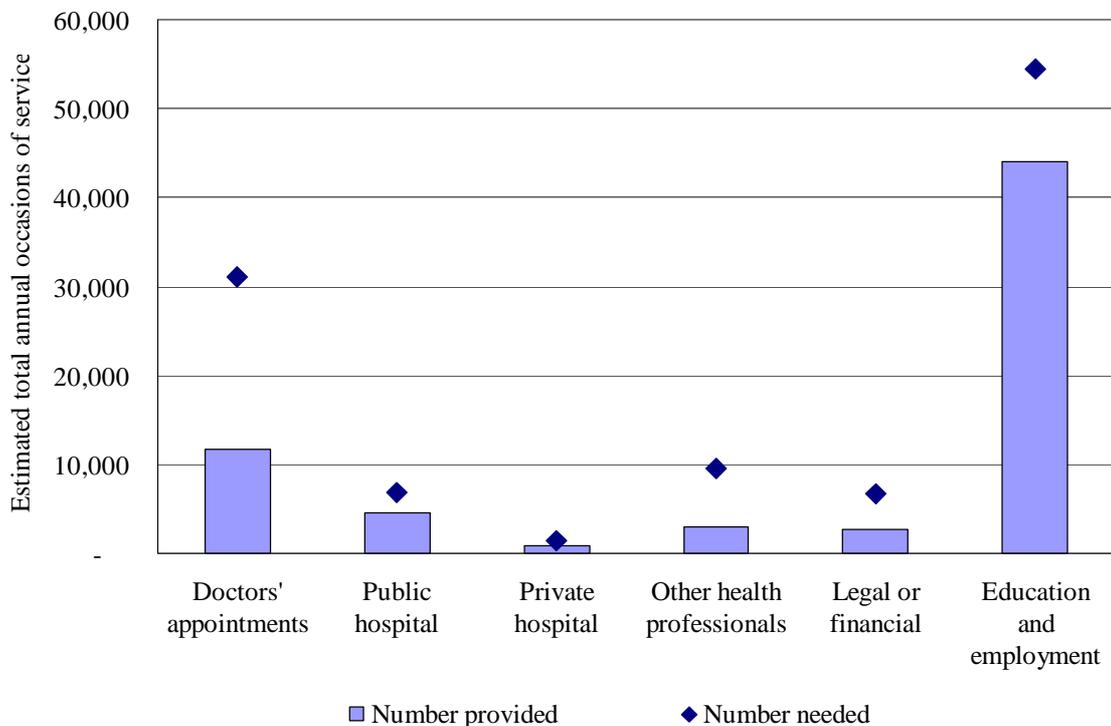
B. Demand for professional Auslan interpreters across key service areas

The Deaf Auslan user survey asked respondents to indicate how many times over the past 12 months they had consultations/meetings/appointments (occasions of service) in each of the key service areas. For each service area they were asked:

- ◆ how many times they were provided with a professional Auslan interpreter; and
- ◆ whether they were always able to get a professional interpreter when they needed one.

For each service area, Figure 28 shows the estimated total occasions of service where a professional interpreter was needed (the diamond) versus the estimated total occasions of service where a professional interpreter was provided (the blue bar).

Figure 28: Demand and supply of Auslan interpreting services



The Auslan user survey indicates that there were around 110,000 occasions over the past year where a professional Auslan interpreter was required in the key service areas. On 68,000 (61%) of these occasions, a professional Auslan interpreter was provided.

- ◆ Estimates calculated from responses to the Auslan user survey of professional interpreting provision across key service areas are broadly in line with the estimates based on data submitted by Auslan interpreting service providers. For example, 66% of the occasions on which users said that interpreting services had been supplied related to education/employment. As discussed in Chapter III.C, Auslan interpreting service provider data indicated that education and employment together accounted for 59% of the total expenditure on Auslan interpreting services in 2002-03 (see Figure 21).

Figure 28 above also shows that the level of unmet demand varies significantly across service areas.

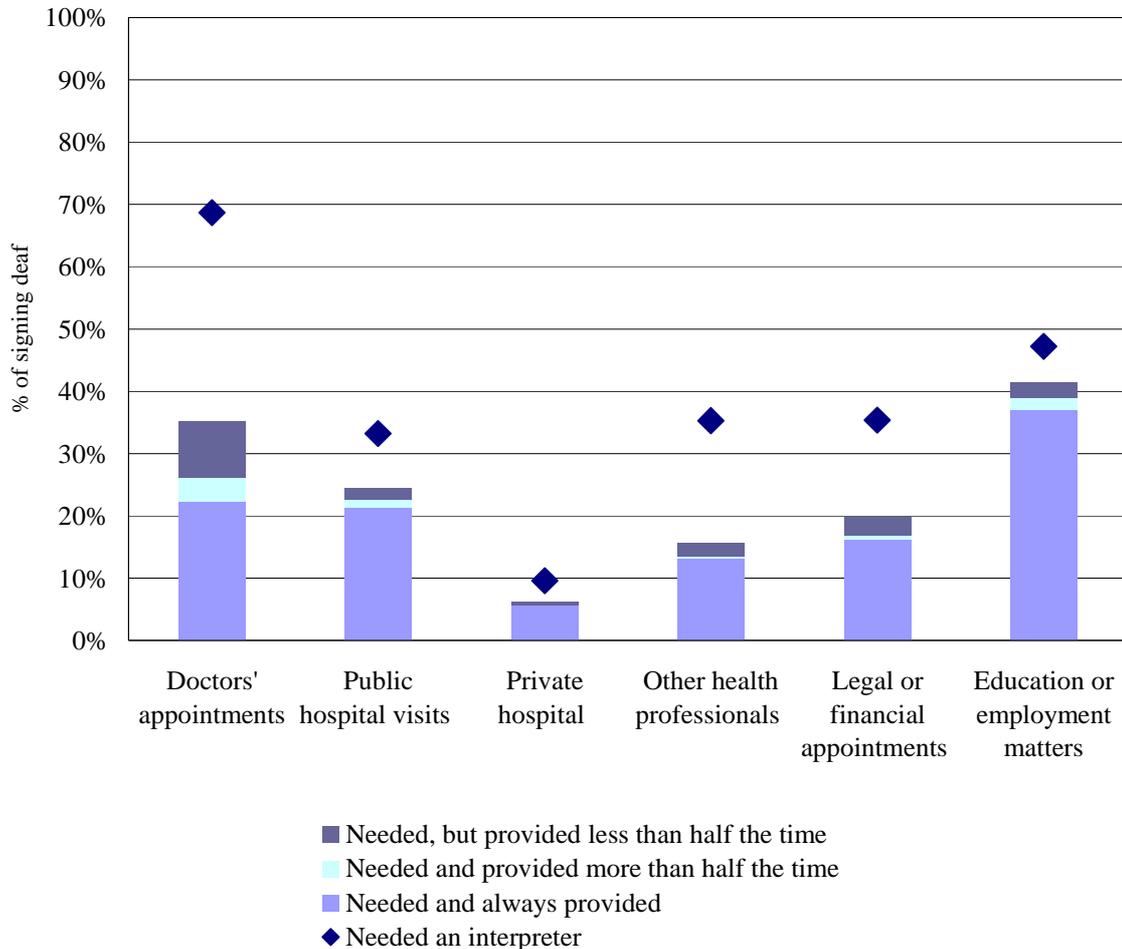
- ◆ The demand for professional Auslan interpreting is largest in relation to education and employment, with this service area accounting for one half of all demand. The bulk of this relates to interpreting at TAFEs and universities, where students require a high volume of interpreting assistance. Around 80% of the demand for interpreting in education and employment is met. This is higher than for any other service area.
- ◆ The next largest area of demand for professional Auslan interpreters relates to doctors' appointments. It accounts for around one quarter of total demand for Auslan interpreting. Only 38% of this demand was satisfied over the past 12 months. This represented a gap between demand and supply of approximately 19,500 occasions of service. This was the highest level of unmet need.
- ◆ Less than a third of the demand for professional Auslan interpreting at consultations with other health professionals (such as dentists, physiotherapists, acupuncturists, naturopaths) was met over the past 12 months.
- ◆ There was similar level of demand for professional interpreting at public hospitals and legal/financial consultations. Sixty six percent of Auslan interpreting demand at public hospitals was met, while 40% of demand relating to legal and financial matters was met.
- ◆ There was a very low level of demand for professional Auslan interpreting at private hospitals, reflecting the fact that only 12% of Deaf Auslan users responding to the survey had been to a private hospital in the last 12 months (compared with 49% for public hospitals). Fifty seven percent of the demand for professional Auslan interpreters at private hospital consultations was met over the past 12 months.

Figure 28 showed the absolute number of occasions at which professional interpreters were needed versus supplied. While this is a good measure of total demand and supply, it is by nature influenced by small numbers of Deaf persons who frequently use professional interpreting services. For example, the Auslan user survey indicated that 15% of Deaf Auslan users who required interpreting in educational or employment contexts accounted for around 75% of all instances for which interpreters were provided in these service areas in the past 12 months. These users include university and TAFE students who require a significant amount of professional interpreting assistance.

To provide a better representation of the experience of the average Deaf person, Figure 29 (following page) shows the proportion of Deaf Auslan users for each key service area who:

- ◆ required a professional interpreter at least once in the past 12 months (the diamond); and
- ◆ reported that they were able to get a professional interpreter at least some of the time (the coloured bars).

Figure 29: Proportion of Deaf people needing an Auslan interpreter vs. proportion provided with an interpreter across key service areas



Eighty seven percent of Deaf Auslan users had used a professional Auslan interpreter at least once in the last 12 months. Figure 29 shows that:

- ◆ the area in which most Deaf people (almost 70%) required professional Auslan interpreting services was doctors’ (general practitioners and specialists) appointments. However, around half of these people had never been provided with an interpreter;
- ◆ in contrast, of the 47% of Deaf people who required professional interpreting for education or employment matters only 12% had never had an interpreter provided; and
- ◆ a similar proportion of Deaf people (around 35%) required professional interpreting services for public hospitals as for other health professionals (i.e. other than doctors). However, the unmet need was around twice as high in relation to consultations with other health professionals.

The demand and supply of professional interpreting services in individual service areas is discussed in detail in Chapters V to VII of this report.

C. Demand for professional Auslan interpreters across other service areas

The Deaf Auslan user survey asked respondents to state whether in the last 12 months there were other occasions (i.e. not covered in the rest of the survey) when they needed a professional interpreter, but were unable to get one. They were also asked to explain the nature of these occasions and why they could not get an interpreter. One hundred and ninety four respondents (i.e. around one third) indicated that there were other occasions on which they required a professional interpreter, but were unable to get one. These other occasions included:

- ◆ family and social occasions, such as weddings or funerals;
- ◆ child related activities, such as school visits, school fetes, parent/teacher interviews, swimming lessons, parents' groups, and guardianship meetings;
- ◆ dealings with government agencies (e.g. Centrelink);
- ◆ purchasing goods and services or obtaining quotes;
- ◆ sporting related matters;
- ◆ community meetings, public speeches or live theatre performances;
- ◆ emergencies, such as motor vehicle accidents or roadside assistance; and
- ◆ religious activities such as church services or seminary lectures.

The primary reasons for not being able to obtain interpreters were:

- ◆ lack of interpreter availability;
- ◆ the costs involved; and
- ◆ the difficulty in booking an interpreter, especially at short notice.

In some cases, respondents said Auslan interpreters were not used because they were unaware of the availability of interpreting services or did not know how to book interpreters. For example the Australian Federation of Deaf Societies noted Deaf Societies generally provide free interpreting for funerals, although some do not publicise this. Other occasions – such as weddings or Deaf community group activities – may also qualify for free or reduced rate interpreting.

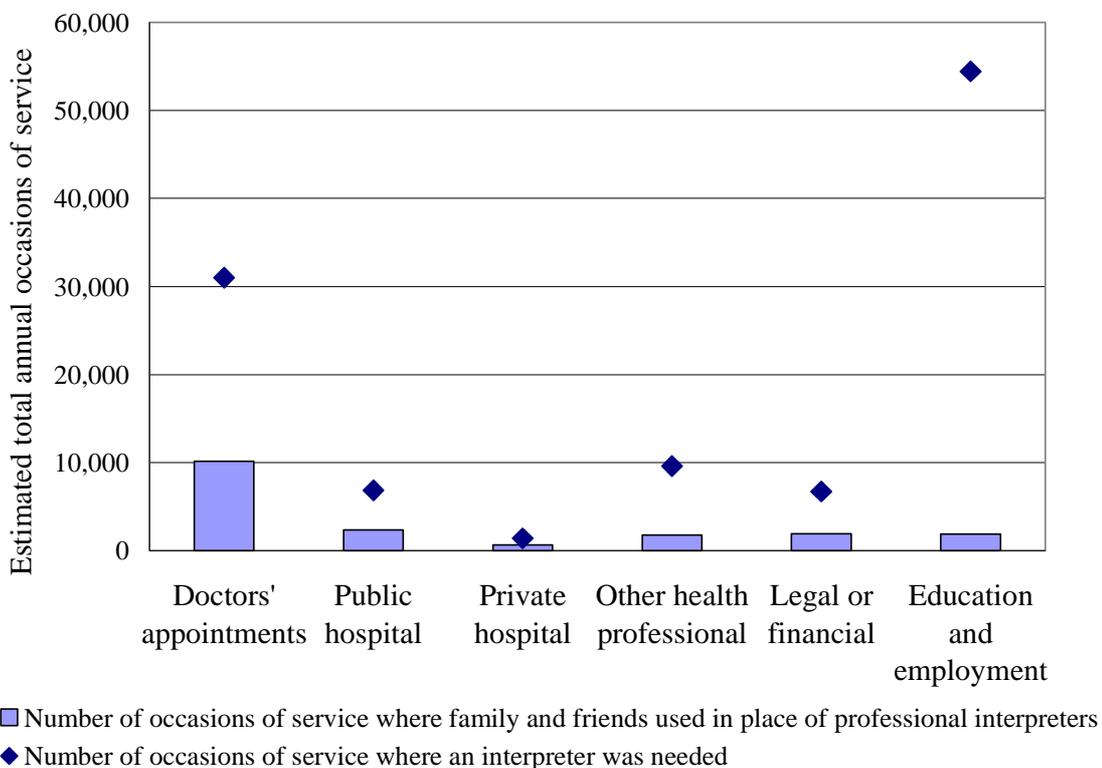
In some areas, the lack of awareness of interpreter availability was compounded by special issues. For example, some interpreters:

- ◆ will not interpret at funerals because of the often complex, specialised and emotive nature of interpreting in such an environment;
- ◆ preferred not to interpret at religious activities because they were not religious or they lacked the specialised skills/understanding of religious terminology.

D. Use of family members and friends as interpreters

The Deaf Auslan user survey asked respondents how many times in the last 12 months a family member or friend had interpreted for them. Figure 30 shows the estimated total occasions of service where a professional interpreter was needed (the diamond) versus the estimated total occasions of service where a family member or friend interpreted in place of a professional interpreter, that is when a professional interpreter was needed but could not be obtained (the blue bar), for each of the key service areas. It shows that family and friends provided most interpreting assistance at general practitioner and specialist appointments. As discussed in Section B, this was the area of greatest unmet need for professional interpreters. Family and friends interpreted at one third of doctors' appointments at which Deaf Auslan users needed an interpreter.

Figure 30: Interpreting assistance provided by family and friends in place of professional interpreters

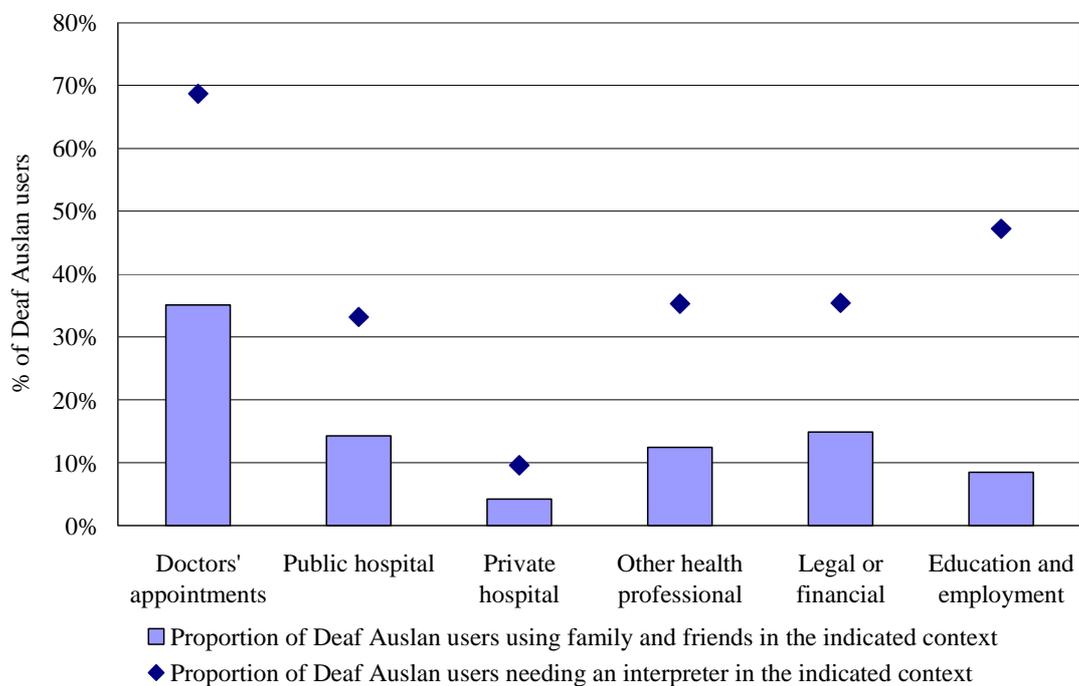


Note: These figures do not include those respondents who stated that they did not need a professional Auslan interpreter. Some of these respondents may have used family and friends to interpret for them at various appointments.

Around 70% of Deaf Auslan users said that they had used family or friends to interpret for them in the last 12 months. Figure 31 shows that:

- ◆ 35% of Deaf Auslan users had family members or friends interpret for them at least once in the last 12 months at a doctor’s appointment – slightly over half of those who required an interpreter at a doctor’s appointment over that period;
 - ◆ in contrast, 8% of Deaf Auslan users had family and friends interpret for them at least once in the last 12 months at an education or employment matter – or 18% of those who required an interpreter at an education or employment matter over that period.
- As discussed in the previous section, this service area has the highest level of provision of professional Auslan interpreters and a relatively low level of unmet need for professional interpreters.

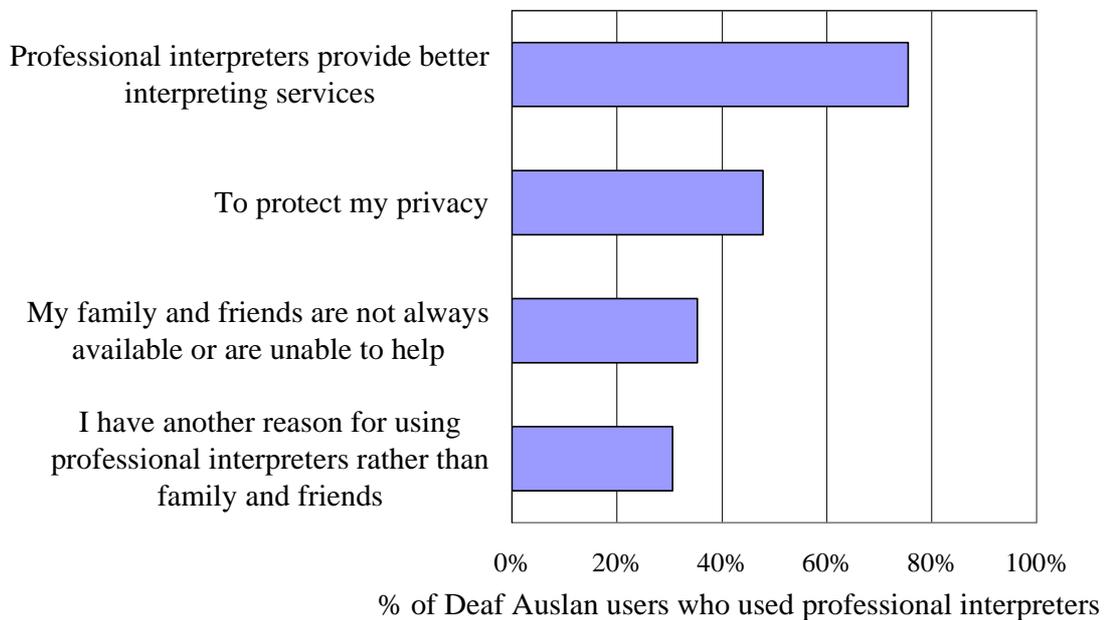
Figure 31: Interpreting assistance provided by family and friends



E. Deaf Auslan users’ views on the use of professional interpreters versus family and friends

Figure 32 shows that the main reason given by Deaf Auslan users for using professional interpreters rather than family members or friends was that professional interpreters provided a better interpreting service (cited by 76% of Deaf Auslan users). Almost one half cited “to protect my privacy” as a reason for using professional interpreters. Consistent with this, interviews with Auslan family members indicated that in many contexts (such as medical, legal and financial consultations) the family member did not consider it appropriate to interpret for privacy reasons.

Figure 32: Why do you use professional Auslan interpreters rather than your family and friends to interpret for you?



Note: multiple responses were possible.

Other reasons cited for using professional interpreters included:

- ◆ a desire by the Deaf person to remain independent;
- ◆ the Deaf person not wanting to be a burden on their family or friends; and
- ◆ the view that Deaf people have a right to use professional interpreters rather than family or friends.

Figure 33 shows the main reasons for using family and friends to interpret were:

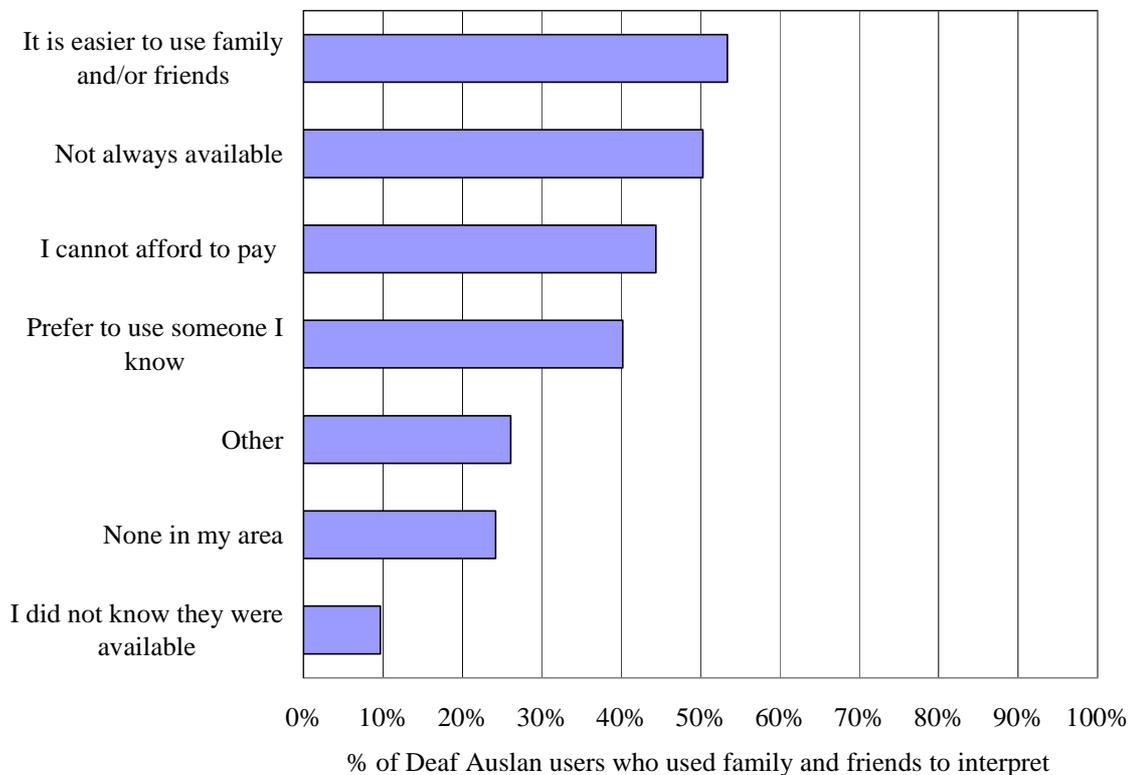
- ◆ convenience (cited by 53% of Deaf Auslan users);
- ◆ professional (non family member) interpreters not always being available (cited by 50%);
- ◆ not being able to afford a professional interpreter (cited by 44%); and
- ◆ a preference for using someone known to the Deaf person (cited by 40%).

Other reasons for using family and friends included privacy concerns and family understanding of the Deaf person’s communication techniques.

Around one quarter (24%) of Deaf Auslan users indicated that they use family and friends to interpret because there were no professional interpreters in their area.

- ◆ Thirty five percent of Deaf Auslan users in non-metropolitan areas who use family and friends to interpret for them indicated that this was because there were no professional interpreters in their area, compared with 20% of those in metropolitan areas.
- ◆ Thirty nine percent of Deaf Auslan users from Victoria stated they used family and friends to interpret because there were no professional interpreters in their area – the highest level across all States.

Figure 33: Why do you use family and friends rather than professional interpreters to interpret for you?



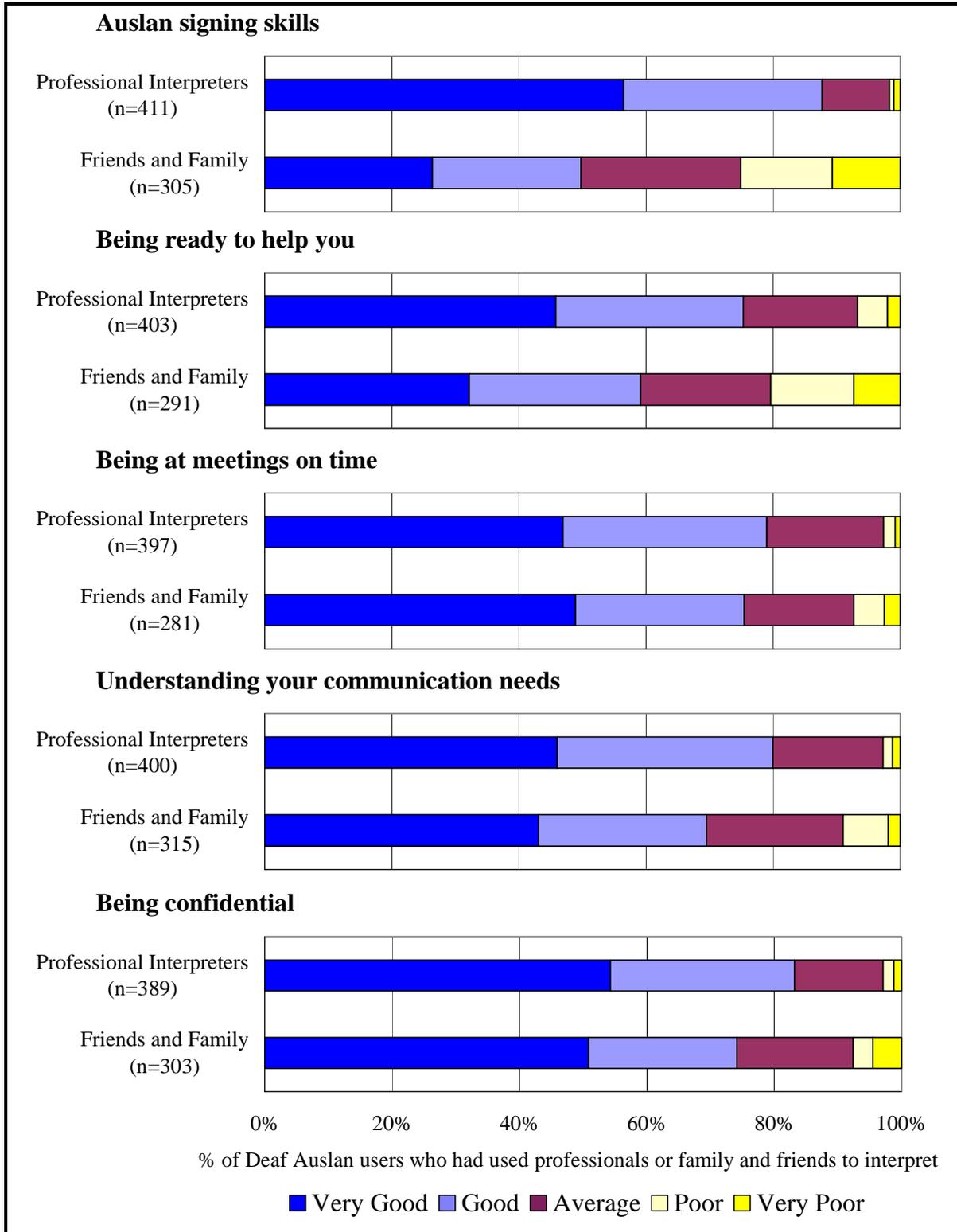
Note: Multiple responses were possible.

Consistent with these findings, interviews with family members of Deaf Auslan users indicated that:

- ◆ not being able to book interpreters at short notice was a key reason for using family and friends to interpret; and
- ◆ many Deaf people do not have the financial resources to afford professional interpreters.

Figure 34 shows Deaf Auslan users' assessment of various aspects of interpreting provided by professional interpreters compared with family and friends.

Figure 34: How good are the professional Auslan interpreters, family and friends you use to interpret for you in:



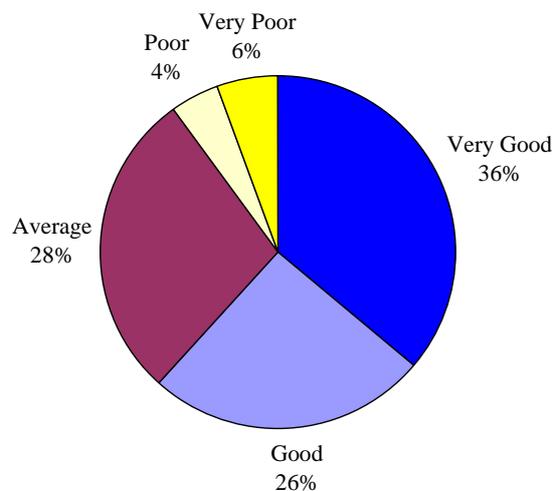
In each aspect, satisfaction with both professional interpreters and family and friends was fairly high, with professional interpreters being rated more positively. The most marked difference relates to ratings of signing skills, for which 88% of Auslan users rated professional interpreters as being ‘good’ or ‘very good’ compared with 50% for family and friends. This is consistent with the finding that the main reason for using professional interpreters is that “Auslan interpreters provide better interpreting services”. Auslan family members also commented that professional interpreters are generally used for more complex matters, where the outcomes are more important or significant for the Deaf Auslan user as well as the hearing person using the interpreting service.

Figure 35 shows that:

- ◆ almost two thirds (62%) of Deaf Auslan users rated professional interpreters as “good” or “very good” in terms of delivering value for money;
- ◆ only 10% rated professional interpreters as “poor” or “very poor” in terms of value for money.

Caution should be exercised in citing these results because the Deaf Auslan users typically do not pay for interpreting services. These results may be largely reflective of assessments of interpreting quality, regardless of cost.

Figure 35: How good are the professional interpreters you use in terms of value for money? (% of Deaf Auslan users)



V. Auslan interpreting at medical consultations

Overview

This chapter examines the supply and demand for Auslan interpreters at:

- ◆ consultations with general practitioners and medical specialists;
- ◆ examinations and treatments conducted at public hospitals;
- ◆ examinations and treatments conducted at private hospitals; and
- ◆ consultations with other health professionals (e.g. dentists, physiotherapists, acupuncturists, naturopaths).

For each of these areas, this chapter:

- ◆ uses the Auslan user survey to estimate the proportion of Deaf Auslan users who required an interpreter in the past 12 months;
- ◆ uses the Auslan user survey to estimate the extent to which interpreting services were provided when needed; and
- ◆ provides estimates of per capita funding and provision across Australia.

Utilisation of medical services is generally higher amongst older Deaf people and so the overall demand for Auslan interpreters in medical settings might be expected to increase as the cohort of Deaf signers associated with the Rubella epidemics of 1944-48 and 1964-70 move into their 60's and 40's, respectively. Against this, Johnston (2003) concludes that, due to a number of factors including increased rates of cochlear implantation and other medical advancements, the size of the signing Deaf population will probably decline over the next 20 years and this will tend to reduce the demand for Auslan interpreting services.

The Deaf Auslan user survey found that the vast majority (between 80% and 87%) of Deaf Auslan users who attended a medical consultation (e.g. a doctor's appointment, hospital, dentist, etc) in the last 12 months considered that they needed an interpreter. However:

- ◆ 66% of those who needed an interpreter at doctors' appointments (general practitioners or specialists) were not always able to get one;
- ◆ 34% of those who needed an interpreter at a public hospital were not always able to get one;
- ◆ 41% of those who needed an interpreter at a private hospital were not always able to get one; and
- ◆ 63% of those who needed an interpreter at a consultation with a health professional (other than a general practitioner or specialist) were not always able to get one.

The Auslan user survey indicates that in 2002-03 there were around 50,000 medical appointments for which Deaf people required an Auslan interpreter⁴³ and that:

- ◆ a professional Auslan interpreter was provided on 41% of these occasions;
- ◆ family members and friends provided interpreting assistance on around 30% of these occasions; and
- ◆ the Deaf person rescheduled the appointment or proceeded without an interpreter in the remainder of cases.

Most Auslan interpreting services are centralised in metropolitan areas. For this reason, many Deaf people in regional and remote areas find it more difficult to obtain Auslan interpreting services and have to arrange their medical appointments around the availability of interpreters.

Deaf Societies have a key role in the provision of professional Auslan interpreting services for medical consultations. In 2002-03, interpreting for medical consultations accounted for 30% of the total cost of Auslan interpreting to Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies.

- ◆ Professional Auslan interpreting for public medical consultations, i.e. across public hospitals, community health centres and public counselling and mental health counselling cost Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies \$340,000. This amounted to nearly two thirds of the total Auslan interpreting for public medical consultations.
- ◆ Professional Auslan interpreting for private medical consultations, i.e. at general practitioners and medical specialists, private hospitals and for consultations with other health professionals cost Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies \$525,000. This was almost all of the total Auslan interpreting for private medical consultations (\$531,000).

There is a marked difference in the funding arrangements governing Auslan interpreting arrangements in the public and private medical sectors. This impacts on the financial position of the Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies. In 2002-03:

- ◆ Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies recouped 86% of their interpreting costs for public medical consultations as fee-for-service;
- ◆ in contrast, Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies recouped only 9% of their interpreting costs for private medical consultations as fee-for-service.

The Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies reported a shortfall between the total cost of providing interpreting for private medical consultations and the total charges recouped from interpreting for private medical consultations of \$480,000. Direct funding from State and Territory Governments reduced the shortfall across all Auslan interpreting provision, but it is not possible to attribute this funding to particular areas of service.

⁴³ This 50,000 estimate is based on the assumption that the Deaf Auslan user population is around 6,500 nationally. In the absence of survey data from Deaf respondents under 16 years of age we have assumed that medical appointments for children occur with the same frequency of those for adults.

Most Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies indicated that they provided free interpreting for private medical consultations because medical appointments can be “life critical”, with potentially serious consequences flowing from poor communication between medical practitioners and their Deaf patients. In general, other Auslan interpreting service providers did not provide free interpreting services, or only provided services to fee-paying public sector agencies (such as public hospitals and courts).

The level and pattern of interpreting provision for medical consultations varies considerably across State Deaf Societies. This reflects a number of factors, including:

- ◆ the different spending priorities and funding arrangements of the individual Deaf Societies;
- ◆ the different arrangements adopted by individual State governments in relation to the provision of Auslan interpreting at public medical consultations;
- ◆ the different demographic composition of Deaf communities (e.g. in terms of employment, education and age) across States; and
- ◆ the capacity of individual Deaf Societies to provide free interpreting services (funded by direct State government funding, investment income, capital reserves or charitable fund-raising).

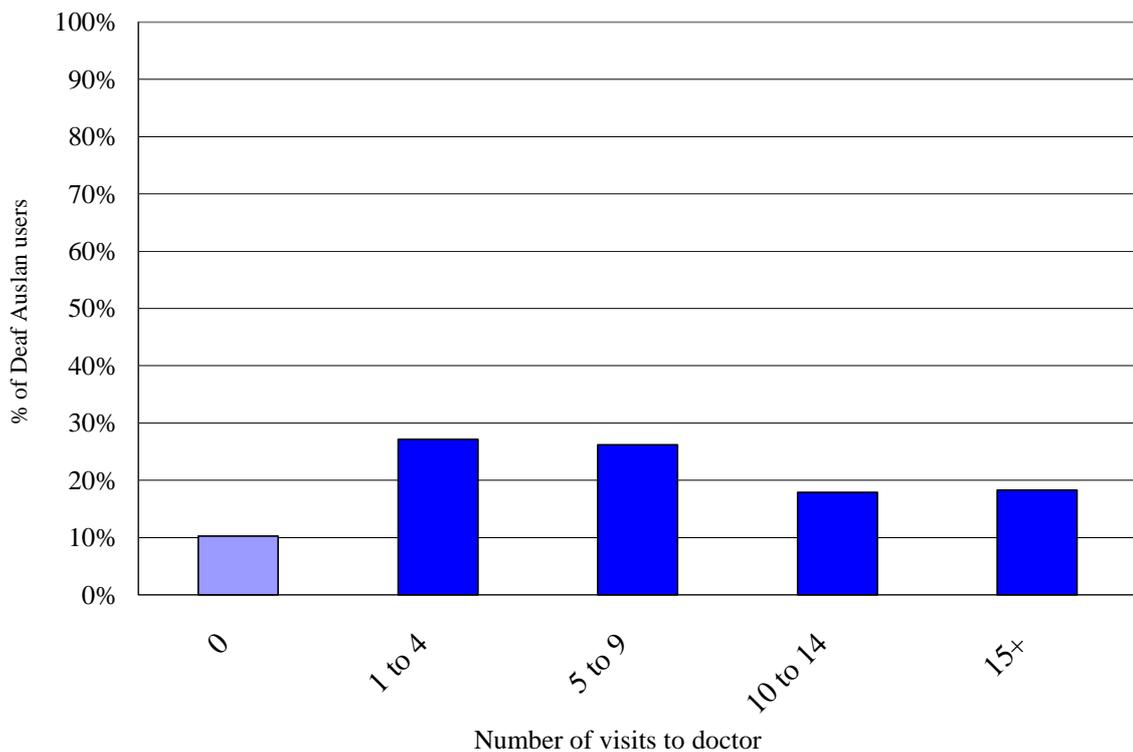
A. Auslan interpreting at consultations with general practitioners and specialists

Demand

The Deaf Auslan user survey asked how many times the respondent went to a doctor (either for themselves or for a family member) in the last 12 months. Figure 36 shows that:

- ◆ 10% of Deaf Auslan users said that they did not go to a doctor at all (either a general practitioner or a specialist) in the last 12 months – that is, the remaining 90% said that they had been at least once; and
- ◆ a substantial proportion (18%) said that they went to a doctor over 15 times in the last 12 months.

Figure 36: In the last 12 months, how many times did you go to a doctor (for you or for your family)?



Note: There were some incomplete responses to the Deaf Auslan user survey. This figure is based only on the responses where the number of appointments was clear.

On average, Deaf Auslan users went to a doctor (either a general practitioner or specialist) 8.7 times in the last 12 months. The demand for general practitioners and specialists is higher amongst older and female Deaf people, where on average:

- ◆ those aged over 55 years went to a doctor 10.7 times over the last 12 months, compared with 7.1 times for those aged under 25 years; and
- ◆ females went to a doctor 9.4 times over the last 12 months, compared with 7.8 times for males.

Sixteen percent of Deaf Auslan users who went to a general practitioner or specialist in the last 12 months indicated they did not need professional Auslan interpreters for these visits.

Of the people who went to a doctor (either a general practitioner or a medical specialist) at least once and needed a professional interpreter:

- ◆ 70% indicated that they needed an interpreter for less than one hour;
- ◆ 26% indicated that they needed an interpreter for between one to two hours; and
- ◆ only 4% indicated that they needed an interpreter for more than two hours.

The majority of doctors' appointments are less than 30 minutes. However, it is likely that Auslan interpreters would be required for more than just the consultation time (e.g. waiting times can be long in many surgeries).

Supply

Eighty four percent of Deaf Auslan users who had been to a doctor (either a general practitioner or a medical specialist) in the last 12 months, said they needed a professional Auslan interpreter. Of these people:

- ◆ 33% said they were always able to get an interpreter;
- ◆ 5% were able to get an interpreter more than half the time;
- ◆ 13% were able to get an interpreter less than half the time; and
- ◆ 49% were never able to get an interpreter.⁴⁴

The reasons given by respondents who had not been able to get an interpreter for a doctor's appointment included that:

- ◆ they could not get an interpreter at short notice (indicated by around one quarter of these);

Complain if I book it on the day. It is hard considering I am a new mother and can't see for myself if I am or my baby will be sick tomorrow.

- ◆ interpreters were unavailable in their area (a further one quarter of respondents); and
- ◆ it was too expensive to obtain a professional interpreter (around 10%).

A small number indicated that they were unaware that interpreters were available.

⁴⁴ Attachment B outlines how these estimates were derived.

Deaf Auslan users were asked what they did if they were not able to obtain a professional Auslan interpreter for a doctor's appointment.

- ◆ Around two thirds stated that they went to the doctor without an interpreter – most indicating they used written English notes to communicate.

I go to the Doctor, lip-read and have pen and paper handy for him to write if I do not understand.

- ◆ Around one third went to the doctor with a friend or family member to interpret.

Most Auslan users' family members interviewed stated that they often interpreted for their Deaf parent or child at private medical appointments.

- ◆ Most parents of younger children stated that interpreting for their children was not a problem as parents normally speak for young children at medical appointments. However, as their children got older, interpreting could cause problems in terms of the Deaf child's privacy.
- ◆ Children of Deaf adults reported similar privacy issues in relation to interpreting for their parents in private medical consultations, particularly if the medical condition was delicate or personal in nature.
- ◆ All family members stated that they often interpreted at medical consultations because they did not want their Deaf family members to risk miscommunication through purely written communication.

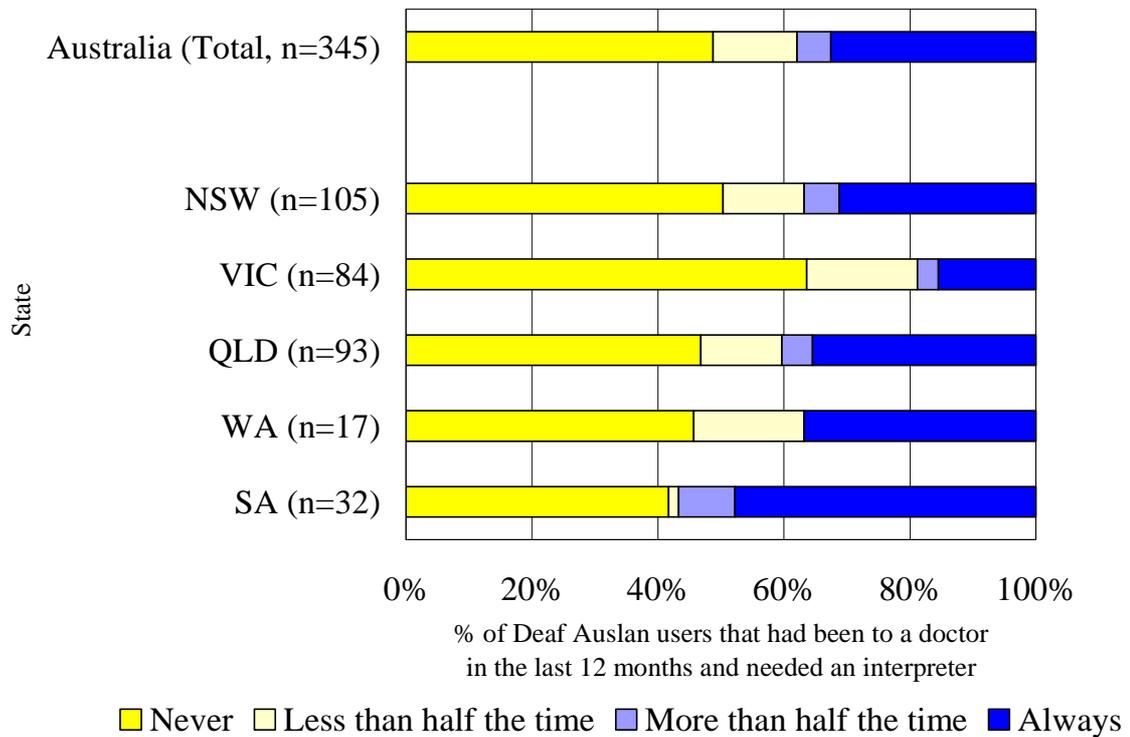
Individual general practitioners consulted considered that:

- ◆ for simple consultations, such as taking blood pressure, there was often no need for an Auslan interpreter, depending on the patient's level of English literacy;
- ◆ in more complex medical cases, there was a high risk of misunderstanding and incorrect treatment or management of the condition without an interpreter; and
- ◆ not having an Auslan interpreter significantly increased the time required for appointments with Deaf patients.

The Australian Division of General Practice noted that there were circumstances in which it would be inappropriate to have a family member or friend to provide interpreting assistance in general practitioner consultations. The standards and ethics to which professional interpreters commit could also assist in ensuring the information given by the patient and the advice given by the doctor are accurate and clearly understood.

Figure 37 shows the extent to which Deaf Auslan users were able to get interpreters when needed at doctors’ appointments across States. The proportion of Deaf Auslan users in each State always able to get an Auslan interpreter at doctors’ appointments (dark blue bars) ranges from 16% in Victoria to 48% in South Australia.

Figure 37: In the last 12 months, how often were you able to get a professional Auslan interpreter at a doctor’s appointment when you needed one?



Note: Results for Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory were not included due to the small sample from these areas.

There was no statistically significant difference between reported provision of interpreters at doctors’ appointments in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.

Funding

The Australian Government funds Medicare, which is a universal health care system. Under the *Health Insurance Act 1973*, Medicare benefits are payable to people who incur medical expenses in respect of clinically relevant professional services that are contained in the Medicare Benefits Schedule and rendered by qualified medical practitioners. Therefore, Medicare benefits are not payable for services provided by most allied health practitioners or by professional interpreters on behalf of the patient to assist communication with the medical practitioner.

The Medicare Benefits Schedule fee for a standard ‘level B’ consultation by a general practitioner is \$30.20 with a benefit of \$25.70. The minimum fee for a Deaf Society

Auslan interpreter ranges between \$66 and \$165 depending on the State or Territory.⁴⁵ A general practitioner charging the Medicare Benefits Schedule fee for a consultation (that is, who bulk bills) would be out of pocket in the event that s/he also paid for an Auslan interpreter.⁴⁶ The Australian Division of General Practice considered that doctors could not afford to absorb the cost of providing interpreters.

The Auslan user survey found that 8% of Deaf people who used professional interpreters at a doctor's appointment contributed toward the cost of that interpreting.⁴⁷ Auslan interpreting costs are not covered by private health insurance.

As only a minority of individual Deaf patients and medical practitioners pay for Auslan interpreting out of their own resources, the bulk of professional interpreting for general practitioner and specialist consultations is provided by Deaf Societies.

Deaf Societies reported that, in 2002-03, the total cost of providing interpreting at general practitioner and specialist consultations was around \$400,000. Deaf Societies provided 90% of these interpreting services free-of-charge.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ In all States and Territories, the minimum Deaf Society interpreter call-out fee is based on a 2-hour appointment time: \$165 in NSW; \$123.20 in Victoria; \$114.40 in Queensland; \$110 in South Australia; \$110 in Western Australia; \$82.50 in Tasmania; \$132 in the ACT and \$66 in the NT.

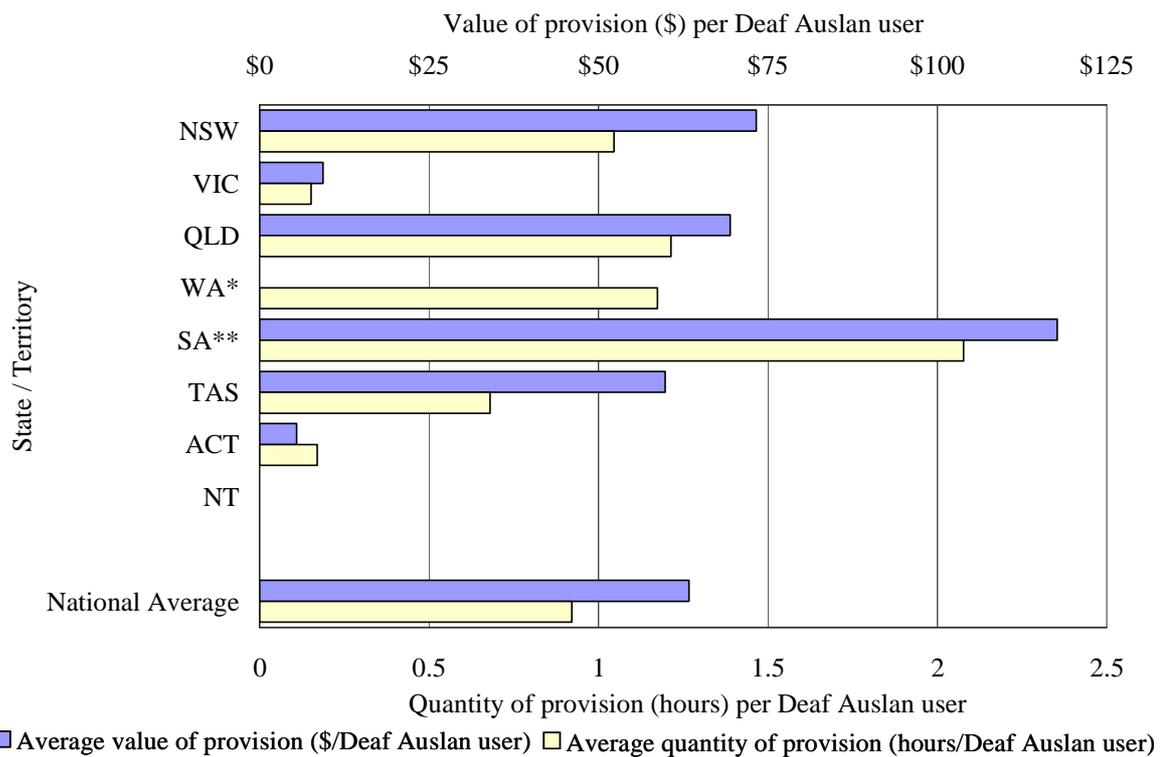
⁴⁶ Fourteen percent of respondents to the user survey who had received interpreting services at an appointment with a general practitioner indicated that the general practitioner had paid. However, in many cases it would be difficult for the respondent to know whether a Deaf Society had actually provided the service free-of-charge to the general practitioner.

⁴⁷ More generally, only 10% of Auslan users indicated that they were willing to pay some of the cost for a professional Auslan interpreter – see Chapter IX on overall opinions of Deaf Auslan users.

⁴⁸ Direct state and territory government funding for Auslan interpreting to Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies was \$379,499 in 2002-03. It is not possible to attribute this funding across the key service areas, but it would have assisted the Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies to fund much, if not all, of the free interpreting at private medical consultations.

Figure 38 shows that the per capita level of interpreting services provided by Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies for general practitioner and specialist appointments varied considerably across States and Territories.⁴⁹ In 2002-03, the average per capita provision of Auslan interpreting at doctors' appointments ranged from 0.2 hours per Deaf Auslan user in Victoria (at a cost of \$9 per Deaf Auslan user) to 2.1 hours per Deaf Auslan user (at a cost of \$118) in South Australia. This variation in per capita interpreting provision largely reflects the extent to which individual Deaf Societies provide free interpreting services for general practitioner and specialist appointments.

Figure 38: Deaf Society and Territory Auslan interpreting agency provision of interpreters at doctors' appointments, 2002-03



* WA Deaf Society only able to provide data on hours of provision across service areas.
 ** Royal South Australia Deaf Society doctors' appointment estimates are based on data of total private medical provision and Deaf Society estimates of proportion related to doctors' appointments.

⁴⁹ State and Territory per capita interpreting provision levels shown in Figure 38 (and equivalents for other service areas) were derived from total provision estimates divided by estimated number of Deaf Auslan users in each State and Territory (see Table 3 of Chapter II).

It is evident from a comparison of Figure 37 and Figure 38 that variations in the level of Deaf Society provision of interpreters across States impact on the level of unmet demand.⁵⁰ The proportion of Deaf Auslan users in each State always able to get an Auslan interpreter at doctors' appointments (dark blue bars in Figure 37) correlates with the average annual provision of interpreters for medical appointments by the Deaf Society in that State (Figure 38). For example:

- ◆ around half (48%) of Deaf Auslan users in South Australia were always able to get an interpreter when one was needed at a doctor's appointment – the highest level across States and Territories (Figure 37). This is consistent with the finding that, per Deaf Auslan user, the Royal South Australian Deaf Society provided significantly more interpreting in this area than any other State (Figure 38)⁵¹; and
- ◆ less than one fifth (16%) of Deaf Auslan users in Victoria were always able to get an interpreter when they needed one at a doctor's appointment – the lowest level across States (Figure 37). This is consistent with the finding that the Victorian Deaf Society provided almost no free interpreting services for general practitioner or medical specialist appointments in 2002-03 (Figure 38).

The Northern Territory Interpreting and Translating Service did not provide any Auslan interpreting at general practitioner and specialist appointments in 2002-03. A number of factors may be contributing to the very low level of professional interpreting at general practitioner and specialist appointments in the Northern Territory, including limited interpreter availability⁵² and lower levels of treatment by general practitioners and specialists generally.

⁵⁰ Other factors (such as the differing availability of Auslan interpreters across States) also impact on the level of unmet demand for interpreting at doctors' appointments.

⁵¹ The Royal South Australian Deaf Society reports that, for financial reasons, it ceased offering free Auslan interpreting services (except in very limited circumstances) from 1 July 2003.

⁵² There are only four practising Auslan interpreters in the Northern Territory: three based in Darwin and one based in Alice Springs. All work through the NT Interpreting and Translating Service. Of the four interpreters, all had other employment and worked casually as interpreters for only a few hours per week. Two noted that interpreting needs were going unmet for Deaf people in the Northern Territory, including in relation to appointments with general practitioners and specialists.

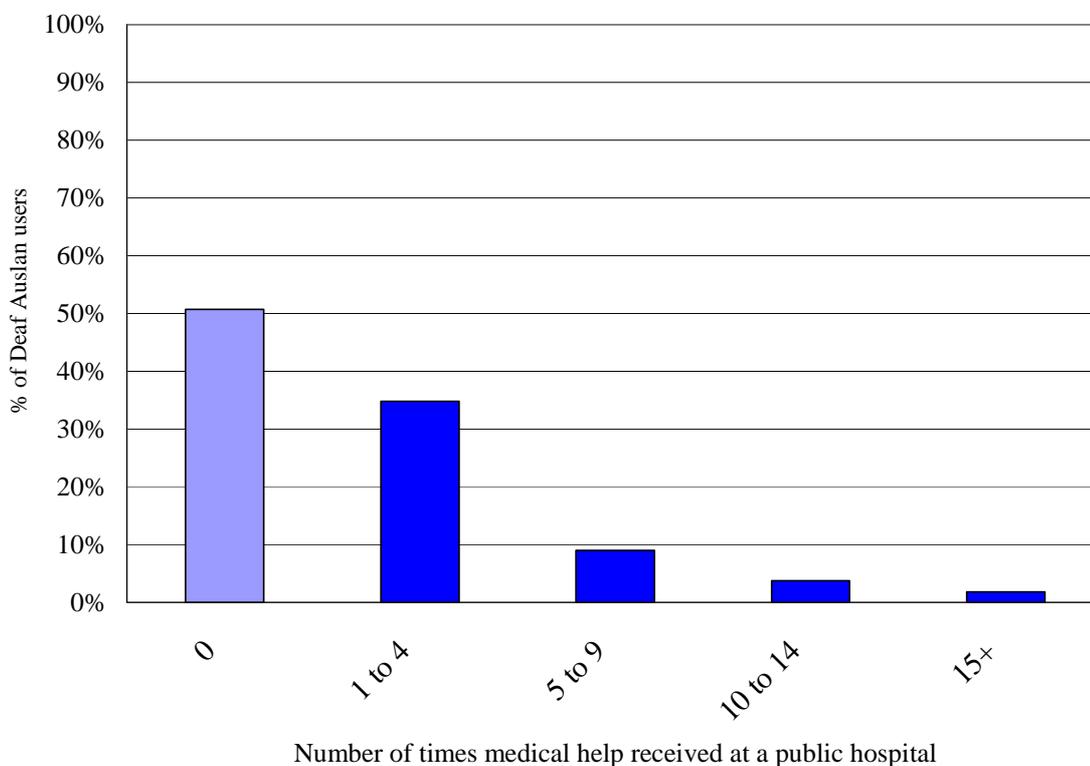
B. Auslan interpreting at public hospital consultations

Demand

The Deaf Auslan user survey asked how many times respondents went to a public hospital in the last 12 months. Figure 39 shows that:

- ◆ 51% of Deaf Auslan users said that they had not been to a public hospital at all in the last 12 months, that is, 49% of Deaf Auslan users had been to a public hospital in the last 12 months; and
- ◆ less than 6% had been to a public hospital over 10 times in the last 12 months.

Figure 39: In the last 12 months, how many times did you get medical help at a public hospital?



Note: There were some incomplete responses to the Deaf Auslan user survey. This figure is based only on the responses where the number of appointments was clear.

On average, Deaf Auslan users received medical help from a public hospital 2.1 times in the last 12 months. The demand for medical help at public hospitals is higher amongst females and those in age brackets typically associated with child bearing and rearing. On average:

- ◆ females went to a public hospital 2.6 times over the last 12 months, compared with 1.5 times for males; and
- ◆ those aged from 25 to 44 years were the most frequent users of public hospitals, attending an average of 2.6 times.

Thirteen percent of Deaf Auslan users who had been to a public hospital in the last 12 months indicated they did not need a professional interpreter for these visits.

Of those who had been to a public hospital in the last 12 months and needed an interpreter:

- ◆ 37% indicated they needed an interpreter for less than one hour;
- ◆ 38% indicated they needed an interpreter for between one and two hours; and
- ◆ 25% indicated they needed an interpreter for more than two hours.

Supply

Eighty seven percent of Deaf Auslan users who had been to a public hospital in the last 12 months said they needed a professional Auslan interpreter. Of these people:

- ◆ 65% said they were always able to get an interpreter;
- ◆ 4% were able to get an interpreter more than half the time;
- ◆ 6% were able to get an interpreter less than half the time; and
- ◆ 26% were never able to get an interpreter.⁵³

The reasons given by respondents who had not always been able to get an interpreter at a public hospital included:

- ◆ there were no interpreters available at short notice (cited by around 40% of these respondents);

None available onsite as I drop into casualty without an appointment.

- ◆ the hospital failed to book an interpreter (cited by around 10%);

Hospital sometimes don't know how to - I arrived and discovered interpreter was not booked after I requested it.

- ◆ Other reasons included respondents not being aware that interpreting services were available and the failure of booked interpreters to show up for the appointment.

Didn't know there was one available, and in any case I was too sick to care!

The social worker booked for interpreter for us a few times, but they never came.

Deaf Auslan users were asked what they did if they were not able to obtain a professional Auslan interpreter at a public hospital. The survey found that:

- ◆ almost one half went with a friend or family member to interpret for them;
- ◆ 40% went to the hospital without an interpreter; and

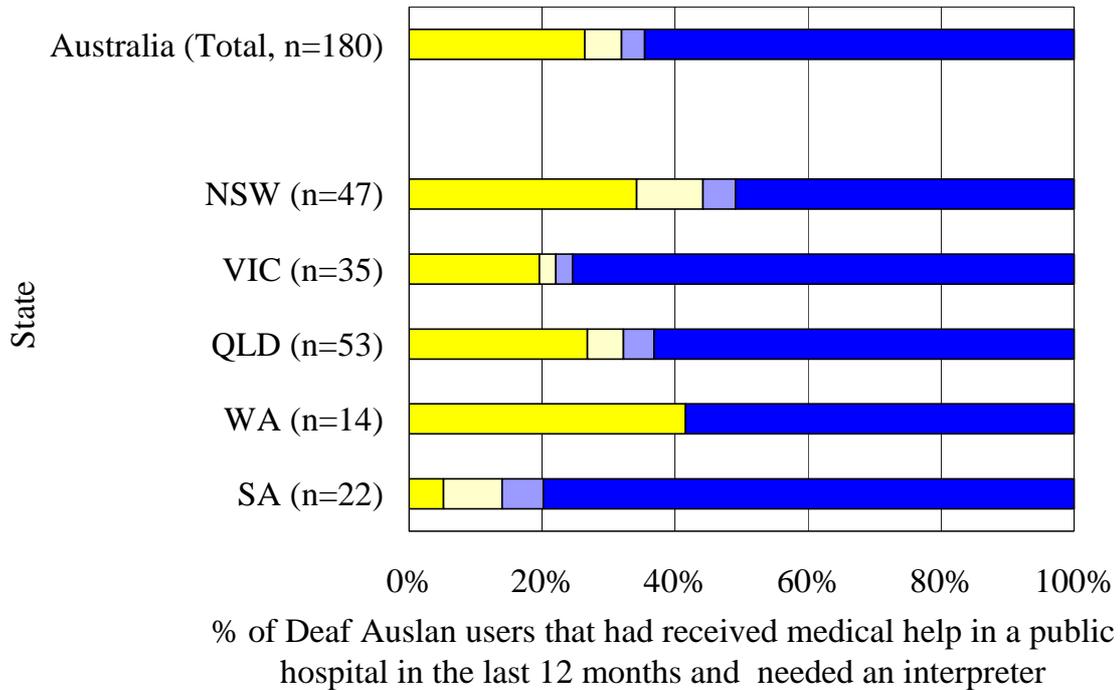
Just kept talking till I found a staff member I could lip read. Normally find one. We write each other on papers.

- ◆ 10% postponed their treatment.

⁵³ Attachment B outlines how these estimates were derived.

Figure 40 breaks down the availability of interpreters for public hospital matters by State. It shows that 80% of Deaf Auslan users in South Australia indicated that they were always able to obtain an Auslan interpreter at a public hospital when they needed one.⁵⁴ By comparison, 50% of Deaf Auslan users in NSW indicated that they were always able to get an interpreter at a public hospital when needed.

Figure 40: In the last 12 months, how often were you able to get a professional Auslan interpreter at a public hospital appointment when you needed one?



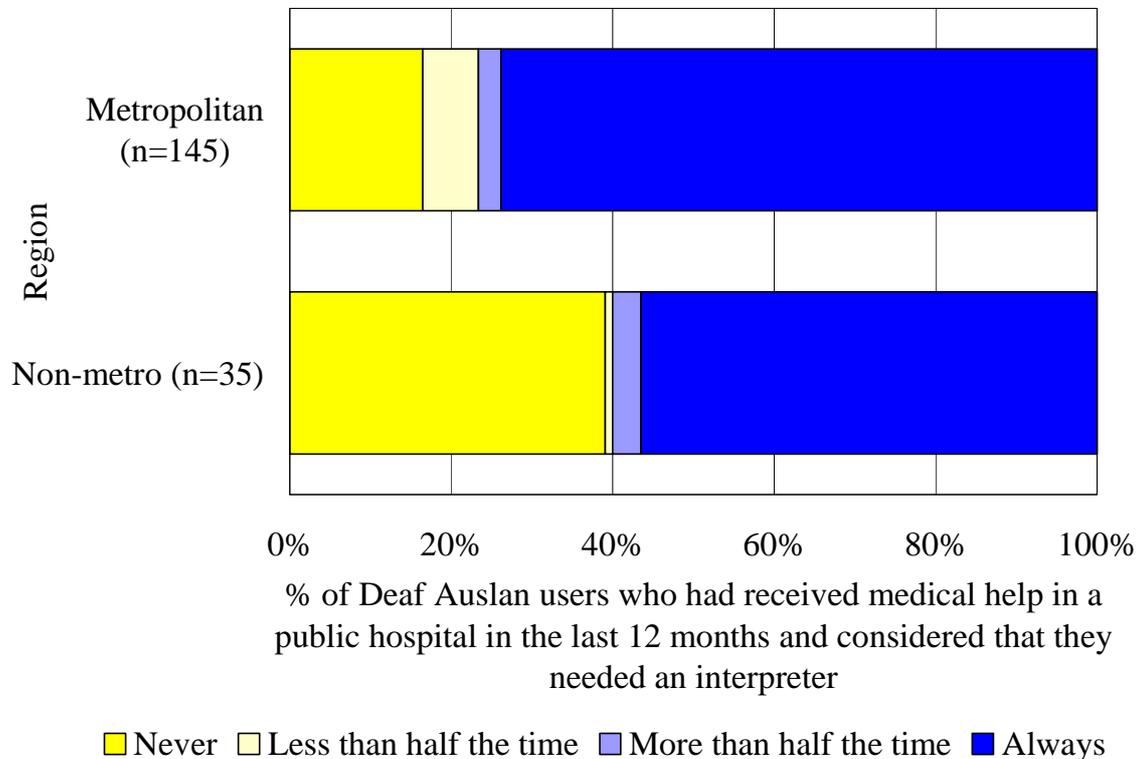
■ Never
 ■ Less than half the time
 ■ More than half the time
 ■ Always

Note: Results for Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory were not included due to the small sample from these areas.

⁵⁴ The sample sizes for SA and WA (n=14 and 22, respectively) mean that the State estimates in Figure 40 have low levels of statistical precision and should be treated with caution.

Figure 41 shows that unmet demand for Auslan interpreters at public hospitals is significantly higher in non-metropolitan areas than in metropolitan areas.

Figure 41: In the last 12 months, how often were you provided with a professional Auslan interpreter at a public hospital appointment when you needed one?



Funding

The total cost reported by Auslan interpreting service providers of providing Auslan interpreting services to public hospitals in 2002-03 was around \$400,000. Unlike interpreting for visits to general practitioners and specialists, the majority of interpreting at public hospitals is provided by agencies other than Deaf Societies. The funding arrangements, and the role of Deaf Societies, vary from State to State, but in all States and Territories public hospital patients receive free Auslan interpreting.⁵⁵

- ◆ In Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania the bulk of public hospital Auslan interpreting is provided by Deaf Societies on a fee-for-service basis.
- ◆ In Western Australia, the Western Australian Deaf Society provides over half the interpreting at public hospitals on a fee-for-service basis, but many larger hospitals obtain interpreting services directly from individual interpreters through panel arrangements. These hospitals will generally only purchase interpreting services from the Deaf Society (on a fee-for-service basis) if they are unable to obtain them directly.

⁵⁵ None of the surveyed respondents who had been to a public hospital and had used a professional interpreter reported paying for that interpreter.

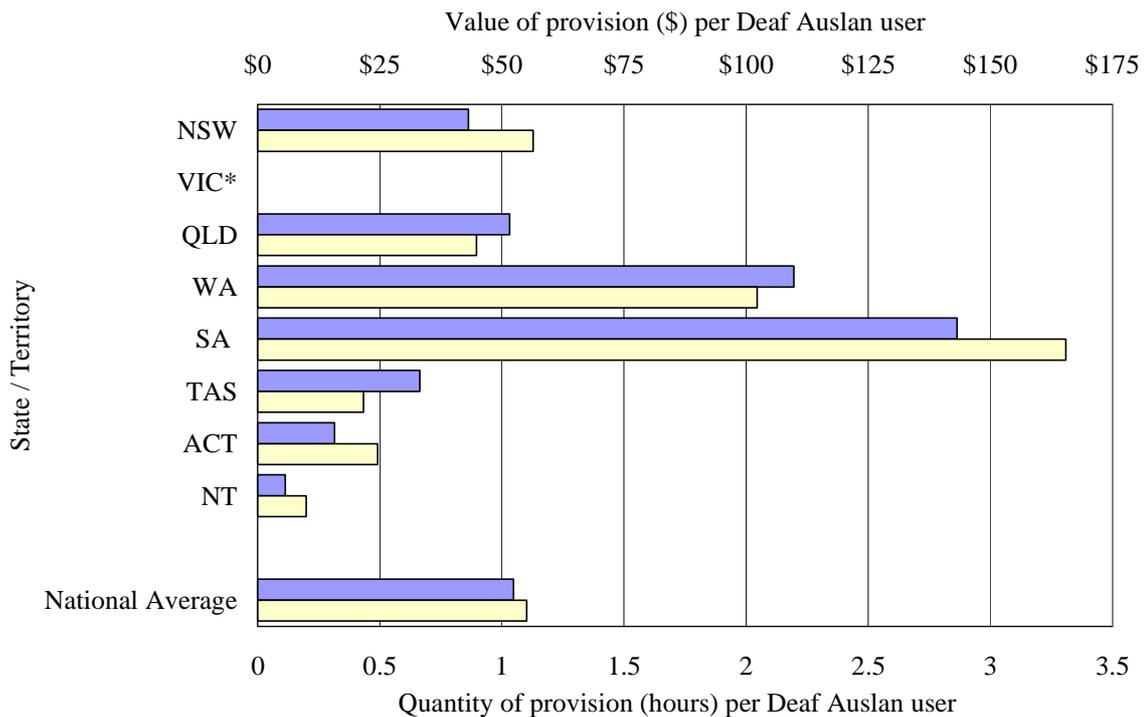
- ◆ In Victoria, a range of language service providers supply Auslan interpreting to public hospitals. The largest of these are the Central Health Interpreter Service and the Victorian Interpreting and Translating Service LanguageLink. They are quasi-government organisations whose main role is to provide State-funded interpreters (including for Auslan) to government agencies such as public hospitals. The Victorian Deaf Society provides less than one quarter of total Auslan interpreting at public hospitals in Victoria.⁵⁶
- ◆ In New South Wales, almost all Auslan interpreting at public hospitals is provided by region-based Health Care Interpreter Services. They are directly funded by the NSW Department of Health to provide free interpreting (including for Auslan) to public hospitals and their patients. The NSW Deaf Society is only occasionally called upon to fill interpreting requirements at public hospitals.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Only partial data are available on the quantity of Auslan interpreting provided in Victorian public hospitals. A rough estimate for total provision (of \$135,000) was derived based on the estimated Deaf population of Victoria and national average per capita provision.

⁵⁷ In 2002-03, the NSW Deaf Society provided \$3,000 worth of public medical interpreting, which is less than 3% of the total value of provision in NSW public hospitals.

Figure 42 shows that the level of interpreting services provided by Deaf Societies for public hospital appointments varied considerably across States and Territories. In 2002-03, the average per capita provision of Auslan interpreting at public hospitals ranged from less than 0.5 hours per Deaf Auslan user in Tasmania, ACT and NT (at a per capita cost of \$30, \$16 and \$6 respectively) to 3.3 hours per Deaf Auslan user in South Australia (at a per capita cost of \$145).⁵⁸

Figure 42: Deaf Society and Territory Auslan interpreting agency provision of interpreters at public hospital appointments, 2002-03



■ Average value of provision (\$/Deaf Auslan user) □ Average quantity of provision (hours/Deaf Auslan user)

* As only partial data were provided in relation to interpreting in Victorian public hospitals, reliable estimates of per capita provision could not be derived.

⁵⁸ Note that stakeholder feedback indicated that much of the Auslan interpreting provided in public hospitals throughout Australia is not provided by Deaf Societies or the Territory Auslan interpreting agencies. Comprehensive figures on Auslan interpreting provided to public hospitals through panel or freelance arrangements were not available for this report.

Some public hospitals reported that they had established their own panel of Auslan interpreters due to the high fees charged by some Auslan interpreting service providers. It was also noted that the cost of providing Auslan interpreting to patients could vary due to different prevailing market rates for interpreters in each State and Territory. For example:

- ◆ The NSW Deaf Society charges an initial fee of \$165 plus \$47.50 for each hour after the first two hours. The Central and South East Sydney Health Care Interpreter Service pays its Auslan panel interpreters an initial fee of around \$80 plus around \$30 for each hour after the first two and a half hours.⁵⁹
- ◆ The Western Australian Deaf Society charges an initial fee of \$110 plus \$55 for each hour after the first two hours. The Sir Charles Gardiner hospital pays its Auslan panel interpreters an initial fee of \$65 plus \$32.50 for each hour after the first two hours.

A number of stakeholders noted that in practice it was difficult for public hospitals to obtain interpreters (particularly at short notice) at the panel rates. Competition for Auslan interpreters from other interpreting agencies often made it difficult for contracted service providers to find appropriately skilled and qualified interpreters to fill interpreting engagements. However, some stakeholders were concerned about privacy issues if family members or friends interpreted for Deaf Auslan users at public hospitals. There was also concern about the potential for treatment to be delayed or compromised when professional interpreters were not in attendance.

Interpreting in other public health services

In addition to interpreting at public hospitals, interpreting for public medical consultations includes services provided in:

- ◆ community health centres (accounting for 7% of the total expenditure on Auslan interpreting in the public health sector in 2002-03); and
- ◆ public counselling and mental health counselling (accounting for 28% of the total expenditure on Auslan interpreting in the public health sector in 2002-03).

While provision by Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies accounts for only 46% of the total cost Auslan interpreting in public hospitals, they account for:

- ◆ 52% of interpreting at community health centres; and
- ◆ 93% of interpreting for public counselling or mental health counselling.

⁵⁹ Panel rates are not strictly comparable with Auslan interpreting service provider rates because the former do not include the administrative costs incurred by the hospital in arranging and booking panel interpreters.

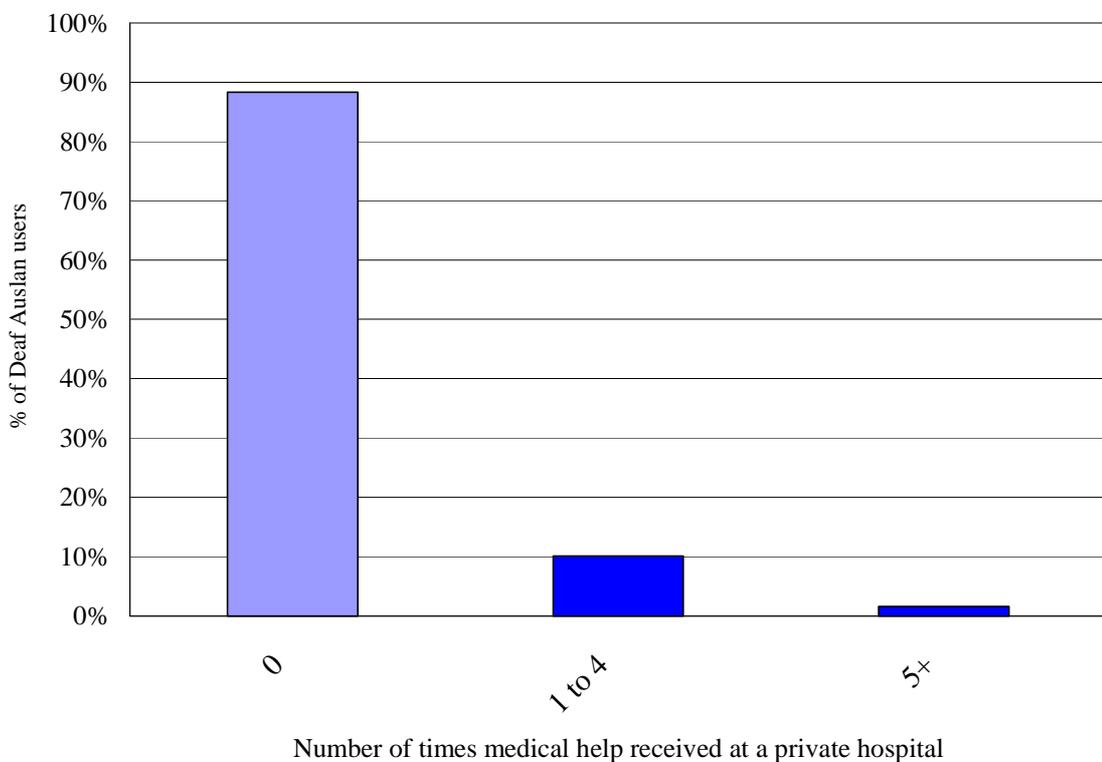
C. Auslan interpreting at private hospital consultations

Demand

The Deaf Auslan user survey asked how many times respondents went to private hospitals in the last 12 months. Figure 43 shows that:

- ◆ 88% of respondents said that they had not been to a private hospital at all in the last 12 months, that is, only 12% of Deaf Auslan users had been to a private hospital in the last 12 months; and
- ◆ less than 2% had been to a private hospital over four times in the last 12 months.

Figure 43: In the last 12 months, how many times did you get medical help at a private hospital?



Note: There were some incomplete responses to the Deaf Auslan user survey. This figure is based only on the responses where the number of appointments was clear.

On average, Deaf Auslan users received medical help from a private hospital 0.3 times in the last 12 months (compared with 2.1 times for public hospitals). The demand for medical help at private hospitals is higher amongst older Deaf people, where on average, those aged over 55 years were most likely to visit a private hospital, at an average of 0.5 visits over the last 12 months.

Sixteen percent of Deaf Auslan users who had been to a private hospital in the last 12 months said that they did not need a professional Auslan interpreter for these visits.

Of those who had been to a private hospital in the last 12 months and needed an interpreter:

- ◆ 48% indicated that they needed an interpreter for less than one hour;
- ◆ 33% indicated that they needed an interpreter for between one to two hours; and
- ◆ 19% indicated that they needed an interpreter for more than two hours.

Supply

Eighty four percent of Deaf Auslan users who had been to a private hospital in the last 12 months said they needed a professional Auslan interpreter. Of these people:

- ◆ 59% said they were always able to get an interpreter;
- ◆ 1% were able to get an interpreter more than half the time;
- ◆ 5% were able to get an interpreter less than half the time; and
- ◆ 35% were never able to get an interpreter.⁶⁰

The reasons respondents were not able to get an interpreter at a private hospital included:

- ◆ a lack of available interpreters (cited by one quarter of these); and

Once again, unavailability of an interpreter - another person booked the interpreter ahead of me.

- ◆ the cost of the interpreter (cited by one quarter) .

Deaf Society said they won't provide interpreter for private hospital because the hospital won't pay.

Deaf Auslan users were asked what they did if they were not able to obtain a professional Auslan interpreter at a private hospital. The survey found that:

- ◆ around one half went to the private hospital with a friend or family member to interpret; and

I have a friend who is a professional interpreter who volunteers her time free of charge.

- ◆ around one half went ahead with their medical treatment without an interpreter.

Lip-reading and written English were sufficient.

Given the low number of Auslan users that had received medical treatment at a private hospital in the last 12 months, it is not possible to make robust conclusions in relation to the differences in the provision of interpreters at private hospitals across States and Territories or between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.

⁶⁰ Attachment B outlines how these estimates were derived.

Funding

In 2002-03, the total cost of providing Auslan interpreting for consultations in private hospitals was around \$40,000 – around one tenth of the \$400,000 spent on Auslan interpreting in public hospitals in that year.

Consultations with Deaf Societies and State government representatives indicated that generally private hospitals are not willing to pay for Auslan interpreters. Moreover, Deaf Auslan users are generally either unable or unwilling to pay for Auslan interpreters at private hospitals.

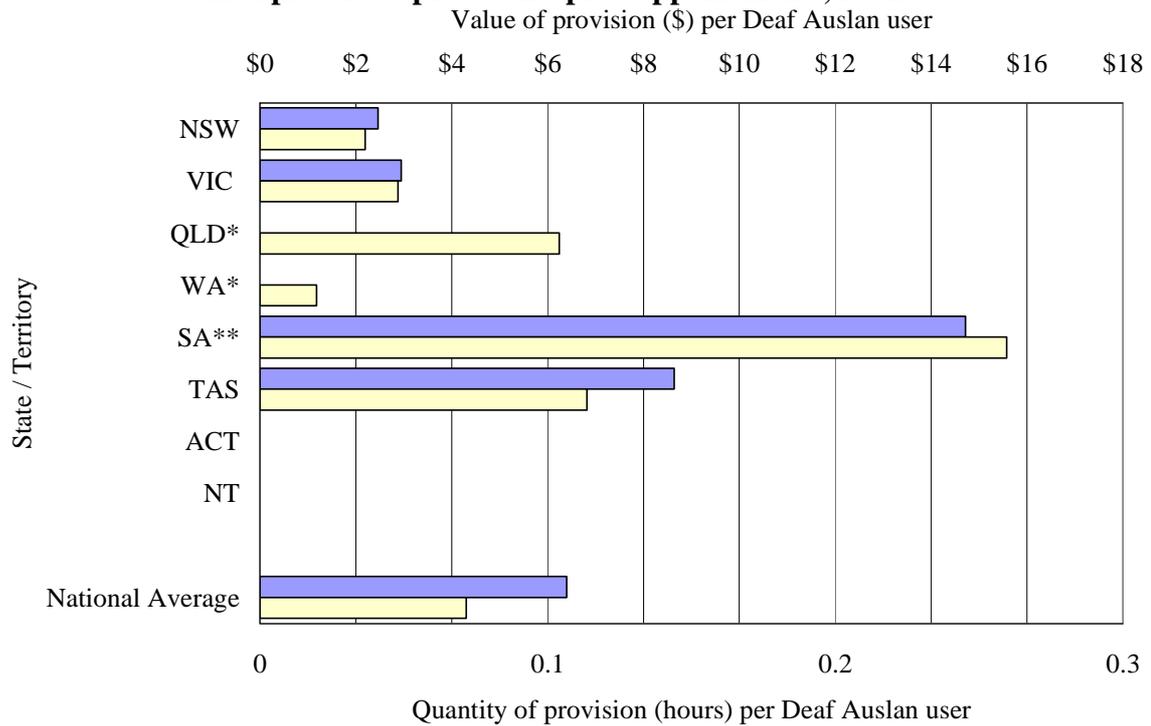
- ◆ The Auslan user survey found that around 10% of Deaf Auslan users who used a professional interpreter at a private hospital contributed toward the cost of providing the interpreter.

Deaf Societies provide the bulk of private hospital Auslan interpreting. Figure 44 (following page) shows that the level of Deaf Society interpreting provided at private hospital consultations varies considerably across States and Territories. The average annual Deaf Society provision per Deaf Auslan user ranges from nil in the ACT and the Northern Territory to just under 0.3 hours per Deaf Auslan user (at a cost of \$15) in South Australia.⁶¹ This variation in per capita interpreting provision reflects a number of factors, including the extent to which individual Deaf Societies provide free interpreting services and the extent to which Deaf Auslan users in each State and Territory access private hospital treatment.

- ◆ In 2002-03 the cost to the Victorian Deaf Society of interpreting at private hospitals was around \$5,000, all of which was covered by fee-for-service (from private hospitals and some medical specialists, such as anaesthetists).

⁶¹ The low per capita provision of private hospital interpreting reflects low utilisation of private hospitals by Deaf people (only 12% of Deaf people received medical treatment at a private hospital in the last 12 months).

Figure 44: Deaf Society and Territory Auslan interpreting agency provision of interpreters at private hospital appointments, 2002-03



■ Average value of provision (\$/Deaf Auslan user) □ Average quantity of provision (hours/Deaf Auslan user)

* The Deaf Societies of Queensland and Western Australia were not able to supply data on the value (\$) of provision to private hospitals.

** South Australian estimates are based on data on total private medical provision and the Royal South Australian Deaf Society estimate of proportion related to private hospital appointments.

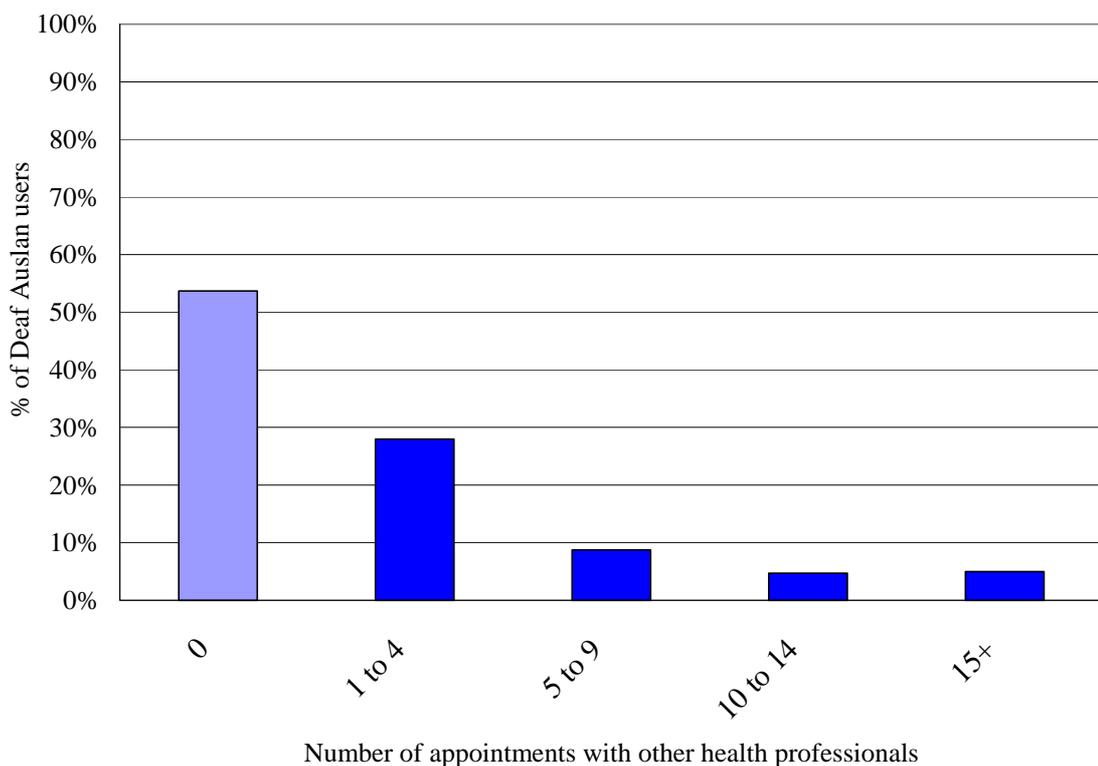
D. Auslan interpreting at consultations with other health professionals

Demand

The Deaf Auslan user survey asked how many times the respondent had an appointment with health professionals (other than a doctor) in the last 12 months, e.g. dentists, physiotherapists, acupuncturists, naturopaths. Figure 45 shows that:

- ◆ 54% of respondents said that they had not had appointments with other health professionals at all in the last 12 months – that is, 46% said that they had at least one appointment with other health professionals; and
- ◆ 10% said that they had appointments with other health professionals over 10 times in the last 12 months.

Figure 45: In the last 12 months, how many appointments did you have with other health professionals (not doctors)?



On average, Deaf Auslan users had an appointment with other health professionals 2.9 times in the last 12 months. The demand for assistance from other health professionals is higher amongst middle-aged Deaf people, where on average those aged 45-55 years had a consultation with another health professional 4.5 times over the last 12 months.

Twenty percent of Deaf Auslan users who had attended appointments with health professionals (other than doctors) in the last 12 months indicated they did not need professional Auslan interpreters for these visits.

Of those who had a consultation with a health professional (other than a doctor) in the last 12 months and needed an interpreter:

- ◆ 55% indicated that they needed an interpreter for less than one hour;
- ◆ 38% indicated that they needed an interpreter for between one to two hours; and
- ◆ 7% indicated that they needed an interpreter for more than two hours.

Supply

Eighty percent of Deaf Auslan users who had been to an appointment with a health professional (other than a doctor) in the last 12 months said they needed a professional Auslan interpreter. Of these people:

- ◆ 37% said they were always able to get an interpreter;
- ◆ 1% were able to get an interpreter more than half the time;
- ◆ 6% were able to get an interpreter less than half the time; and
- ◆ 55% were never able to get an interpreter.⁶²

The reasons respondents were unable to get an interpreter for consultations with other health professionals included:

- ◆ cost (cited by around 20% of these respondents);
- ◆ inability to arrange interpreters at short notice (cited by around 20%); and
- ◆ lack of interpreters in their area (indicated by around 15%).

Other reasons included the Deaf person or health professional not knowing how to book an interpreter, difficulties with booking interpreters, the Deaf person being unaware that s/he could use an interpreter in such situations or the interpreter cancelling the appointment.

Deaf Auslan users were asked what they did if they were not able to obtain a professional Auslan interpreter for an appointment with a health professional (other than a doctor):

- ◆ slightly over half went to the health professional without an interpreter;

When we need to attend Private Dentist or Physiotherapy we cannot have an interpreter as no one accepts responsibility for paying for the interpreter fees. So we end up writing notes with the health professional but the health professional get impatient when they have to write notes and they just gesture "good" and try to get rid of us!

- ◆ around one fifth went to the appointment with a friend or family member to interpret; and

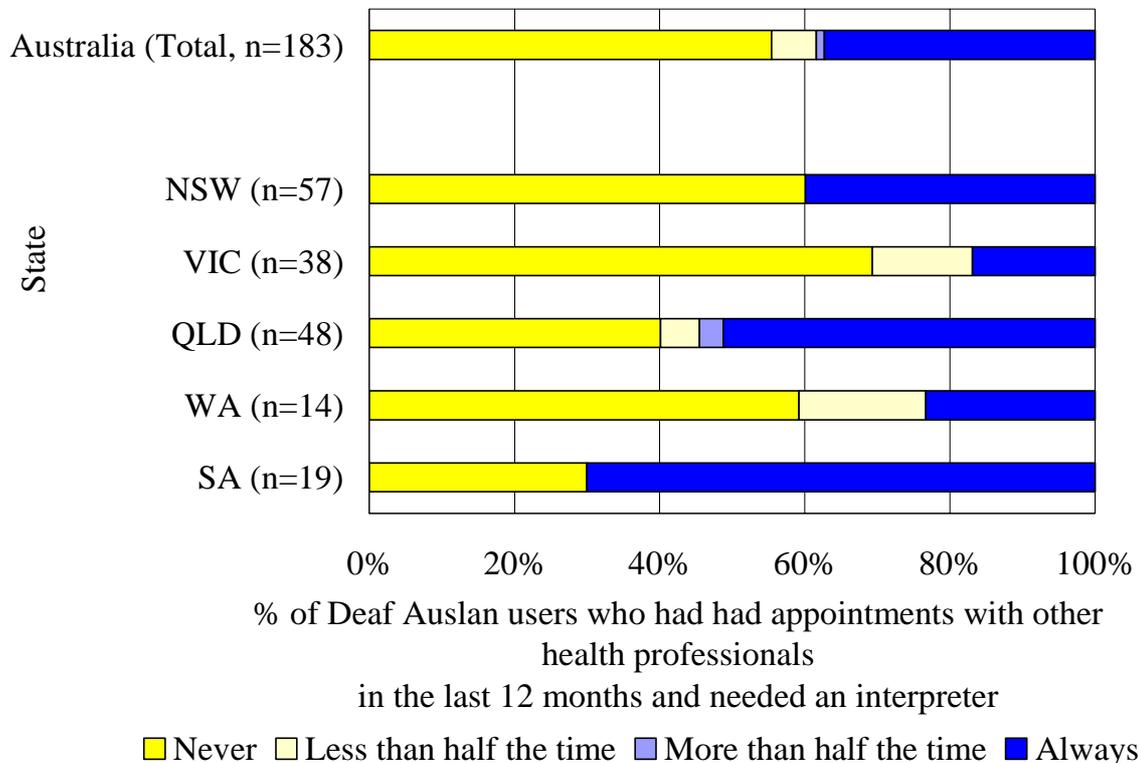
My sister-in-law came to the podiatrist for the first appointment. Now my husband and I go ourselves. My other sister goes to the dentist with me.

- ◆ around 10% either postponed the appointment until a professional interpreter was available or cancelled the appointment.

⁶² Attachment B outlines how these estimates were derived.

Figure 46 shows that the provision of Auslan interpreters at appointments with other health professionals varies significantly across States.

Figure 46: In the last 12 months, how often were you provided with a professional Auslan interpreter at appointments with other health professionals when you needed one?



Note: Results for Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory were not included due to the small sample from these areas.

The variation across States partly reflects the restrictions that individual Deaf Societies have placed on free interpreting provision.⁶³ The Victorian Deaf Society provides very little by way of free Auslan interpreting and the Western Australian Deaf Society has restricted interpreting service provision in chiropractic, dental and physiotherapy. Figure 46 shows that Deaf Auslan users in these two States report lower levels of provision of interpreting at consultations with other health professionals than in the other three States:

- ◆ only 17% and 23% of Deaf Auslan users in Victoria and Western Australia (respectively) were always able to get an interpreter for consultations with other health professionals when needed;
- ◆ in contrast, 70%, 51% and 40% of Deaf Auslan users in South Australia, Queensland and New South Wales (respectively) were always able to get an interpreter for consultations with other health professionals when needed.

There was no significant difference in the provision of interpreters at appointments with other health professionals between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas.

⁶³ Due to the small sample from SA and WA (n=19 and 14, respectively), the corresponding State estimates in Figure 46 have low statistical precision and should be treated with caution.

Funding

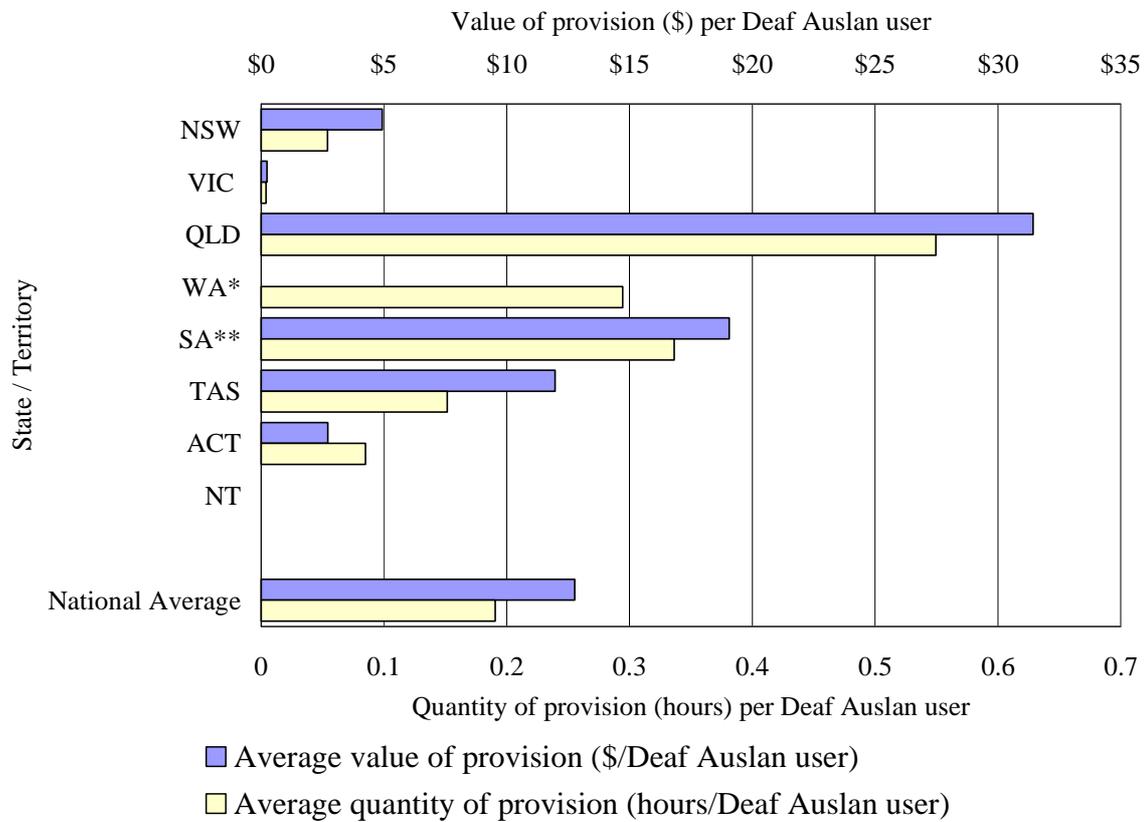
In 2002-03, the total cost of providing Auslan interpreters at consultations with health professionals (other than general practitioners and specialists) was around \$81,000. Almost all of this interpreting was provided by Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies free-of-charge, with only around 11% of costs being recouped through fees-for-service.

Figure 47 (following page) shows that the level of interpreting at appointments with health professionals (other than general practitioners and specialists) varies considerably across States and Territories. In 2002-03, the average per capita provision of Auslan interpreting at health professional consultations ranged from nothing/almost nothing in NT and Victoria to around half an hour per Deaf Auslan user (at a per capita cost of around \$30) in Queensland. The variation partly reflects different levels of free interpreting provision across Deaf Societies⁶⁴ and differences in Deaf Societies' policies in relation to the appointments with other health professionals they will cover. For example:

- ◆ the Tasmanian Deaf Society does not provide free interpreting at dentists or optometrist appointments; and
- ◆ the Western Australian Deaf Society has recently moved to restrict interpreting services for areas such as chiropractic, dental and physiotherapy.

⁶⁴ The Victorian Deaf Society provides very limited free interpreting services and this impacts on the level of interpreting provided in this service area. In total, the Victorian Deaf Society provided only \$368 worth of interpreting at health professional consultations, all of which was recouped on a fee for service basis.

Figure 47: Deaf Society and Territory Auslan interpreting agency provision of interpreters at appointments with other health professionals across States and Territories, 2002-03.



* The Western Australia Deaf Society was unable to supply data on the value (\$) of provision to other health professionals.

** Royal South Australia Deaf Society estimates are based on data on total private medical provision and the Society's estimate of proportion related to consultations with other health professionals.

VI. Auslan interpreting for legal and financial matters

This chapter examines the supply, demand and funding for Auslan interpreters for legal and financial matters across Australia. Legal and financial matters include, but are not limited to:

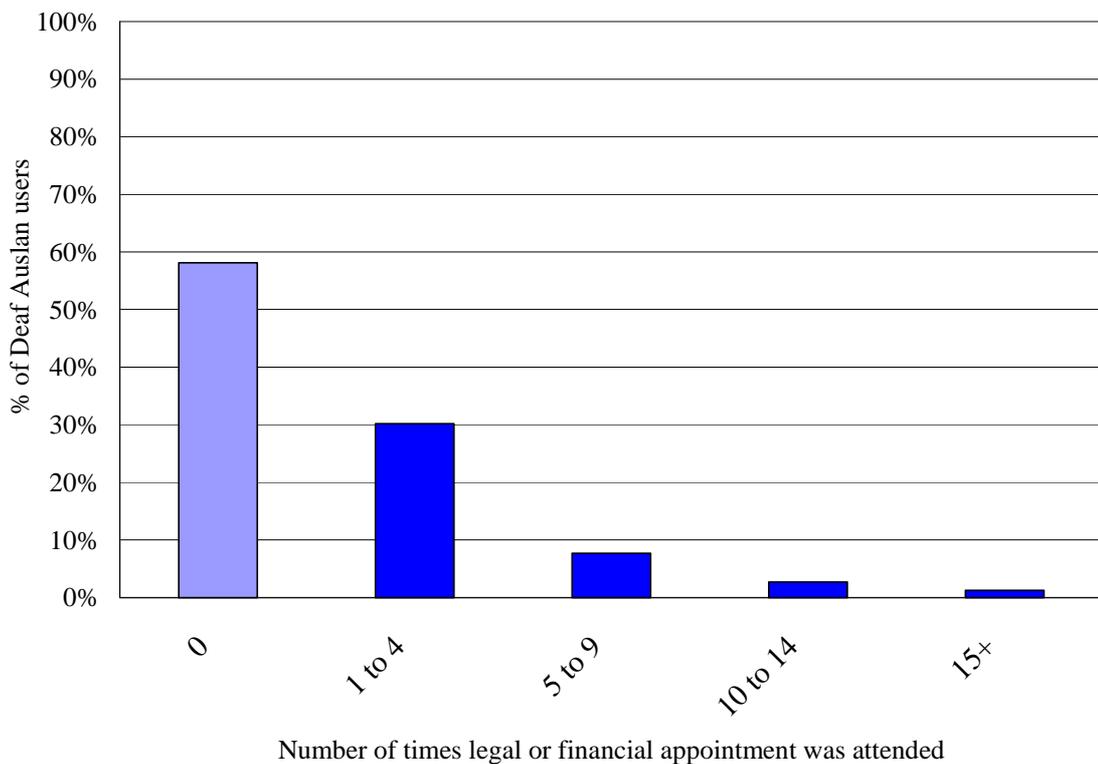
- ◆ meetings with police;
- ◆ appearances at court;
- ◆ legal aid consultations;
- ◆ private legal consultations; and
- ◆ private financial consultations.

A. Demand for Auslan interpreters

Figure 48 shows the number of times Deaf Auslan users had been to a legal or financial meeting or appointment in the last 12 months.

- ◆ The majority of survey respondents (58%) did not attend any legal or financial appointments.
- ◆ Thirty percent attended between one and four appointments.

Figure 48: In the last 12 months, how many appointments/meetings did you have about legal and financial matters?



On average, the Deaf Auslan users attended 1.7 legal or financial meetings in the last 12 months. Attendance at legal and financial appointments was:

- ◆ higher amongst males, who went to a legal or financial meeting 2.0 times over the last 12 months, compared with 1.5 times for females; and
- ◆ lower amongst those aged under 25 years, who went to a legal or financial meeting 0.72 times over the last 12 months, compared with 1.9 times for those aged over 25 years.

Fourteen percent of Deaf Auslan users who had a legal or financial meeting or appointment in the last 12 months said they did not need professional Auslan interpreters for these visits.

B. Supply of Auslan interpreters

Eighty six percent of Deaf Auslan users who had been to a legal or financial appointment in the last 12 months said they needed a professional interpreter. Of these people:

- ◆ 46% said they were always able to get an interpreter;
- ◆ 2% were able to get an interpreter more than half the time;
- ◆ 8% were able to get an interpreter less than half of the time; and
- ◆ 44% were never able to get an interpreter.⁶⁵

The main reasons given by respondents who did not always get an interpreter for legal and financial appointments included:

- ◆ lack of available interpreters (cited by around one third of these respondents);
- ◆ lack of awareness that s/he could ask for an interpreter (cited by around 20%); and
- ◆ interpreters being too expensive/not funded (cited by around 20%).

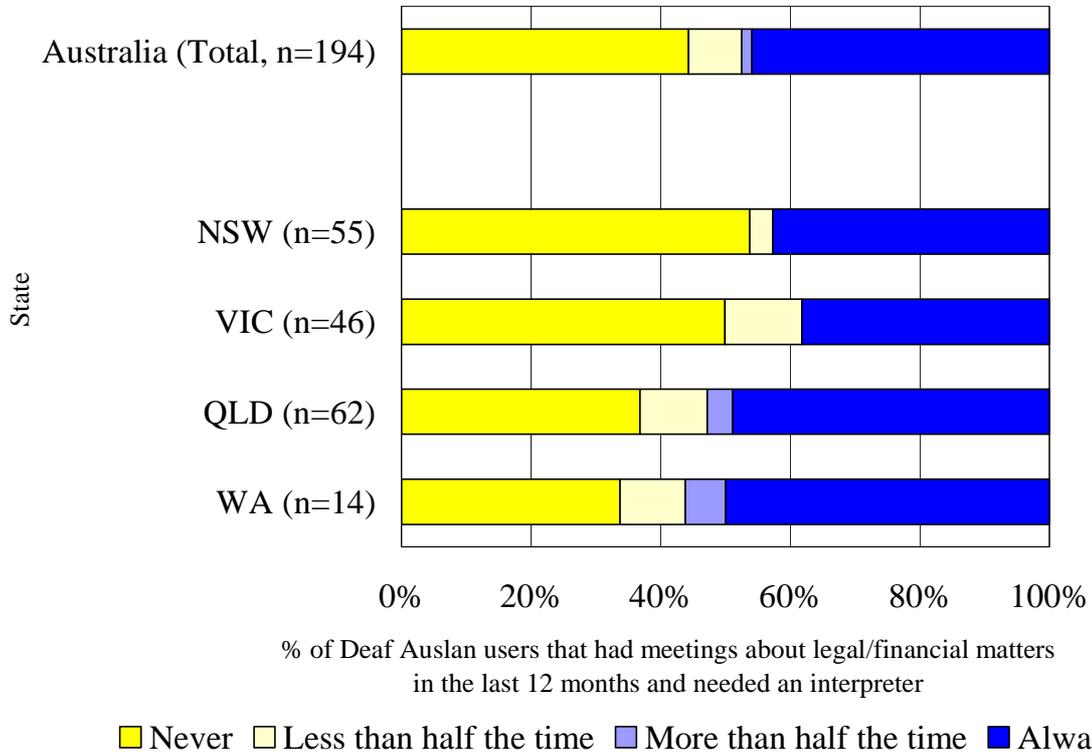
In the event that Deaf Auslan users were not able to obtain a professional interpreter for a legal or financial meeting:

- ◆ around half went without an interpreter;
- ◆ around one third went with a friend or family member to interpret;
- ◆ around 15% postponed or delayed the meeting until a professional interpreter was available; and
- ◆ 5% cancelled the meeting.

⁶⁵ Attachment B outlines how these estimates were derived.

Figure 49 shows the variation between States in the provision of Auslan interpreters for legal and financial meetings. The proportion of Deaf Auslan users in each State always able to get an Auslan interpreter for legal or financial matters (dark blue bars) ranges from 38% in Victoria to 50% in Western Australia.

Figure 49: In the last 12 months, how often were you provided with a professional Auslan interpreter at a legal or financial appointment when you needed one?



Note: Results for South Australia, Tasmania, ACT and NT have been excluded due to an insufficient number of respondents from these States.

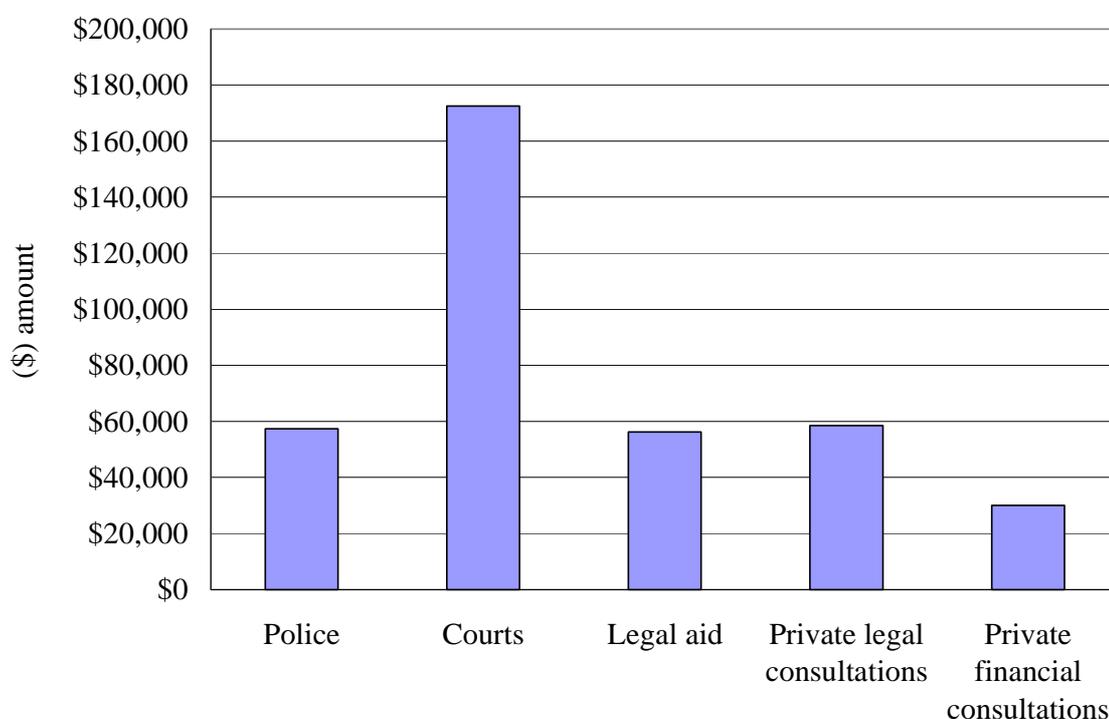
There was no statistically significant difference between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas in the provision of interpreters at legal and financial meetings.

C. Funding of Auslan interpreting services

Auslan interpreting service providers reported a total of around \$400,000 was spent on interpreting for legal and financial matters in 2002-03.⁶⁶ Figure 50 shows that of this amount:

- ◆ 15% was for interpreting in police matters;
- ◆ 45% was for interpreting in court;
- ◆ 15% was directed to interpreting for legal aid matters;
- ◆ 16% was for interpreting in private legal consultations; and
- ◆ 8% was for private financial consultations.

Figure 50: Total cost of providing Auslan interpreting for legal and financial matters, 2002-03



A number of States and Territories were unable to completely account for all legal and financial spending in a breakdown by the contexts shown above. While the amount remaining has been included in total interpreting for legal and financial contexts it has not been included in Figure 50, resulting in a slight discrepancy in totals.⁶⁷

The Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies were the major providers of Auslan interpreters for legal and financial matters, although in New South Wales

⁶⁶ Including spending by Deaf Societies, Territory interpreting agencies and other service providers who were able to provide data.

⁶⁷ These were: South Australia, Victoria, Western Australia, Tasmania, the ACT and NT.

interpreting services for legal matters are provided through the Community Relations Commission.

In the Deaf Auslan user survey, when asked who paid for the interpreter at a legal or financial meeting:

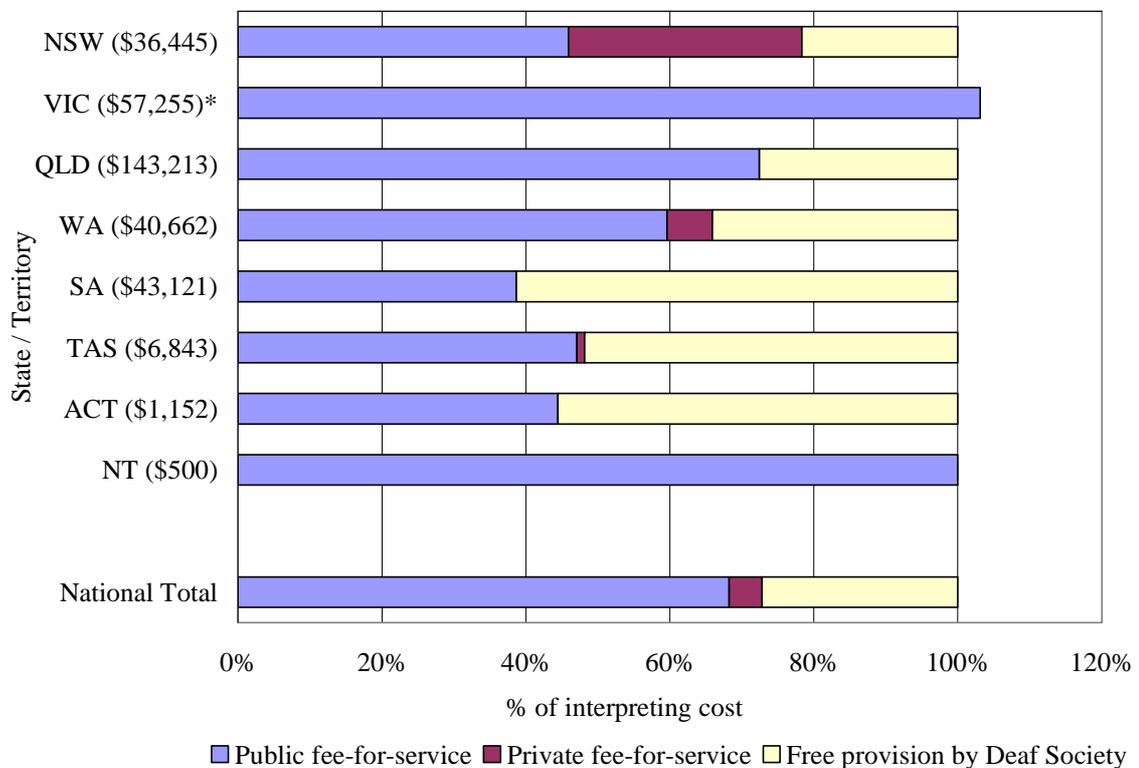
- ◆ 7% of Deaf Auslan users who used a professional interpreter for a legal or financial matter said that they had contributed to the cost of interpreting;
- ◆ 32% answered that the legal or financial service had paid for the interpreter;
- ◆ 49% answered that the interpreting agency had paid; and
- ◆ 24% gave other reasons such as they did not know who paid, friends or family paid, or some other agency paid.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Multiple responses were allowed.

Figure 51 shows the sources of funding of Deaf Societies' expenditure on the provision of Auslan interpreting services for legal and financial matters in 2002-03. (In Figure 51, "public fee-for-service" are those interpreting services purchased by public sector agencies for a fee, "private fee-for-service" are those interpreting services purchased by private sector organisations for a fee. The remainder of services were provided free-of-charge by the Deaf Societies.)

- ◆ In NSW and Victoria, Auslan interpreting service providers other than Deaf Societies provide the majority of interpreting for public legal matters. The Deaf Societies of New South Wales and Victoria had the lowest proportions of free interpreting provision for legal and financial matters.
- ◆ The Royal South Australian Deaf Society provided the highest proportion of fee-free interpreting.⁶⁹

Figure 51: Deaf Society and Territory Auslan interpreting agency funding sources for interpreting for legal and financial matters, 2002-03



Note: Total funding for interpreting for legal and financial matters in each State is shown in brackets
 * VicDeaf collected slightly more in public fees-for-service from interpreting in legal matters than their costs in providing this service, effectively cross-subsidising interpreting services in other areas.

Ninety eight percent of Auslan interpreting for public legal matters by Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies was covered by public fee-for-service funding. This included interpreting relating to courts, police and legal aid. In contrast, of the total amount spent on Auslan interpreting services at private legal and financial consultations, 84% was provided by Deaf Societies free-of-charge. Deaf Societies noted that it is

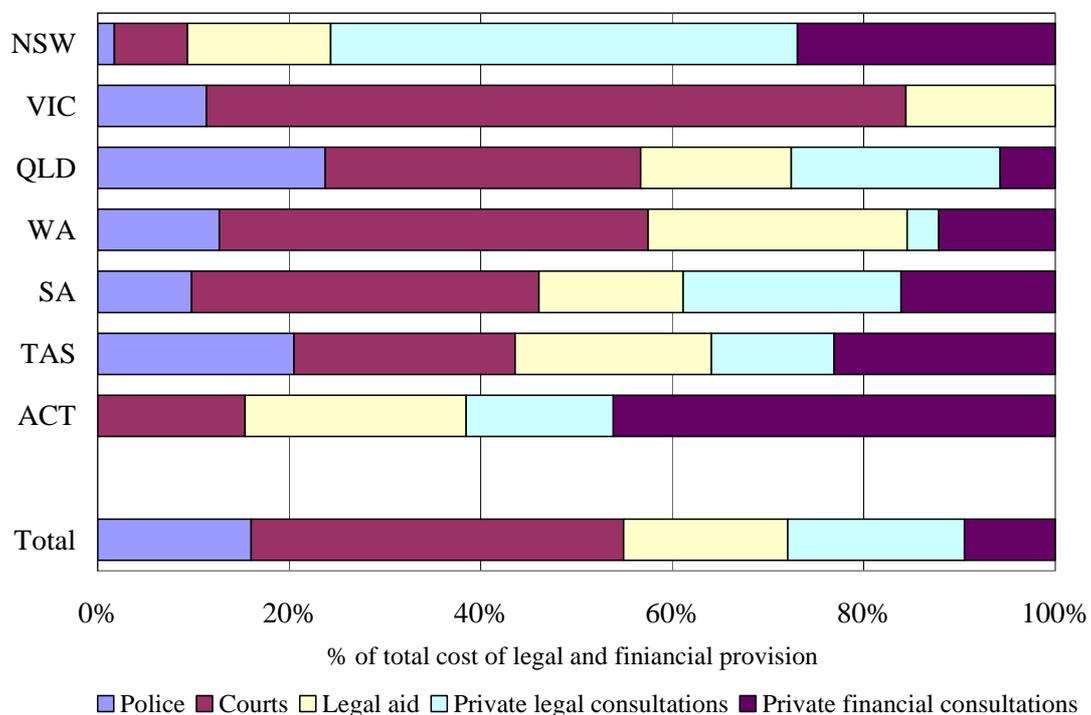
⁶⁹ In 2003-04, the Royal South Australian Deaf Society has ceased offering free Auslan interpreting except in very limited circumstances.

difficult to find private legal and financial practitioners who are willing to pay Auslan interpreting fees for their Deaf clients.

Figure 52 illustrates the breakdown of Deaf Society expenditure in 2002-03 on interpreting for legal and financial matters by type of service provided.

- ◆ In Victoria, interpreting in courts accounts for the greatest proportion of VicDeaf’s budget for interpreting for legal and financial matters.
- ◆ In Queensland and Tasmania, a relatively high proportion of total expenditure is allocated to interpreting for police matters.

Figure 52: The composition of Auslan interpreting for legal and financial matters by State Deaf Societies and the ACT Deafness Resource Centre, 2002-03

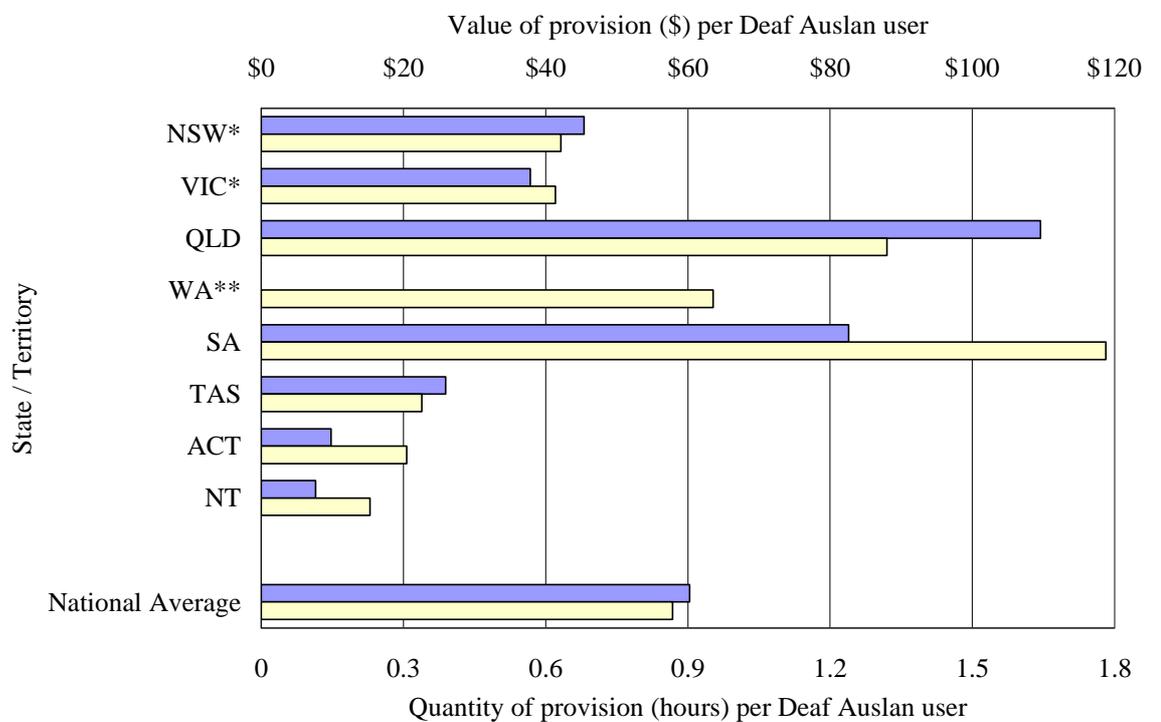


Note: NT interpreting provision is excluded due to very small amounts of interpreting for legal and financial matters provided by the Northern Territory Interpreting and Translating Service in 2002-03.

Figure 53 shows the average per capita level of Auslan interpreting for legal and financial matters for 2002-03:

- ◆ South Australia provided around 1.8 hours of Auslan interpreting for legal and financial matters per Deaf Auslan user (at a cost of around \$80 per Deaf Auslan user);
- ◆ Queensland provided around 1.3 hours of Auslan interpreting for legal and financial matters per Deaf Auslan user (at a cost of around \$110 per Deaf Auslan user); and
- ◆ available data from New South Wales and Victoria suggest a lower level of provision of Auslan interpreting for legal and financial matters than in Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia. This may have contributed to the relatively high level of unmet demand for interpreting for legal and financial matters (see Figure 49).⁷⁰

Figure 53: Deaf Society and Territory Auslan interpreting agency provision of interpreters at legal and financial appointments, 2002-03



- Average value of provision (\$/Deaf Auslan user) ■ Average quantity of provision (hours/Deaf Auslan user)
- * Data for both NSW and Victoria underestimate the provision due to lack of data from Auslan interpreting service providers other than Deaf Societies.
- ** WA Deaf Society only able to provide data on hours of provision across service areas.

⁷⁰ Only partial data are available for NSW and Victoria in relation to Auslan interpreting for legal and financial matters. It is unclear to what extent estimates in Figure 53 understate provision of Auslan interpreting for legal and financial matters in these two States.

VII. Auslan interpreting for education and employment matters

This chapter examines the supply and demand for Auslan interpreters within the education and employment sectors.

Section A presents the Deaf Auslan user survey data.

Section B sets out the supply and demand for interpreters for primary and secondary education and Section C examines the provision of interpreting for Deaf people undertaking further education. These two sectors have been addressed separately because the supply and demand issues at the two levels of education are quite different.

Section D relates to issues specific to the use of interpreters for employment matters.

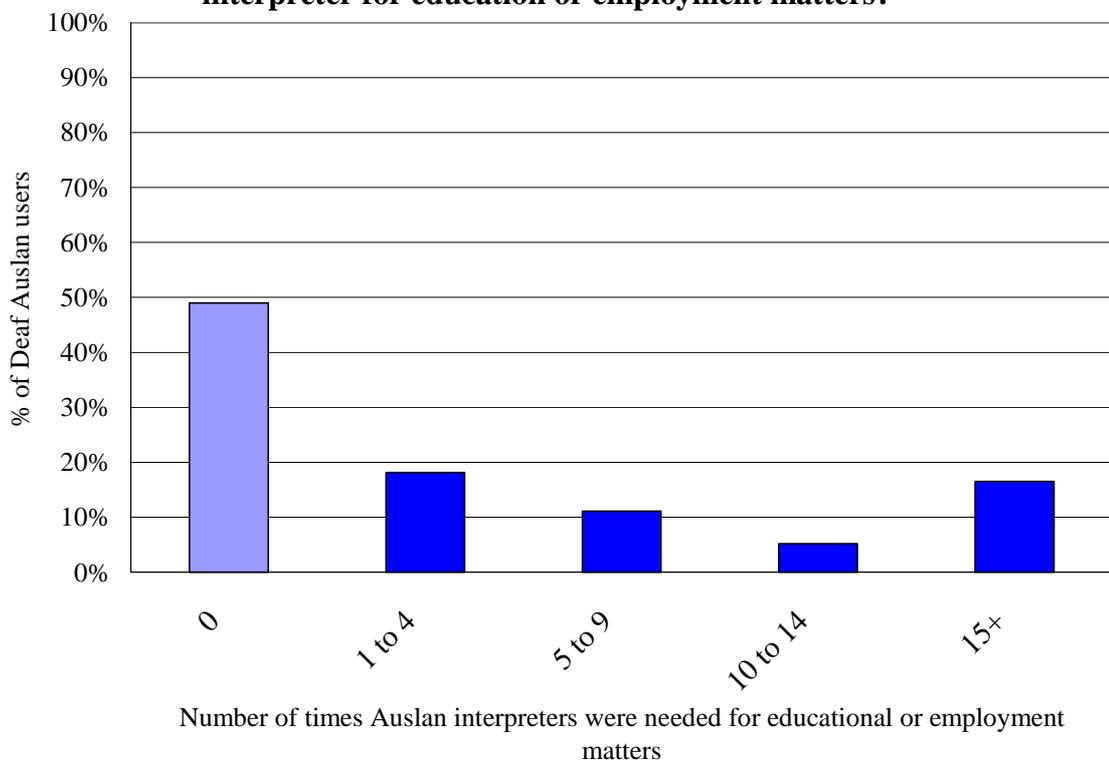
A. Results of Deaf Auslan user survey

The Deaf Auslan user survey asked respondents how many times an Auslan interpreter was required for education or employment matters in the last 12 months.

Figure 54 shows:

- ◆ 49% of respondents indicated that they did not need an interpreter for education or employment matters in the last 12 months; and
- ◆ 17% of respondents indicated they needed an interpreter more than 15 times in the last 12 months.

Figure 54: In the last 12 months how many times did you need an Auslan interpreter for education or employment matters?



Note: There were some incomplete responses to the Deaf Auslan user survey. This figure is based only on the responses where the number of appointments was clear.

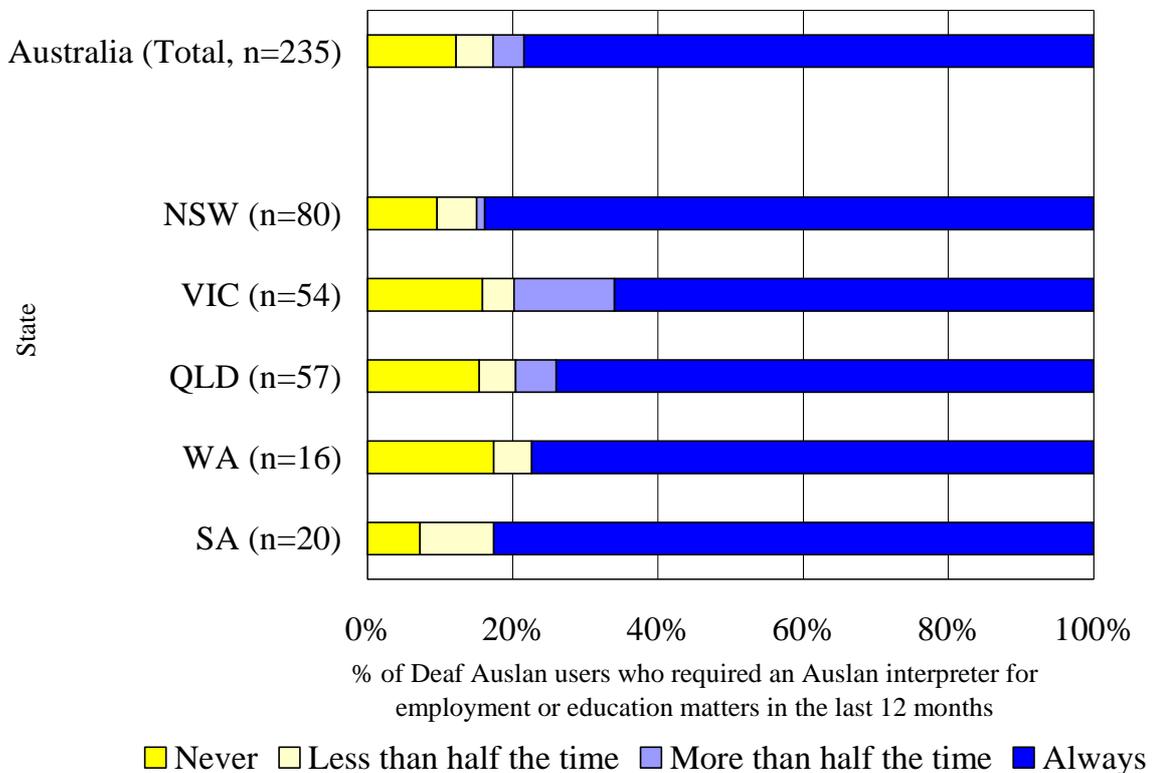
On average, respondents needed an Auslan interpreter for education or employment 13.8 times in the last 12 months.

Of the 51% of Deaf Auslan users who needed an interpreter for education or employment matters in the last 12 months:

- ◆ 78% were always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter;
- ◆ 4% had one more than half the time;
- ◆ 5% had an interpreter less than half of the time; and
- ◆ 12% were never able to get an Auslan interpreter.⁷¹

Figure 55 shows the extent to which Auslan interpreters were provided when needed for education or employment matters across States. The proportion of Deaf Auslan users in each State always able to get an Auslan interpreter for an education or employment matter (dark blue bars) ranges from 66% in Victoria to 84% in NSW.

Figure 55: In the last 12 months, how often were you provided with a professional Auslan interpreter for an education or employment matter when you needed one?



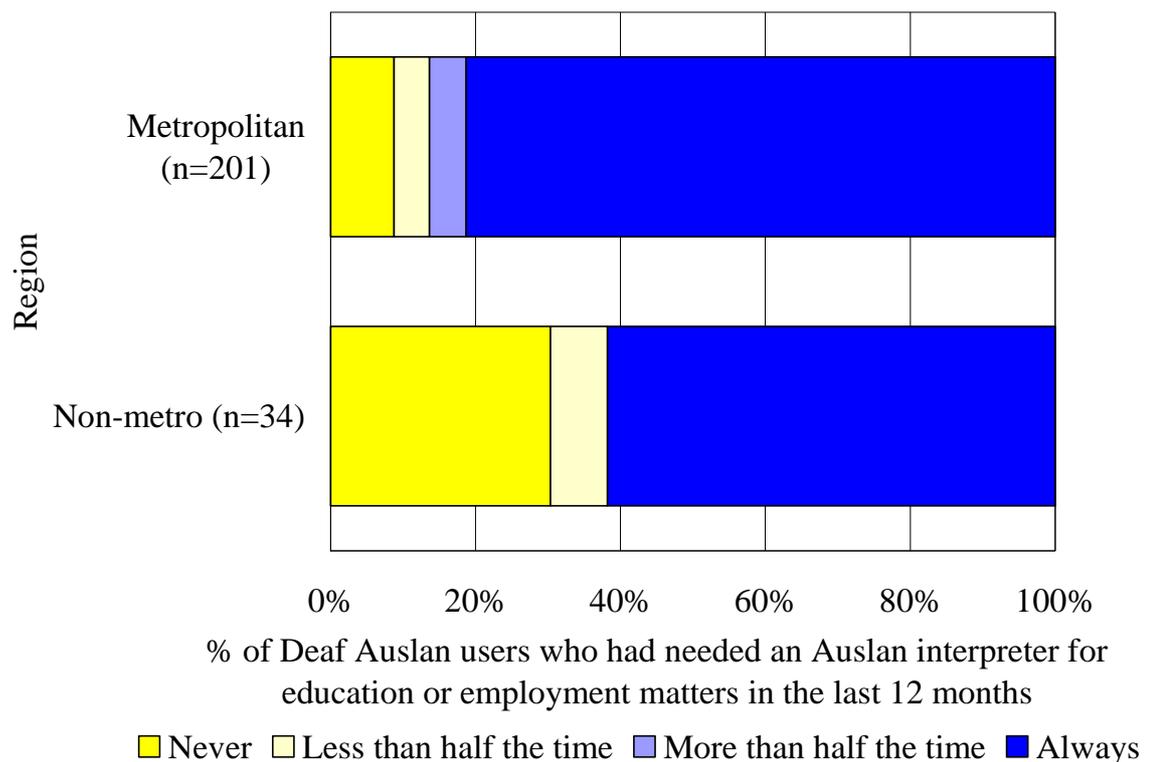
Note: Results for Tasmania, the ACT and the Northern Territory were not included due to the small sample from these areas.

⁷¹ Attachment B outlines how these estimates were derived.

Figure 56 shows for education or employment matters:

- ◆ 81% of metropolitan respondents were always able to obtain an interpreter for education or employment matters, compared to 62% of non-metropolitan respondents; and
- ◆ 8% of metropolitan respondents never obtained an interpreter for education or employment matters in the last 12 months, compared to 30% of respondents from non-metropolitan areas.

Figure 56: In the last 12 months, how often were you provided with a professional Auslan interpreter for an education or employment matter when you needed one?



B. Auslan interpreting in primary and secondary education

The Auslan user survey was sent to Deaf Auslan users over the age of 16. Therefore the survey provided little guidance on the demand and supply of Auslan interpreting in primary and secondary schools throughout Australia. Stakeholder consultation forms the main basis for the information presented below on Auslan interpreting in primary and secondary education.

Factors influencing demand for Auslan interpreting in schools

Over the last fifty or so years there has been a shift toward educating Deaf students in mainstream schools rather than dedicated schools for the Deaf. Australia now has one of

the highest rates of hearing impaired and Deaf children enrolled in mainstream schools in the world⁷² and only a few schools remain which cater solely for signing Deaf students.⁷³

Demand for Auslan interpreting for primary and secondary schooling varies across the nation and, in large part, relates to communication policies adopted by State and Territory education departments. Two main methods for communication with Deaf students predominate. These are:

- ◆ oralism and signed English, an approach which combines an emphasis on the teaching of English speech and lip reading, with the signing of exact representations of each word of spoken English; and
- ◆ bilingual programs, primarily involving instruction through Auslan, with scope for students to also learn spoken English if they choose.

Where a Deaf primary or secondary student lives is a key determinant of whether s/he receives instruction through the oralism and signed English approach or a bilingual Auslan-based education.

- ◆ In NSW, it is current government policy that Deaf children receive instruction in signed English. Auslan is only available in two schools in NSW and there are only a few Deaf students at each of these schools.
- ◆ Signed English is also predominant in the Northern Territory and Queensland (although there are two bilingual Deaf education programs in Brisbane).
- ◆ The Victorian government does not have a set policy on the language of instruction. The Victorian School for Deaf Children indicated that roughly half of Victorian Deaf children receive instruction in bilingual Auslan programs.
- ◆ In Tasmania, the majority of Deaf school students attend one bilingual (mainstream) school.
- ◆ The Royal South Australian Deaf Society advises that Auslan has been used in primary and secondary schools in South Australia for quite some time.
- ◆ There are only around 10 Deaf primary and secondary students in the ACT, all of whom attend mainstream schools. Most of these schools employ the Oralism and signed English approach. The ACT has a bilingual program at one primary school for Deaf children who want to sign in Auslan, but there is only one Deaf student at this school.
- ◆ In Western Australian schools, the majority of Deaf students communicate orally (lip reading) or use signed English. However, all Auslan using students (45 primary and secondary school students) have been provided an Auslan interpreter on an individual basis.

As evident from the information above, bilingual programs are currently less commonly delivered in primary and secondary education, which has an impact on the demand for Auslan interpreters. It is the case, however, that bilingual programs have been introduced

⁷² Hyde and Power (2002).

⁷³ For a more thorough view of the historical development of approaches to educating Deaf children in Australia, see: Ozolins and Bridge (1999) pp. 10-12, 17. For greater detail on the impact of mainstreaming on the use of sign language by Deaf children see Johnston (2003).

in at least one school in most States and Territories, with a trend toward further bilingual education in most States.

This trend towards Auslan-based educational instruction in primary and secondary schools may be increasingly influenced by the use of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* to challenge the failure of educators to provide Auslan interpreters when requested by Deaf students or their parents. Families of Deaf students alleging discrimination have taken successful action in both Western Australia⁷⁴ and the ACT⁷⁵ in relation to failure to provide students with the assistance of an Auslan interpreter.

A move toward greater national provision of bilingual instruction in primary and secondary education would seem likely to increase future demand for Auslan interpreting. However, some State and Territory education departments noted that this may be somewhat countered by the fact that an increasing number of children born profoundly Deaf are receiving cochlear implants. This will eventually lead to a decreased demand for Auslan interpreters in the education sector.

Issues relating to the supply of professional Auslan interpreters in schools

State and Territory education departments or schools usually provide Auslan interpreters in primary and secondary schools. Most education authorities employ Auslan interpreters directly rather than through Auslan interpreting service providers. Deaf Societies have limited involvement in the provision of interpreting services in primary and secondary education.

In a number of States and Territories, Auslan interpreters are engaged as teachers' aides rather than as professional interpreters. This means interpreting qualifications and accreditation are not a prerequisite. As teachers' aides, school-based interpreters receive lower rates of pay than Auslan interpreters in tertiary education or other industry sectors. This makes it difficult to attract accredited interpreters to work in primary and secondary schools.

Funding for Auslan interpreters in schools

State and Territory governments were able to provide little data on the funding for Auslan interpreting services in primary and secondary schools. Only South Australia was able to provide an estimate (of \$17,000) for the amount of Auslan interpreting provided in primary and secondary schools in that State.

⁷⁴ The greater provision of Auslan interpreters in Western Australian primary and secondary education occurred in response to a decision of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. There is currently a case before the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission in relation to the lack of relief Auslan interpreters in schools in Western Australia. In response to this, the Department of Education is exploring the option of employing a full-time Auslan relief interpreter.

⁷⁵ *Clarke v Catholic Education Office & Anor* [2003] FCA 1085

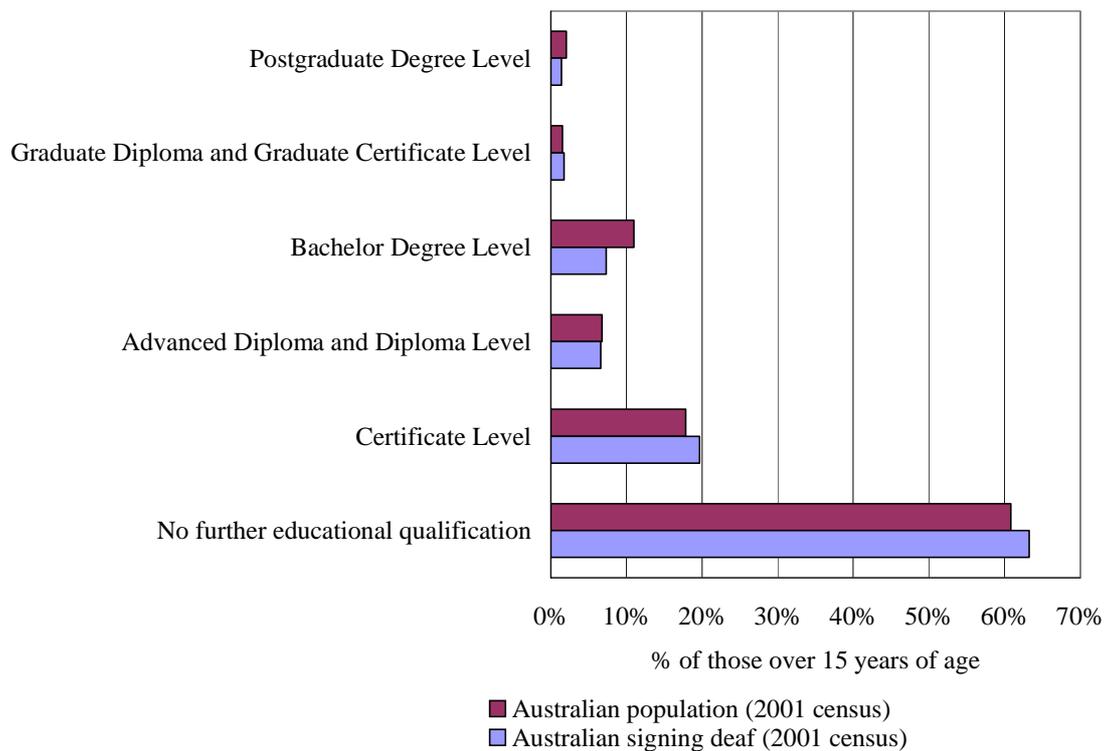
C. Auslan interpreting in further education

In comparison to primary and secondary schooling, stakeholder feedback indicates that Auslan is more commonly the primary method of communication for Deaf students undertaking vocational education and training and tertiary education.

Figure 57 draws on the ABS 2001 census data, showing that Deaf people are more likely than the general Australian population to undertake further education to the Certificate, Diploma and Advanced Diploma levels. This suggests strong demand for Auslan interpreting in the vocational education and training sector.

Although Deaf people are less likely to undertake degree courses to the Bachelor level, Deaf university graduates participate in post-graduate degree studies to a similar level to the general Australian population. While there are Deaf tertiary students across Australia, they are not spread evenly across tertiary institutions. Deaf people have generally chosen to study at institutions that provide high levels of support for Deaf students such as Griffith University and the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. This affects the geographical spread of the demand for interpreters both within and between States and Territories.

Figure 57: Further education qualifications of the ABS 2001 census signing Deaf population compared to the general Australian population



Issues relating to the supply of professional Auslan interpreters in further education

Research by the Tertiary Education Disability Council of Australia has identified⁷⁶ considerable variation in the pay and working conditions of interpreters across different tertiary institutions. Reasons for this include whether pay scales recognise accreditation levels, travel time and after-hours interpreting.

Different approaches are also adopted in engaging and managing the provision of Auslan interpreters in the further education sector. Some further education institutions have specialist units or staff responsible for coordinating interpreting, while in others a disability officer undertakes this role. Other approaches are for the Deaf student to coordinate the provision of interpreters or for this role to be outsourced to the State Deaf Society.

Stakeholders indicated that there is a shortage of sufficiently skilled Auslan interpreters in the further education sector, particularly in some non-metropolitan and outer suburban areas. Deaf people are choosing a diverse range of subjects and courses but there is a lack of interpreters with the high-level skills and specialisation necessary to interpret these subjects. Many Auslan interpreters have not undertaken studies at a tertiary level, and there are some subjects for which there are very few interpreters with relevant background knowledge.

A number of stakeholders were also concerned about the use of unaccredited interpreters in the further education sector. Universities generally only employ accredited interpreters and some States and Territories (such as the ACT) only permit accredited interpreters to interpret at Technical and Further Education institutes.

Funding

Australian, State and Territory governments jointly fund Auslan interpreting for Deaf students undertaking vocational education and training as a component of funding of the Australian National Training Authority Agreement.

The Australian Government funds the tertiary education sector through the provision of funds to universities. Approaches vary across tertiary institutions as to whether funding is used to set up in-house Auslan interpreting units (either to manage or provide interpreting services) or to purchase interpreting services from Auslan interpreting service providers.

⁷⁶ Hartley Judy, "Briefing Paper drafted on behalf of TEDCA on the issues related to the use of sign language interpreters in the tertiary sector" May 2000.

Partial data provided by State governments, Deaf Societies and further education institutions suggest that total expenditure on Auslan interpreting in 2002-03 for further education (both vocational education and training and tertiary education) was at least \$2.6 million. This represents around half of the total expenditure on Auslan interpreting across all service areas. The amount spent varies significantly between States and Territories.

- ◆ The largest reported expenditure (almost \$1.5 million) was in the NSW Technical and Further Education system.⁷⁷
- ◆ By contrast, expenditure by the Queensland government on interpreting in Technical and Further Education institutes was in the order of \$0.25 million.

The extent to which this variation is the result of some States and Territories having a greater number of Deaf students undertaking further education is difficult to assess.

D. Auslan interpreting for employment-related matters

Demand

Most stakeholders and Deaf Auslan users indicated it was important to have Auslan interpreters in the following employment situations:

- ◆ job interviews;
- ◆ induction processes;
- ◆ staff meetings;
- ◆ conferences;
- ◆ performance reviews or appraisals;
- ◆ training courses;
- ◆ industrial relations matters; and
- ◆ when information is being provided to Deaf staff about workplace health and safety regulations and procedures (e.g. fire drills and evacuation procedures).

Consultations with Deaf Societies and State government representatives indicated that one factor driving demand for employment-related Auslan interpreting was the increasing number of Deaf people gaining tertiary qualifications and entering professional employment.

⁷⁷ As shown in Figure 55, 86% of Deaf Auslan users in NSW indicated that they were always able to get an Auslan interpreter for an education or employment matter – higher than for any other State.

Stakeholders were concerned that some Deaf people are unaware of the availability of interpreters for employment-related matters or are unwilling to ask for interpreters.

- ◆ Deaf people sometimes think they are better off not using an interpreter in job interviews to counter employers' perceptions that Deaf people are more expensive to employ.
- ◆ Some Deaf Auslan users were reluctant to ask for interpreters because of the additional cost to their employers.

Issues relating to the supply of professional Auslan interpreters for employment-related matters

The main issues stakeholders raised that affected the supply of Auslan interpreters for employment-related matters were:

- ◆ the costs of providing interpreters;
- ◆ the shortage of qualified interpreters, particularly at short notice;
- ◆ difficulties with booking interpreters;
- ◆ employers being unaware of the need for interpreters;
- ◆ employers refusing to pay for interpreters; and
- ◆ interpreters failing to attend appointments.

Of those Deaf Auslan user survey respondents who were not able to obtain an interpreter for an employment or education related matter when they needed one:

- ◆ around one third postponed or delayed the appointment until a professional interpreter was available;
- ◆ around 20% went to the appointment with a friend or family member to interpret;
- ◆ around 20% communicated/proceeded without an interpreter; and
- ◆ around 20% cancelled their appointment.

Others reported that:

- ◆ another employee had interpreted for them; or
- ◆ they requested written summaries of meetings where possible.

Funding

Consultations with representatives from State and Territory governments and Auslan interpreting service providers indicated that generally smaller employers were not willing to pay for Auslan interpreters. Larger employers and government departments usually have more capacity to engage interpreters.

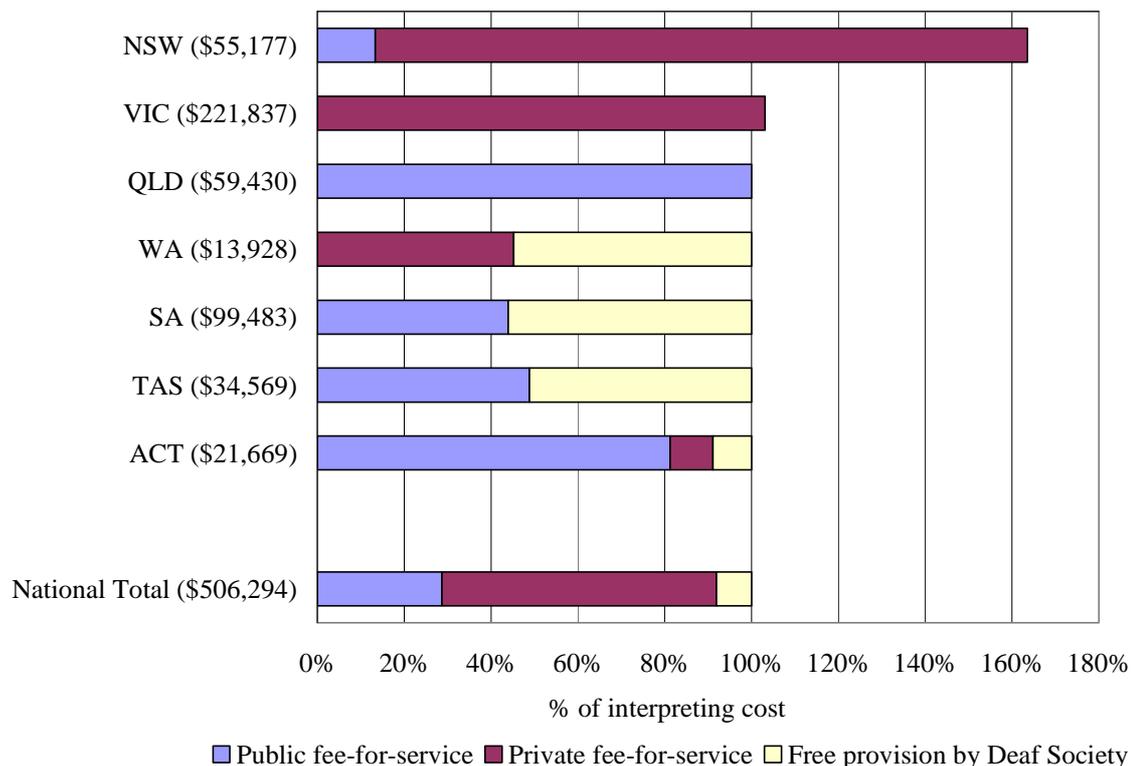
To some extent, Deaf Societies and Territory Auslan interpreting agencies provide free interpreting services in employment-related matters. Figure 58 (following page) shows that the amount of such free interpreting varies considerably across States.

- ◆ The South Australian, Western Australian and Tasmanian Deaf Societies provided around half of their interpreting services for employment-related matters free-of-

charge. In Western Australia, the remainder of interpreting for employment-related matters provided by the Deaf Society was recovered from the private sector (e.g. private sector employers) on a fee-for-service basis. By contrast, in South Australia and Tasmania, the remainder was derived wholly from public sector fee-for-service arrangements.

- ◆ The Victorian and NSW Deaf Societies provided no interpreting for employment-related matters free-of-charge. In both States, interpreting for employment-related matters was predominantly paid for by private sector organisations, with both Deaf Societies realising a profit in this area, effectively cross-subsidising interpreting in other contexts. In both these States, other Auslan interpreting service providers provide a significant amount of interpreting for employment-related matters.⁷⁸
- ◆ The Queensland Deaf Society and the ACT Deafness Resource Centre predominantly provided interpreting for employment-related matters to public sector agencies on fee-for-service basis.

Figure 58: Deaf Society and Territory Auslan interpreting agency funding sources for interpreting for employment-related matters, 2002-03



Note: Both the NSW Deaf Society and VicDeaf received more revenue in fees for service for employment-related matters than their expenditure in this area. For example the NSW Deaf Society raised \$90,255 from fees-for-service for interpreting which cost them only \$55,177 to provide. This profit effectively subsidises Auslan interpreting in other contexts.

⁷⁸ Data were not available from these service providers. Hence, Figure 58 focuses on Deaf Society provision.

VIII. Overall opinions of Deaf Auslan users

A. Availability of Auslan interpreters when needed

To ascertain Deaf Auslan users’ views on the accessibility of Auslan interpreters in their area, the user survey asked how strongly respondents agreed with the following statements:

- ◆ “Mostly I can get an Auslan interpreter when I need one”; and
- ◆ “If I needed a professional Auslan interpreter quickly, I could get one”.

Figure 59: Extent to which Deaf Auslan users felt they could get an interpreter.

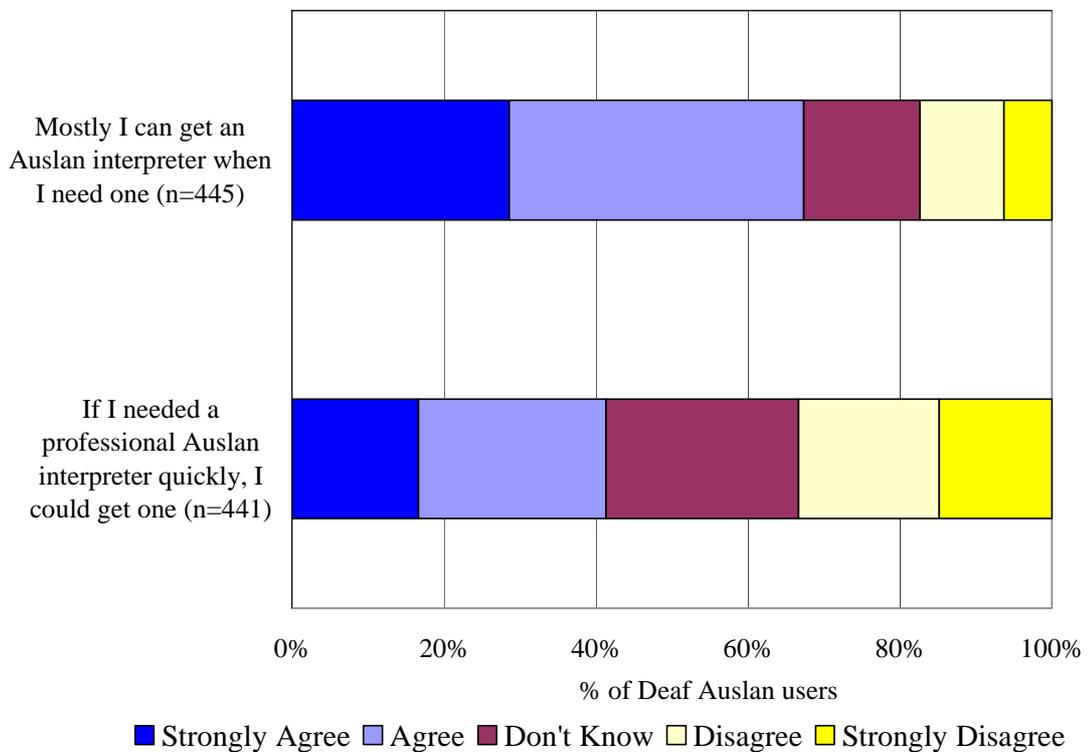


Figure 59 shows that:

- ◆ 67% of Deaf Auslan users agreed that they could mostly get an Auslan interpreter when they needed one, while 17% disagreed; and
- ◆ 41% agreed that they could get a professional Auslan interpreter quickly, while 33% disagreed.

Figure 60 shows the views of Deaf Auslan users in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas on the availability of interpreters.

- ◆ Seventy two percent of Deaf Auslan users in metropolitan areas considered that they could mostly get an interpreter when needed, compared with 60% of those in non-metropolitan areas; and
- ◆ Just under half of Deaf Auslan users in metropolitan areas considered that they could get an interpreter quickly, with a slightly lower satisfaction level in non-metropolitan areas (40%).

Figure 60: Extent to which respondents agreed they could get an interpreter, by region

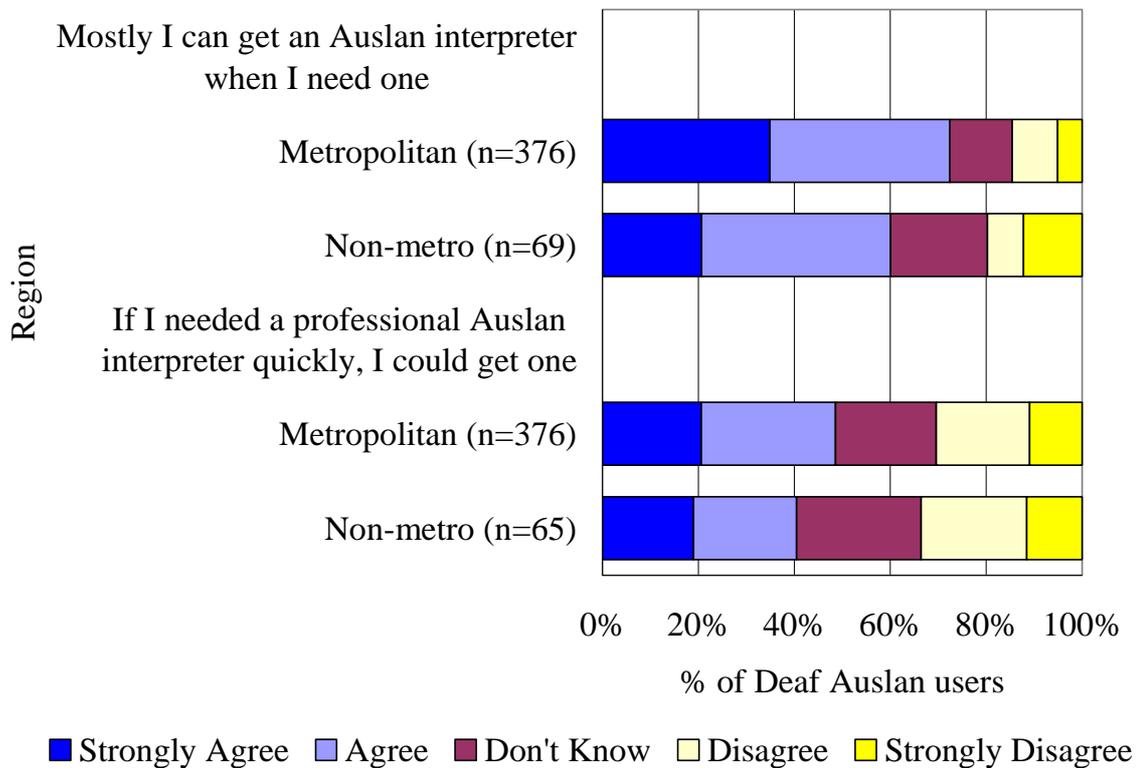
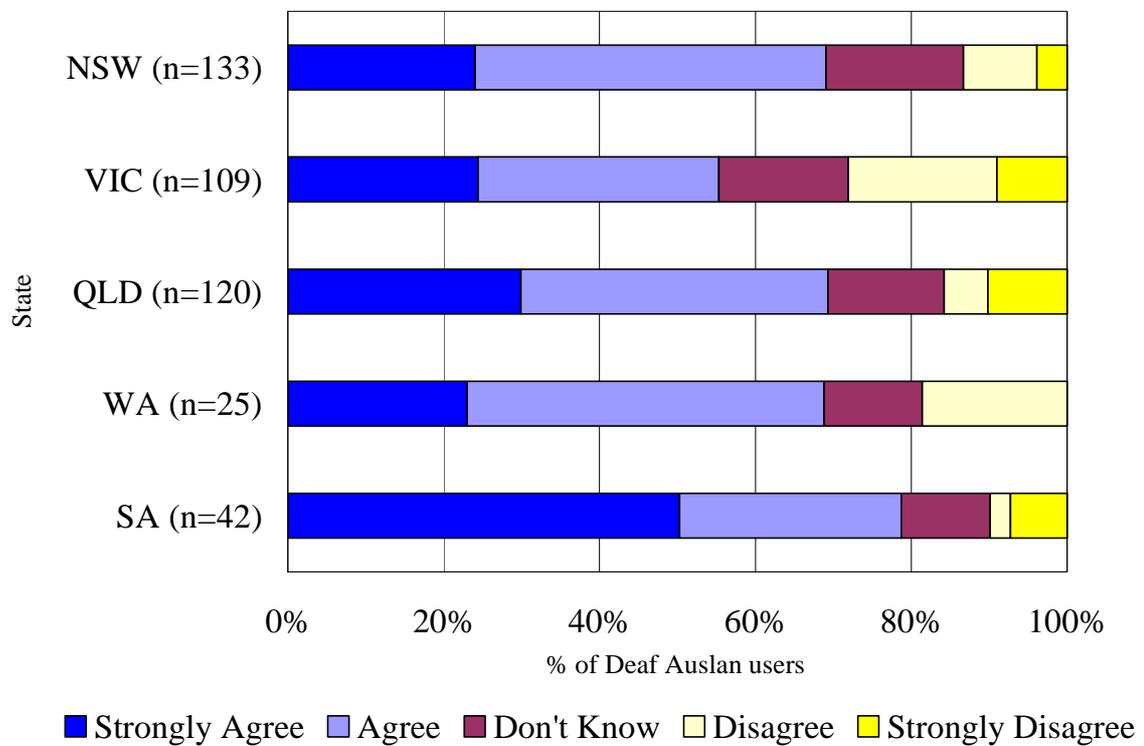


Figure 61 and Figure 62 (page 118) show Deaf Auslan users’ views on the availability of interpreters varied considerably across States.⁷⁹ A factor affecting perceptions about interpreter availability may be the distribution of Auslan interpreters across Australia. For example, VicDeaf reported only two active Auslan interpreters working in non-metropolitan Victoria.

- ◆ Fifty five percent of Deaf Auslan users in Victoria agreed that they could mostly get an interpreter when needed (Figure 61), compared with 67% nationally (Figure 59).
- ◆ Sixty six percent of Deaf Auslan users in South Australia agreed that they could get an interpreter quickly if needed (Figure 62), compared with 41% nationally (Figure 59).

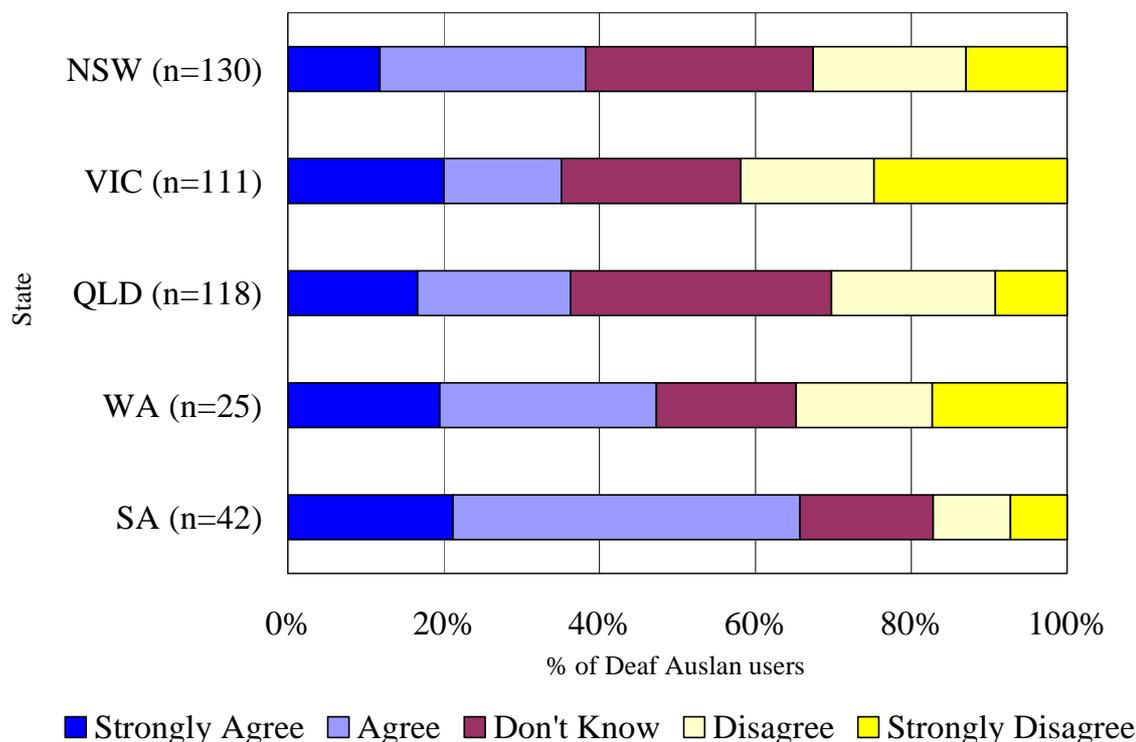
Figure 61: Extent to which respondents agreed they could mostly get an interpreter when needed, by State



Note: Tasmania, ACT and NT not included due to small sample size.

⁷⁹ Tasmania, the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory have been excluded from Figure 61 and Figure 62 due to the small sample sizes.

Figure 62: Extent to which respondents agreed they could get an interpreter quickly when needed, by State



Note: Tasmania, ACT and NT not included due to small sample size.

The Deaf Auslan user survey also invited respondents to comment generally on their need for Auslan interpreters. The majority of concerns related to the lack of availability of interpreters for scheduled medical visits, and for emergencies involving either medical or police issues.

This is consistent with the finding that, of all the service areas examined, interpreting in private medical consultations is the service area for which the greatest proportion of Deaf Auslan users reported an unmet need for an interpreter in the last 12 months.

As outlined in Chapter V, Deaf Societies provide the bulk of interpreting for private medical matters free-of-charge. However, there is considerable variation in the level of provision across States and Territories. This variation closely resembled the levels of unmet demand for interpreting in private medical settings across States and Territories. The correlation between the levels of unmet demand for interpreting for private medical consultations and the overall ratings in Figure 61 and Figure 62 indicates that the extent to which the demand for interpreting for private medical consultations is met is closely related to overall perceptions of, and satisfaction with, access to Auslan interpreting.

B. Provision of interpreters by government agencies, employers and private service providers

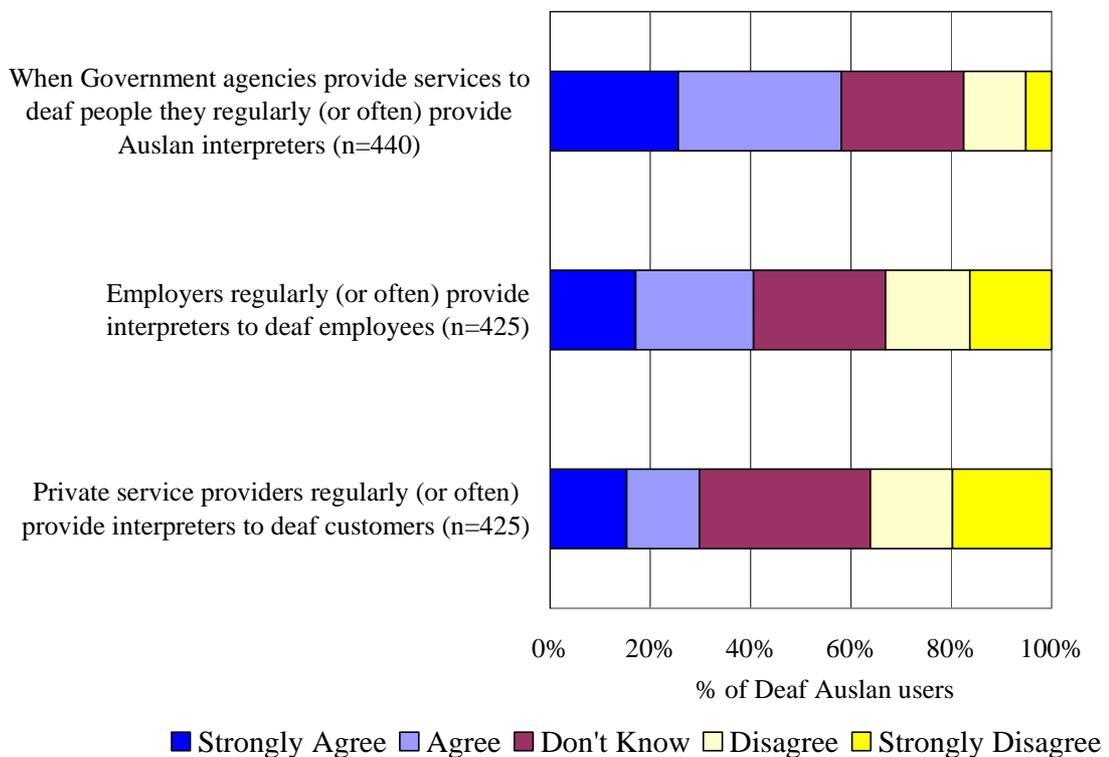
The Deaf Auslan user survey asked how strongly respondents agreed with the following statements:

- ◆ “When Government agencies provide services to Deaf people they regularly (or often) provide Auslan interpreters”;
- ◆ “Employers regularly (or often) provide interpreters to Deaf employees”; and
- ◆ “Private service providers regularly (or often) provide interpreters to Deaf customers”.

Figure 63 shows that:

- ◆ 58% of Deaf Auslan users agreed that government sector agencies regularly provide Auslan interpreters, while 18% disagreed;
- ◆ 41% agreed that employers regularly provide Auslan interpreters, while 33% disagreed; and
- ◆ only 30% agreed that private service providers regularly provide Auslan interpreters, while 36% disagreed.

Figure 63: Extent to which Deaf Auslan users agreed that interpreters are provided by government agencies, employers and private service providers



C. Willingness to pay for Auslan interpreters

The Deaf Auslan user survey asked how strongly respondents agreed with the following statement:

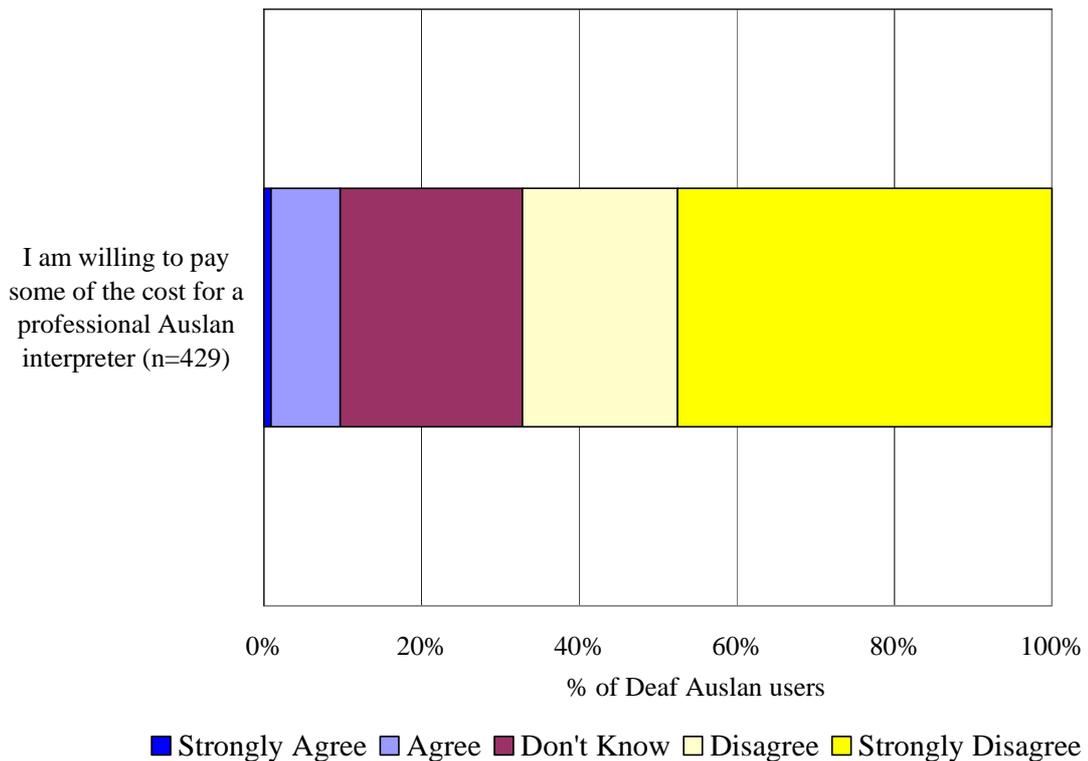
- ◆ “I am willing to pay some of the cost for a professional Auslan interpreter.”

Figure 64 shows that two thirds (67%) of Deaf Auslan users indicated that they were not willing to contribute towards the cost for professional Auslan interpreters. The majority of respondents reported they could not afford the expense. Many considered that they should not be disadvantaged by having to pay for interpreting services.

Hearing people talk to each other with no prices involved. Why not us too?

Money kills when you are struggling on a Newstart benefit or Dole. It can hurt if have to pay costs to communicate!

Figure 64: Willingness to pay for interpreters



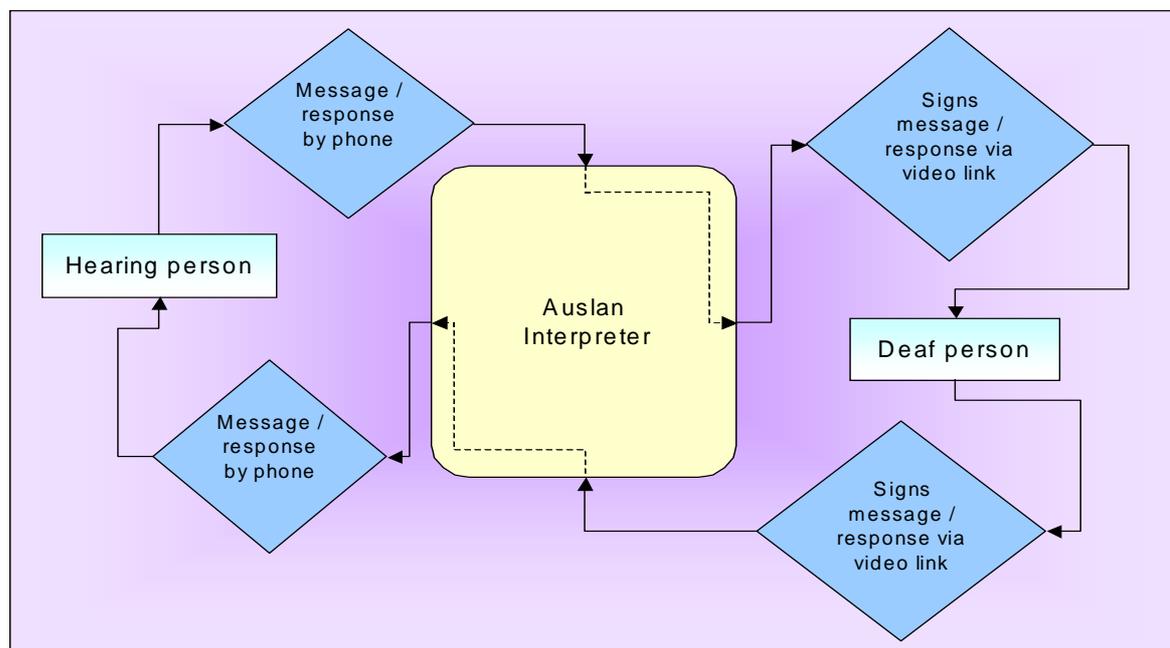
IX. Alternative technologies for providing Auslan interpreting services

A. Video remote interpreting

Video remote interpreting⁸⁰ assists communication between a hearing and a Deaf person through an Auslan interpreter who is in a different (or remote) location.

Figure 65 illustrates how video relay interpreting can be used to facilitate conversations where the hearing person, the Deaf person and the Auslan interpreter are in different locations. Either the hearing person or the Deaf person can initiate communication by calling the Auslan interpreter. The hearing person communicates with the interpreter via a standard telephone, while the Deaf person interacts with the Auslan interpreter via a video link. This video link replaces the telephone typewriters currently used by Deaf people to communicate with hearing people via the National Relay Service. Using a video link allows the Deaf person to communicate in Auslan rather than in written English. It also makes interpreters more accessible to Deaf people who live in non-metropolitan areas by removing the need for the Auslan interpreter to be physically present at the interaction.

Figure 65: Video relay interpreting information flows



⁸⁰ 'Video remote interpreting' and 'video relay interpreting' are interchangeable terms.

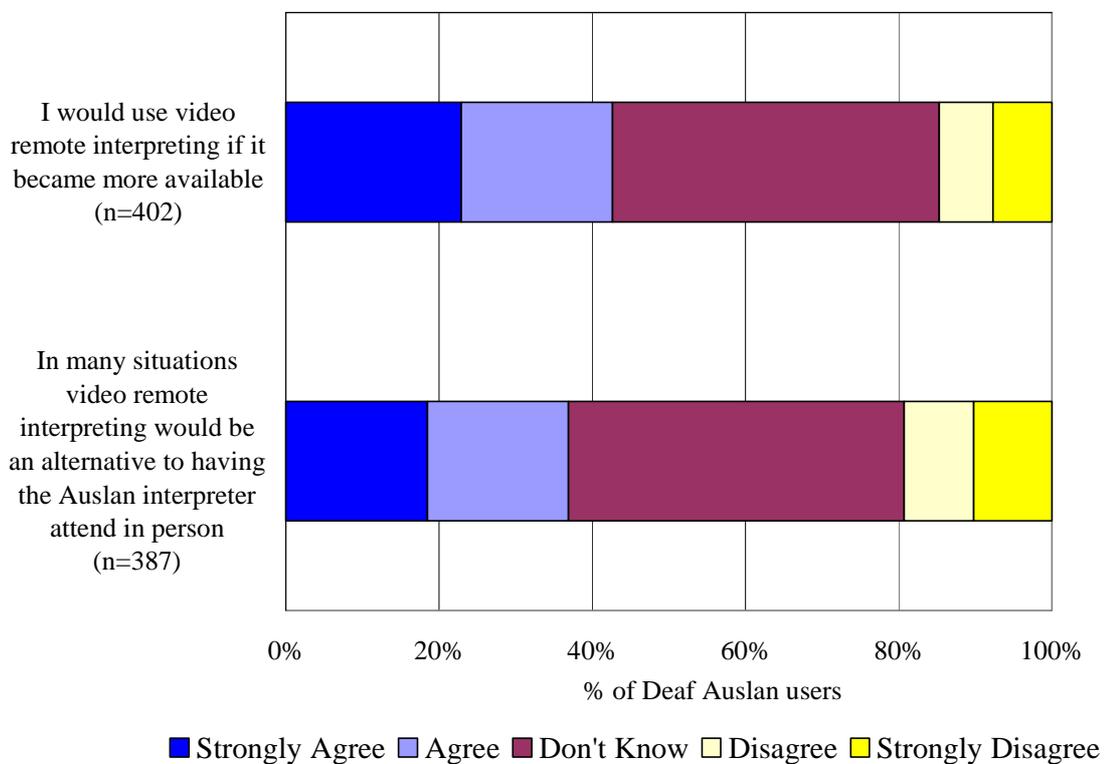
There are two main ways that video relay interpreting can be implemented:

- ◆ by using dedicated Integrated Services Digital Network lines and stand-alone videophones; or
- ◆ by using computers linked to the internet.

In the United Kingdom, video relay interpreting services focus around the Integrated Services Digital Network model. In the United States of America, they focus around the internet model.

- ◆ Figure 66 shows the opinions expressed by Deaf Auslan users about the use of video relay interpreting.

Figure 66: Opinions of Auslan users on video relay interpreting



For both questions there were a high number of ‘don’t know’ responses, reflecting the limited experience of Deaf people with video relay interpreting. Around 40% of respondents were positive about the potential of video relay interpreting. Comments from the proportion of Deaf Auslan users who were negative about video relay interpreting (around 20%) generally related to concerns about privacy, using an unknown communication technology, and the difficulty of reading sign language from video images. Stakeholder feedback raised similar issues.

The Australian Communication Exchange, which manages the National Relay Service for telephone typewriter users, conducted a trial of video relay interpreting in 2000. The trial looked at access points in Geelong, Bendigo and Bairnsdale, as well as in metropolitan Melbourne. The interpreter centre was placed in Melbourne. Trial results suggest that once Deaf Auslan users have actually used the technology, they are generally very positive about it. Most Deaf participants (81%) indicated that they would use video relay

interpreting again and 69% said they liked video relay interpreting. Half of the Deaf participants said they liked video relay interpreting better than TTY. Overall, the majority of participants believed that video relay interpreting would enhance their lifestyle by giving better access to the telecommunications network. The Australian Communication Exchange considered that video relay interpreting would be most useful for Deaf people in regional and remote areas.⁸¹

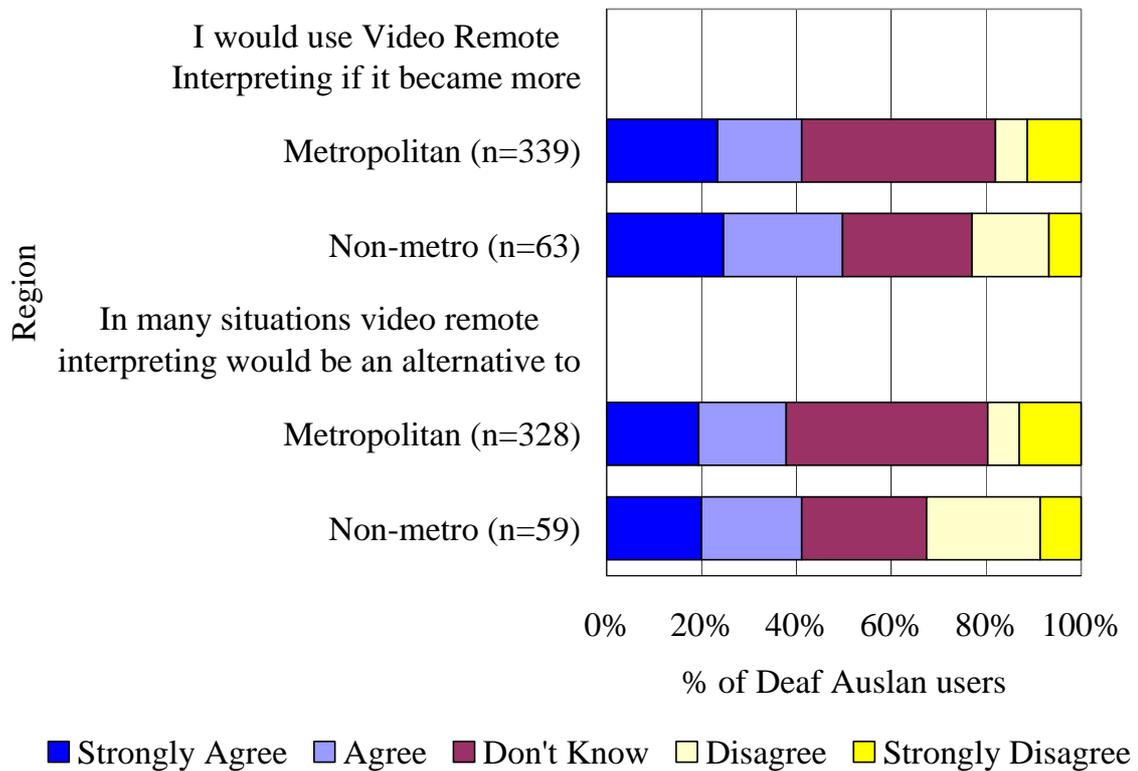
Video relay interpreting has most potential in situations where the flow of information is predominantly in one direction (such as at university lectures and training events), rather than for two-way interactions that would involve regular switching between the Deaf and hearing persons.

Interpreting via video conferencing tools is already happening in Australia. Deaf Infolink, a service for Deaf people in rural Victoria, has a video conferencing capability through Telstra. In addition, the Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children in Sydney is using video conferencing as an approach to communicating with Deaf students. The Community Relations Commission in New South Wales consider that providing Auslan interpreting by video conferencing may be an option that they will use in the future after suitable trials.

⁸¹ Australian Communications Exchange 2000. Video Relay Interpreting Trial Final Report. Brisbane:

Figure 67 shows that, compared with Deaf Auslan users living in metropolitan areas, non-metropolitan Deaf Auslan users are more likely to have formed a view (either positive or negative) about video relay interpreting. One third of non-metropolitan Deaf Auslan users disagreed with the statement that “in many situations, video remote interpreting would be an alternative to having an Auslan interpreter attend in person”.

Figure 67: Opinions of Deaf Auslan users on video relay interpreting , metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas



Facilitating video communication – broadband in Australia

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts completed an inquiry in November 2002 into the current and potential use of wireless technologies to provide broadband communication services in Australia, including regional Australia. In relation to facilitating sign language communication via video, the Committee recommended that:

the Commonwealth develop the means to provide hearing-impaired people with mobile telephones compatible with hearing aids, portable wireless devices that can communicate through the National Relay Service, and appropriately adapted video compression and transmission technology for video communication using sign language (page 47)⁸²

⁸² House of Representatives Standing Committee on Communications, Information Technology and the Arts (2002).

Other issues faced by Deaf Auslan users in relation to access to video conferencing include:

- ◆ the cost of purchasing a computer and maintaining an internet connection for people on low incomes; and
- ◆ the limited ability of people living in rural and remote areas to obtain broadband internet connection.

B. Videophones – United Kingdom

According to a spokesman from the Royal National Institute of the Deaf in the United Kingdom, the quality of Integrated Services Digital Network based stand-alone videophones is good enough for signing. However, lighting and background make a difference to how effective they are. The Royal National Institute of the Deaf operates a video relay interpreting service that it has recently made available through installing videophones at public facilities around the United Kingdom. It is too early to be able to gauge the take-up rate and effectiveness.

The take-up rate of videophones by home users has been low because of the expense involved. Stand-alone videophones cost several hundred pounds sterling and dedicated Integrated Services Digital Network lines are also expensive to install and to operate.

C. Internet video relay interpreting – United States

A number of telecommunication carriers in the United States of America are offering video relay interpreting services that are internet-based. The federal government has funded these services so that they are free-of-charge to people who have their own internet access. These services have not been operating for long, so the extent to which they are being used is unclear. Realtime video communication via the internet requires a fast computer, a good video camera and a broadband internet connection. To deliver sufficient video resolution to convey sign language, the internet connection must be able to reliably deliver data transmission speeds of at least 128 kilobits per second. A standard phone line can deliver a maximum of 56 kilobits per second. The most commonly used home-based broadband connections are Digital Subscriber Line and cable. While these connections often achieve the requisite speed, they are generally not sufficiently reliable. In addition, a Digital Subscriber Line connection that guarantees the requisite speed of transmission is expensive.

D. Other technologies

Real time captioning

Real time captioning involves a third party listening to the hearing person's conversation and typing it as the conversation progresses. The transcript is transmitted to the Deaf person's computer in real time. The Deaf person types their responses. As with telephone typewriters, real time captioning is most accessible to Deaf people comfortable communicating in written English. Real time captioning is currently in use by some universities in the United States of America, where it assists Deaf students in understanding lectures.

SignBank

SignBank is a new project to establish an interactive, internet-based Auslan database.⁸³ Users will be able to retrieve video clips and line drawings of individual signs, as well as information about the origins, meaning, usage and grammar of signs. Registered users will also be able to add new signs and meanings.

SignBank will create a 'virtual community' with the most up-to-date information on Auslan, which is available to the Deaf community and hearing people such as teachers, interpreters, parents and friends anywhere in Australia. This will assist in keeping Auslan consistent, especially where new signs are being created to keep the language up-to-date.

Computer generated signing

Translation of English into sign language using computer generated signing is currently being researched. The technology is based on computer mapping of the movements of Auslan signers. The computer depicts oral or written English as movements of an animated interpreter (or "avatars" as they are known in the computer industry). Projects based on this technology are currently underway in both Europe and the United States of America.

- ◆ The European project is called ViSiCAST⁸⁴. In the United Kingdom, with the support of the Royal National Institute of the Deaf, the project launched a successful trial of its system at post offices around the country.
- ◆ The American project is called "Sign Smith" and is a commercial venture run by Vcom3D⁸⁵.

Computer-based recognition of signs

Another technology is the translation of sign language into English using motion detection equipment such as sensor gloves. The Deaf person wears the gloves whilst signing and the computer translates their signs into English. Much of the developmental research is being conducted in Europe and the United States of America, although a significant

⁸³ http://www.ridbc.org.au/institute/pressreleases/press_2003i05.html viewed 7/11/03

⁸⁴ <http://www.visicast.org> Viewed 3/10/03

⁸⁵ <http://www.vcom3d.com> Viewed 3/10/03

amount of research has also been done in Australia.⁸⁶ However, there is a number of issues to be resolved before this technology becomes viable.

In particular, Auslan is based on facial expressions and body movements as well as hand movements. Sensor gloves do not capture these. Some work has been done with the use of video to pick up facial expressions and body movements but this technology is in its infancy. It is possible to perform finger spelling without using facial expressions and body movements, but for many Deaf people typing or handwriting is faster than finger spelling.

⁸⁶ See Mohammed Waleed Kadous' University of New South Wales website at: <http://www.cse.unsw.edu.au/~waleed/thesis.html> Viewed 3/10/03

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**Department of Family
and Community
Services**

Attachment A

**Deaf Auslan User Survey
Questionnaires/Discussion Guides**

January 2004

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Deaf Auslan Users Survey

on behalf of the Office of Disability

Australian Government Department of Family and Community Services

We need your help to find out about interpreting services for Deaf people.

CONFIDENTIAL

**This confidential survey will only take about 20 minutes to complete.
Only ORIMA Research will see your response.
Your answers cannot be used to identify you.**

September 2003

Instructions

- a) Please read each question carefully.
 b) You may not need to answer all questions.
 c) Circle the number for the answer you want to give. For example, if you think the weather today was good, you would circle 1 as in Example 1 below.

	Good	Average	Poor
Example 1: How was the weather today?	①	2	3

- d) Some questions tell you to “[CIRCLE AS MANY NUMBERS AS APPLY]”. For these questions, you can give more than one answer. For example, if you communicate using “Auslan,” “Signed English” and “TTY” but not “email”, then you would circle 1, 2 and 4, as in Example 2 below.

Example 2: How do you communicate with others?
 [CIRCLE AS MANY NUMBERS AS APPLY].

- ① Auslan
- ② Signed English
- 3 Email
- ④ TTY

- e) If you are helping a Deaf person to complete this survey, please answer the questions based on their experiences.

If you are not sure about any questions in the survey or have any difficulty with it, please contact ORIMA Research using the National Relay Service (133 677 and quote (02) 6243 3270) or contact Robert Horne by email (robert.horne@orima.com) or facsimile (02 6243 3220).

You can do this survey in THREE ways.

- 1. You can complete this paper survey and place it in the reply-paid envelope and mail it to ORIMA Research before 6 October 2003 or fax it to ORIMA Research on (02) 6243 3220 before 8 October 2003.**
- 2. You can complete the survey on-line anytime before 8 October 2003 by going to the internet site: www.orima.com/Auslan/survey.php**
- 3. If you have a telephone typewriter, you can complete the survey by TTY (for the price of a local call) by calling the National Relay Service on 133 677 and quoting ORIMA Research phone number (02) 6243 3270. Please call between 9:00am and 5:00pm (Eastern Standard Time) Monday to Friday and one of ORIMA Research’s staff will do the survey with you by telephone or arrange a convenient time to do the survey. Please call by 8 October 2003.**

Your confidential PASSWORD is given in the letter that came with this survey. Please write this PASSWORD in the space provided at Question 1 of the survey. If you do the survey online or by TTY, you will be asked for this password. This password will not be used to identify you. It simply stops people from giving more than one response to the survey.

A. Your confidential password

1. What is your PASSWORD? _ _ _ _

(This PASSWORD is given in the letter that came with this survey. It will not be used to identify you. It simply stops people from giving more than one response to the survey.)

B. How you communicate with others

2. Which of the following do you use to communicate with deaf people?
[CIRCLE AS MANY NUMBERS AS APPLY]

- 1 Auslan
- 2 Signed English
- 3 Tactile signing
- 4 Other sign language(s) e.g. Irish Sign Language, American Sign Language, British Sign Language
- 5 Lip reading
- 6 Written English
- 7 Telephone Typewriter (TTY)
- 8 Mobile telephone SMS text messages
- 9 Email/ Internet / on-line communication
- 10 Video conferencing
- 11 Other – PLEASE TELL US THE OTHER WAYS YOU COMMUNICATE:

.....

.....

.....

3. Which of the following is your best way of communicating with deaf people?
[PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ONLY]

- 1 Auslan
- 2 Signed English
- 3 Tactile signing
- 4 Other sign language(s) e.g. Irish Sign Language, American Sign Language, British Sign Language
- 5 Lip reading
- 6 Written English
- 7 Telephone Typewriter (TTY)
- 8 Mobile telephone SMS text messages
- 9 Email/ Internet / on-line communication
- 10 Video conferencing
- 11 Other – PLEASE DESCRIBE:

.....

.....

.....

**4. Which of the following do you use to communicate with hearing people?
[CIRCLE AS MANY NUMBERS AS APPLY]**

- 1 Auslan
- 2 Signed English
- 3 Tactile signing
- 4 Other sign language(s) e.g. Irish Sign Language, American Sign Language, British Sign Language
- 5 Lip reading
- 6 Written English
- 7 Telephone Typewriter (TTY)
- 8 Mobile telephone SMS text messages
- 9 Email/ Internet / on-line communication
- 10 Video conferencing
- 11 Other – *PLEASE TELL US THE OTHER WAYS YOU COMMUNICATE:*

.....

.....

.....

**5. Which of the following is your best way of communicating with hearing people?
[PLEASE CIRCLE ONE NUMBER ONLY]**

- 1 Auslan
- 2 Signed English
- 3 Tactile signing
- 4 Other sign language(s) e.g. Irish Sign Language, American Sign Language, British Sign Language
- 5 Lip reading
- 6 Written English
- 7 Telephone Typewriter (TTY)
- 8 Mobile telephone SMS text messages
- 9 Email/ Internet / on-line communication
- 10 Video conferencing
- 11 Other – *PLEASE DESCRIBE:*

.....

.....

.....

6. How often do you use Auslan or other sign languages to communicate?

- 1 Every day
- 2 Sometimes, but not every day
- 3 Never – *PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 55*

C. *Medical consultations*

Questions 7 – 12 are about using Auslan interpreters with your doctors, that is your General Practitioner (GP) or Medical Specialists.

7. In the last 12 months, how many times did you go to a doctor (for you or for your family)?

.....(number of times in the last 12 months)

IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN TO ANY DOCTORS APPOINTMENTS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 13.

8. At these doctors appointments, how many times did you use:

- a. a professional Auslan interpreter:(number of times in the past 12 months)
- b. family or friends to interpret for you:.....(number of times in the past 12 months)

9. In the past 12 months, were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at a doctors appointment?

- 1 "Yes" – GO TO QUESTION 11
- 2 "No" – PLEASE TELL US WHY YOU COULD NOT GET AN INTERPRETER:

.....

.....

.....

10. If you could not get a professional interpreter, what did you do?

- 1 I went to the doctor without the interpreter
- 2 I went to the doctor with a friend or family member to interpret
- 3 I postponed/delayed the doctors appointment until a professional interpreter was available
- 4 I cancelled the doctors appointment
- 5 Other – PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU DID:

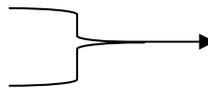
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11. When you use a professional Auslan interpreter for doctors, who pays for the interpreter?

- 1 The doctor provides an interpreter free-of-charge
- 2 The interpreting agency (eg. the Deaf Society) provides the interpreter free-of-charge
- 3 I contribute toward some of the cost and the interpreting agency pays the rest
- 4 I pay all the cost
- 5 Other – PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU DO:



If you contribute some or all of the costs please tell us how much you pay per hour.

..... \$ per hour

.....

.....

.....

12. How long do you need an Auslan interpreter for your doctors appointments?

- 1 Less than 1 hour
- 2 Between 1 and 2 hours
- 3 More than 2 hours

Questions 13 – 18 are about using Auslan interpreters while at a public hospital.

13. In the last 12 months, how many times did you get medical help at a public hospital?

.....(number of times in the last 12 months)

IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED HELP AT A PUBLIC HOSPITAL IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 19.

14. While at a public hospital, how many times did you use:

a. a professional Auslan interpreter:(number of times in the past 12 months)

b. family or friends to interpret for you:(number of times in the past 12 months)

15. In the last 12 months, were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at a public hospital?

1 "Yes" – GO TO QUESTION 17

2 "No" – PLEASE TELL US WHY YOU COULD NOT GET AN INTERPRETER:

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16. If you could not get a professional Auslan interpreter at a public hospital, what did you do?

1 I went ahead with my medical treatment without an interpreter

2 I went to the public hospital with a friend or family member to interpret

3 I postponed/delayed my medical treatment until a professional interpreter was available

4 Other – PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU DID:

.....
.....

17. If you used a professional Auslan interpreter at a public hospital, who paid for the interpreter?

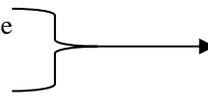
1 The hospital provided the interpreter free-of-charge

2 The interpreting agency (eg. the Deaf Society) provided the interpreter free-of-charge

3 I contributed toward some of the cost and the interpreting agency pays the rest

4 I paid all the cost

5 Other – PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU DID:



If you contributed some or all of the costs please tell us how much you paid per hour.

..... \$ per hour

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18. How long do you need an Auslan interpreter for your appointments at a public hospital?

1 Less than 1 hour

2 Between 1 and 2 hours

3 More than 2 hours

Questions 19 – 24 are about using Auslan interpreters at a private hospital.

19. In the last 12 months, how many times did you get medical help at a private hospital?

.....(number of times in the last 12 months)

IF YOU HAVE NOT RECEIVED HELP AT A PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 25.

20. At a private hospital, how many times did you use:

a. a professional Auslan interpreter:(number of times in the past 12 months)

b. family or friends to interpret for you:(number of times in the past 12 months)

21. In the last 12 months, were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at a private hospital?

1 "Yes" – GO TO QUESTION 23

2 "No" – PLEASE TELL US WHY YOU COULD NOT GET AN INTERPRETER:

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22. If you could not get a professional interpreter at a private hospital, what did you do?

1 I went ahead with my medical treatment without an interpreter

2 I went to the private hospital with a friend or family member to interpret

3 I postponed/delayed my medical treatment until a professional interpreter was available

4 Other – PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU DID:

.....
.....

23. If you used a professional interpreter at a private hospital, who paid for the interpreter?

1 The hospital provided the interpreter free-of-charge

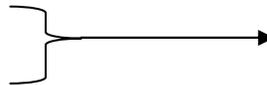
2 The interpreting agency (eg. the Deaf Society)

provided the interpreter free-of-charge

3 I contributed some of the cost and the interpreting agency paid the rest

4 I paid all the cost

5 Other – PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU DID:



If you contributed some or all of the costs please tell us how much you paid per hour.

..... \$ per hour

.....
.....

24. How long do you need an Auslan interpreter for your appointments at private hospitals?

1 Less than 1 hour

2 Between 1 and 2 hours

3 More than 2 hours

Questions 25 – 30 are about using Auslan interpreters for medical appointments with other health professionals (e.g. dentists, physiotherapists, acupuncturists, naturopaths), not with doctors.

25. In the last 12 months, how many appointments did you have with other health professionals (not doctors)?

.....(number of times in the last 12 months)

IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN TO ANY APPOINTMENTS WITH OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS (NOT DOCTORS) IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 31.

26. At appointments with health professionals (not doctors), how many times did you use:

a. a professional Auslan interpreter:(number of times in the past 12 months)

b. family or friends to interpret for you:.....(number of times in the past 12 months)

27. In the last 12 months, were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at appointments with other health professionals?

1 “Yes” – GO TO QUESTION 29

2 “No” – PLEASE TELL US WHY YOU COULD NOT GET AN INTERPRETER:

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28. If you could not get a professional interpreter for appointments with health professionals (not doctors), what did you do?

1 I went to the appointment without an interpreter

2 I went to the appointment with a friend or family member to interpret

3 I postponed/delayed the appointment until a professional interpreter was available

4 I cancelled the appointment

5 Other – PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU DID:

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29. If you used a professional interpreter for appointments with other health professionals (not doctors), who paid for the interpreter?

1 The health professional provided an interpreter free-of-charge

2 The interpreting agency (eg. the Deaf Society)

3 I contributed some of the cost and the interpreting agency paid the rest

4 I paid all the cost

5 Other – PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU DID:

If you contributed some or all of the costs please tell us how much you paid per hour.

..... \$ per hour

.....
.....

30. How long do you need an Auslan interpreter for your appointments with health professionals (not doctors)?

- 1 Less than 1 hour
- 2 Between 1 and 2 hours
- 3 More than 2 hours

D. Legal / Financial Matters

Questions 31 – 35 are about using Auslan interpreters in dealing with your legal and financial matters (eg., with police, legal aid workers, lawyers, accountants, tax agents, or banks).

31. In the last 12 months, how many appointments/meetings did you have about legal and financial matters?

.....(number of times in the last 12 months)

IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN TO ANY LEGAL OR FINANCIAL APPOINTMENTS OR MEETINGS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 36.

32. At these legal and financial appointments, how many times did you use:

- a. a professional Auslan interpreter:(number of times in the past 12 months)
- b. family or friends to interpret for you:.....(number of times in the past 12 months)

33. In the last 12 months, were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at a legal or financial appointment/meeting?

- 1 “Yes” – GO TO QUESTION 35
- 2 “No” – PLEASE TELL US WHY YOU COULD NOT GET AN INTERPRETER:

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.....

34. If you could not get a professional interpreter, what did you do?

- 1 I went to the appointment/meeting without an interpreter
- 2 I went to the appointment/meeting with a friend or family member to interpret
- 3 I postponed/delayed the appointment/meeting until a professional interpreter was available
- 4 I cancelled the appointment/meeting
- 5 Other – PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU DID:

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35. If you used a professional interpreter for legal or financial appointments/meetings, who paid for the interpreter?

- 1 The legal or financial institution provided an interpreter free-of-charge
- 2 The interpreting agency (eg. the Deaf Society) provided the interpreter free-of-charge
- 3 I contributed some of the cost and the interpreting agency paid the rest
- 4 I paid all the costs
- 5 Other – PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU DID:

If you contributed some or all of the costs please tell us how much you paid per hour.

..... \$ per hour

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E. Education / Employment

Questions 36 – 40 are about using Auslan interpreters in education and employment matters (eg. TAFE / university lectures, parent / teacher meetings, job interviews, work training sessions).

36. In the last 12 months, how many times did you need an Auslan interpreter for education or employment matters?

.....(number of times in the last 12 months)

IF YOU HAVE NOT NEEDED AN INTERPRETER FOR ANY EDUCATION OR EMPLOYMENT MATTERS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS, PLEASE GO TO QUESTION 41.

37. For education and employment matters where you needed an interpreter, how many times did you use:

- a. a professional Auslan interpreter:(number of times in the past 12 months)
- b. family or friends to interpret for you:.....(number of times in the past 12 months)

38. In the last 12 months, were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at appointments for education and employment matters?

- 1 “Yes” – GO TO QUESTION 40
- 2 “No” – PLEASE TELL US WHY YOU COULD NOT GET AN INTERPRETER:

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39. If you could not get a professional interpreter, what did you do?

- 1 I went to the appointment/meeting without an interpreter
- 2 I went to the appointment/meeting with a friend or family member to interpret
- 3 I postponed/delayed the appointment/meeting until a professional interpreter was available
- 4 I cancelled the appointment/meeting
- 5 Other – PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU DID:

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40. If you used a professional interpreter for education and employment matters, who paid for the interpreter?

- 1 The educational institution, employment agency or employer provided an interpreter free-of-charge
- 2 The interpreting agency (eg. the Deaf Society) provided the interpreter free-of-charge
- 3 I contributed some of the cost and the interpreting agency paid the rest
- 4 I paid all the cost
- 5 Other – PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOU DO:

If you contributed some or all of the costs please tell us how much you paid per hour.

..... \$ per hour

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F. Other times when you need an Auslan interpreter

41. In the last 12 months, were there other times (not covered above) when you needed a professional interpreter, BUT were not able to get an interpreter?

- 1 “Yes” – PLEASE TELL US THE OTHER TIMES YOU NEEDED AN INTERPRETER AND WHY YOU COULD NOT GET AN INTERPRETER:

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- 2 “No”

G. Using Family and Friends to Interpret

42. Do you use family or friends – not professional Auslan interpreters – to interpret for you sometimes?

- 1 “Yes” – I use family and friends to interpret for me
- 2 “No” – I do not use family and friends to interpret for me – GO TO QUESTION 45

43. Do you use family and friends – not professional Auslan interpreters – to interpret for you? WHY? [CIRCLE AS MANY NUMBERS AS APPLY]

- 1 There are no professional interpreters available in my area
- 2 Professional interpreters are not always available when I need them
- 3 I prefer to use someone I know and trust
- 4 It is easier to use family and/or friends
- 5 I did not know there were professional interpreters available
- 6 I cannot afford to pay for a professional interpreter
- 7 I have another reason for using family and friends to interpret rather than professional interpreters – PLEASE TELL US WHY:

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44. How good are the family and friends who interpret for you in:

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
a. Auslan signing skills?	1	2	3	4	5
b. being ready to help you when you need Auslan interpreting?	1	2	3	4	5
c. being at meetings on time (not being late)?	1	2	3	4	5
d. understanding your communication needs?	1	2	3	4	5
e. being private and confidential with your information?	1	2	3	4	5

H. About Professional Auslan Interpreters

45. If you use professional Auslan interpreters – not your family and friends – WHY? [CIRCLE AS MANY NUMBERS AS APPLY]

- 1 My family and friends are not always available or are unable to help
- 2 Professional interpreters provide better interpreting services
- 3 To protect my privacy
- 4 I have another reason for using professional interpreters rather than family and friends
– PLEASE TELL US WHY:

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46. Overall, how good are professional interpreters you use in:

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
a. Auslan signing skills?	1	2	3	4	5
b. being ready to help you when you need Auslan interpreting?	1	2	3	4	5
c. being at meetings on time (not being late)?	1	2	3	4	5
d. understanding your communication needs?	1	2	3	4	5
e. being private and confidential with your information?	1	2	3	4	5
f. value for money?	1	2	3	4	5

47. If you said that professional interpreters are “Poor” or “Very Poor” on any of the things in question 46, please say why.

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48. How good are interpreting agencies (e.g. Deaf Society) at:

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
a. finding an Auslan interpreter that is good for your needs	1	2	3	4	5
b. booking Auslan interpreters for you	1	2	3	4	5

49. If you said that interpreting agencies are “Poor” or “Very Poor” at doing either of the things in question 48, please tell us why.

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I. Video Remote Interpreting

Video Remote Interpreting is where Auslan and non-Auslan users can communicate by using an Auslan interpreter through a real-time video link (like video conferencing).

50. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a. I would use video remote interpreting if it became more available.	1	2	3	4	5
b. In many situations video remote interpreting would be an alternative to having the Auslan interpreter attend in person.	1	2	3	4	5

51. If you “Disagreed” or “Strongly Disagreed” with either of the statements in question 50, please tell us why.

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J. Your Overall Opinions

52. How strongly do you “Agree” or “Disagree” with the following statements?

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
a.	Mostly I can get an Auslan interpreter when I need one.	1	2	3	4	5
b.	If I needed a professional Auslan interpreter quickly, I could get one.	1	2	3	4	5
c.	I am willing to pay some of the cost for a professional Auslan interpreter.	1	2	3	4	5
d.	When Government agencies provide services to deaf people they regularly (or often) provide Auslan interpreters.	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Employers regularly (or often) provide interpreters to deaf employees.	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Private service providers regularly (or often) provide interpreters to deaf customers.	1	2	3	4	5

53. If you “Disagree” or “Strongly Disagree” with any of the statements in question 52, please tell us why.

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54. If you would like to make any other comments about Auslan interpreters or your need for Auslan interpreters, please do so here.

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K. About You

These questions ask for information about you. This information will not be used to identify you. It will help us better understand the information in the survey.

55. What is your post-code? _ _ _ _

56. What is your age group?

- 1 Under 25 years
- 2 25 – 34 years
- 3 35 – 44 years
- 4 45 – 54 years
- 5 Over 55 years

57. Are you

- 1 Male
- 2 Female

58. What is your work now?

- 1 Permanent employment equal to or greater than 15 hours a week
- 2 Permanent employment less than 15 hours a week
- 3 Regular casual employment equal to or greater than 15 hours a week
- 4 Regular casual employment less than 15 hours a week
- 5 Irregular casual employment
- 6 Unemployed – *GO TO QUESTION 60*
- 7 Retired – *GO TO QUESTION 60*
- 8 Other – *PLEASE TELL US*

59. What industry do you work in now?

- 1 Retail
- 2 Manufacturing – light - heavy
- 3 Hospitality
- 4 Tourism
- 5 Service
- 6 Health
- 7 Government (Federal, State, or local)
- 8 Building

60. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- 1 Less than Year 10 or equivalent
- 2 Year 10 or equivalent
- 3 Year 11-12 or equivalent
- 4 Trade or TAFE
- 5 Diploma, Associate Diploma
- 6 Degree
- 7 Post Graduate Qualification
- 8 Other – *PLEASE TELL US:*

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**Department of Family
and Community
Services**

Attachment B

**Calculating the extent to which
individuals' needs for Auslan
interpreters are met**

January 2004

Calculating the extent to which individuals' needs for Auslan interpreters are met

One objective of the Auslan user survey was to quantify the extent to which the demand (or need) for interpreters was being met across Australia in different service areas. With regard to doctors' appointments, respondents were asked the following questions:

1. In the past 12 months, how many times did you go to a doctor (for you or for your family)?
 - a. At these doctors' appointments, how many times did you use:
 - i a professional Auslan interpreter?
 - ii family or friends to interpret for you?
2. In the past 12 months, were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at a doctor's appointment? (Yes / No)
 - a. If not, please tell us why you could not get an interpreter.
 - b. If you could not get a professional interpreter, what did you do?
3. When you use a professional Auslan interpreter for doctors' appointments, who pays for the interpreter?
4. How long do you need an Auslan interpreter for your doctors' appointments?

The answers to questions 1 and 2 above were used to derive a measure of the extent to which an individual's perceived need for interpreting had been met over the preceding 12 month period. In particular, for those people who had been to a doctor's appointment in the last 12 months and needed an interpreter, the following responses were derived to the hypothetical question **"In the last 12 months, how often were you provided with a professional Auslan interpreter at a doctor's appointment when you needed one?"**

- ◆ **"never"**: the respondent indicated that he/she was never provided with an interpreter (question 1(a)(i));
- ◆ **"less than half the time"**: the respondent indicated that he/she was not always able to obtain a professional interpreter when he/she needed one (question 2) and stated that they were provided with an interpreter (question 1(a)(i)), but less than half of the times that they had been to a doctor (question 1);
- ◆ **"more than half the time"**: the respondent indicated that he/she was not always able to obtain a professional interpreter when he/she needed one (question 2), but stated that they were provided with an interpreter (question 1(a)(i)) more than half of the times that they had been to a doctor (question 1); or
- ◆ **"always"**: the respondent indicated he/she was always able to obtain a professional interpreter when he/she needed one (question 2).¹

¹ Where question 2 was not answered, but the respondent indicated that he/she had been to the doctor in the past 12 months (question 1) and had received an interpreter on every such occasion (question 1(a)(i)), they were deemed to have "always" been provided an interpreter when needed.

This methodology was also used to calculate the extent to which individuals' needs for Auslan interpreters were met in relation to the other service areas covered by the survey. Some of those who indicated they could not get an interpreter (question 2) indicated that they did not need an interpreter (in their response to question 2b). These individuals have been excluded from the analysis of the extent to which interpreting needs have been met in the various service areas.

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**Department of Family
and Community
Services**

Attachment C

**Deaf Auslan User Survey
Weighted Survey Frequencies and
Selected State Crosstabulations**

January 2004

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Please Note:

It is not possible to draw robust quantitative inferences in relation to the views of Deaf Auslan users in Tasmania, ACT or the NT due to the small sample of users from these areas (n=7, 4 and 6 respectively). In addition, results relating to Western Australia and South Australia should be treated with caution (n=28 and 47 respectively). Frequency numbers in the tables below are weighted and give an indication of the total number of Australian Deaf Auslan Users of 16 years or over in the indicated category.

Deaf population by State

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	NSW	1670	34.1	34.1	34.1
	VIC	1142	23.3	23.3	57.4
	QLD	992	20.2	20.2	77.6
	WA	425	8.7	8.7	86.3
	SA	396	8.1	8.1	94.4
	TAS	155	3.2	3.2	97.5
	ACT	78	1.6	1.6	99.1
	NT	43	.9	.9	100.0
	Total	4900	100.0	100.0	

Deaf population by region

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Metropolitan	3710	75.7	75.7	75.7
	Regional	909	18.6	18.6	94.3
	Remote	281	5.7	5.7	100.0
	Total	4900	100.0	100.0	

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Which of the following do you use to communicate with deaf people?

	Frequency	% of respondents
Auslan	4490	91.8%
Signed English	2114	43.2%
Tactile signing	231	4.7%
Other sign language(s)	953	19.5%
Lip reading	2208	45.1%
Written English	1731	35.4%
Telephone Typewriter (TTY)	3358	68.7%
Mobile telephone SMS	3609	73.8%
On-line communication	2678	54.8%
Video conferencing	232	4.8%
Other	609	12.4%

Which of the following do you use to communicate with deaf people?

	State															
	NSW		VIC		QLD		WA		SA		TAS		ACT		NT	
	Frequency	% of respondents														
Auslan	1495	89.8%	1038	90.9%	919	92.7%	378	89.0%	384	98.0%	155	100.0%	78	100.0%	43	100.0%
Signed English	718	43.2%	429	37.6%	572	57.7%	178	41.8%	189	48.3%	28	17.9%				
Tactile signing	77	4.7%	58	5.1%	40	4.1%	28	6.6%	28	7.1%						
Other sign language(s)	377	22.6%	227	19.9%	86	8.6%	164	38.6%	54	13.8%	9	6.0%	36	46.0%		
Lip reading	747	44.9%	519	45.4%	482	48.6%	210	49.5%	199	50.7%	34	22.2%			18	40.5%
Written English	526	31.6%	389	34.1%	449	45.3%	149	35.0%	158	40.2%	44	28.2%			17	39.2%
Telephone Typewriter (TTY)	1064	64.0%	819	71.7%	641	64.6%	371	87.3%	301	76.9%	96	62.3%	57	73.0%	9	20.3%
Mobile telephone SMS	1195	71.8%	893	78.2%	720	72.6%	351	82.6%	295	75.3%	96	62.3%	42	54.0%	18	40.5%
On-line communication	968	58.2%	697	61.0%	461	46.4%	271	63.9%	199	50.7%	44	28.2%	21	27.0%	18	40.5%
Video conferencing	95	5.7%	38	3.3%	19	1.9%	54	12.6%	28	7.1%						
Other	260	15.6%	97	8.5%	139	14.0%	48	11.3%	56	14.4%					8	18.9%

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Which of the following do you use to communicate with hearing people?

	Frequency	% of respondents
Auslan	2019	41.5%
Signed English	1109	22.8%
Tactile signing	225	4.6%
Other sign language(s)	221	4.5%
Lip reading	3087	63.4%
Written English	3761	77.2%
Telephone Typewriter (TTY)	2050	42.1%
Mobile telephone/SMS	2971	61.0%
On-line communication	2467	50.7%
Video conferencing	76	1.6%
Other	1357	27.9%

Which of the following do you use to communicate with hearing people?

	State															
	NSW		VIC		QLD		WA		SA		TAS		ACT		NT	
	Frequency	% of respondents														
Auslan	618	37.4%	520	45.5%	433	43.6%	163	38.5%	184	46.6%	58	37.7%	42	66.7%		
Signed English	361	21.8%	199	17.5%	303	30.5%	90	21.2%	101	25.6%	33	21.5%	21	33.3%		
Tactile signing	79	4.8%	59	5.2%	22	2.2%	27	6.4%	8	2.0%			21	33.3%	8	18.9%
Other sign language(s)	78	4.7%	29	2.6%	17	1.8%	75	17.7%					21	33.3%		
Lip reading	1038	62.8%	696	60.9%	656	66.1%	283	66.6%	210	53.1%	136	88.0%	42	66.7%	26	60.8%
Written English	1337	80.9%	865	75.7%	715	72.1%	332	78.1%	336	85.0%	120	77.8%	21	33.3%	35	79.7%
Telephone Typewriter (TTY)	646	39.1%	514	45.0%	385	38.8%	181	42.5%	163	41.3%	111	71.8%	42	66.7%	9	20.3%
Mobile telephone/SMS	954	57.7%	748	65.5%	591	59.5%	284	66.9%	236	59.6%	120	77.8%	21	33.3%	18	40.5%
On-line communication	891	53.9%	614	53.8%	413	41.6%	285	67.1%	158	39.9%	68	43.7%	21	33.3%	18	40.5%
Video conferencing	22	1.3%	8	.7%	6	.6%	40	9.3%								
Other	578	35.0%	223	19.5%	284	28.6%	159	37.5%	84	21.2%			21	33.3%	8	18.9%

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

How often do you use Auslan or other sign languages to communicate?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Every day	3777	77.1	80.6	80.6
	Sometimes, but not every day	909	18.5	19.4	100.0
	Total	4686	95.6	100.0	
Missing	System	214	4.4		
Total		4900	100.0		

Number of visits to doctor in last 12 months

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	455	9.3	10.3	10.3
	1-4	1201	24.5	27.2	37.6
	5-9	1153	23.5	26.2	63.7
	10-14	790	16.1	17.9	81.7
	15+	808	16.5	18.3	100.0
	Total	4408	90.0	100.0	
Missing	Non-zero, unable to determine number	491	10.0		
Total		4900	100.0		

Proportion of doctors' appointments at which a professional Auslan interpreter was provided when needed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0%	1675	34.2	48.7	48.7
	0>50%	459	9.4	13.3	62.0
	50>100%	187	3.8	5.4	67.5
	100%	1120	22.9	32.5	100.0
	Total	3441	70.2	100.0	
Missing	System	1459	29.8		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

In the past 12 months were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at a doctor's appointment?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	1234	25.2	34.2	34.2
	No	2373	48.4	65.8	100.0
	Total	3607	73.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1293	26.4		
Total		4900	100.0		

In the past 12 months were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at a doctor's appointment?

		State							
		NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
		Valid %							
Valid	Yes	35.3%	16.2%	33.9%	39.7%	48.7%	87.3%	26.0%	76.2%
	No	64.7%	83.8%	66.1%	60.3%	51.3%	12.7%	74.0%	23.8%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

If you could not get a professional Auslan interpreter for a doctor's appointment, what did you do?

	Frequency	% of respondents
I went to the doctor without the interpreter	1920	61.3%
I went to the doctor with a friend or family member to interpret	1109	35.4%
I postponed/delayed the doctor's appointment until a professional interpreter was available	221	7.1%
I cancelled the doctor's appointment	128	4.1%
Other	139	4.4%

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

When you use a professional Auslan interpreter for a doctor's appointment, who pays for the interpreter?

	Frequency	% of respondents
The doctor provides an interpreter free-of-charge	447	17.3%
The interpreting agency (eg the Deaf Society) provides the interpreter free-of-charge	1801	69.8%
I contribute toward some of the cost and the interpreting agency pays the rest	30	1.2%
I pay all the cost	170	6.6%
Other	320	12.4%
Other medical organisations/institutions	99	3.8%
Number of Respondents	2582	100.0%

How long do you need an Auslan interpreter for your doctors' appointments?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Less than 1 hour	2122	43.3	70.1	70.1
Between 1 and 2 hours	773	15.8	25.5	95.6
More than 2 hours	134	2.7	4.4	100.0
Total	3030	61.8	100.0	
Missing System	1870	38.2		
Total	4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Number of visits to a public hospital in last 12 months

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	1896	38.7	50.7	50.7
	1-4	1301	26.5	34.8	85.5
	5-9	337	6.9	9.0	94.5
	10-14	138	2.8	3.7	98.2
	15+	66	1.3	1.8	100.0
	Total	3738	76.3	100.0	
Missing	Non-zero, unable to determine number	1162	23.7		
Total		4900	100.0		

Proportion of public hospital visits at which a professional Auslan interpreter was provided when needed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0%	461	9.4	26.4	26.4
	0>50%	96	2.0	5.5	31.9
	50>100%	61	1.3	3.5	35.5
	100%	1125	23.0	64.5	100.0
	Total	1744	35.6	100.0	
Missing	System	3156	64.4		
Total		4900	100.0		

In the past 12 months were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at a public hospital?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	1229	25.1	66.1	66.1
	No	630	12.9	33.9	100.0
	Total	1859	37.9	100.0	
Missing	System	3041	62.1		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

In the past 12 months were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at a public hospital?

	State							
	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
	Valid %							
Yes	52.4%	77.9%	64.0%	58.4%	79.9%	100.0%	100.0%	76.2%
No	47.6%	22.1%	36.0%	41.6%	20.1%	.0%	.0%	23.8%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

If you could not get a professional Auslan interpreter at a public hospital, what did you do?

	Frequency	% of respondents
I went ahead with my medical treatment without an interpreter	448	44.9%
I went to the public hospital with a friend or family member to interpret	455	45.5%
I postponed/delayed my medical treatment until a professional interpreter was available	130	13.0%
Other	45	4.5%

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

If you used a professional Auslan interpreter at a public hospital, who paid for the interpreter?

	Frequency	% of respondents
The hospital provided the interpreter free-of-charge	906	57.3%
The interpreting agency (eg the Deaf Society) provided the interpreter free-of-charge	575	36.4%
I contributed toward some of the cost and the interpreting agency pays the rest		
I paid all the cost		
Other	198	12.5%

How long do you need an Auslan interpreter for your appointments at a public hospital?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Less than 1 hour	613	12.5	36.9	36.9
Between 1 and 2 hours	629	12.8	37.9	74.8
More than 2 hours	418	8.5	25.2	100.0
Total	1660	33.9	100.0	
Missing				
System	3240	66.1		
Total	4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Number of visits to a private hospital in last 12 months

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	4266	87.1	88.3	88.3
	1-4	488	10.0	10.1	98.4
	5-9	41	.8	.9	99.3
	10-14	24	.5	.5	99.8
	15+	12	.2	.2	100.0
	Total	4831	98.6	100.0	
Missing	Non-zero, unable to determine number	69	1.4		
Total		4900	100.0		

Proportion of private hospital visits at which a professional Auslan interpreter was provided when needed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0%	197	4.0	34.9	34.9
	0>50%	29	.6	5.2	40.1
	50>100%	6	.1	1.1	41.2
	100%	333	6.8	58.8	100.0
	Total	566	11.6	100.0	
Missing	System	4334	88.4		
Total		4900	100.0		

In the past 12 months were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at a private hospital?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	333	6.8	58.8	58.8
	No	233	4.8	41.2	100.0
	Total	566	11.6	100.0	
Missing	System	4334	88.4		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

In the past 12 months were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at a private hospital?

	State							
	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
	Valid %							
Yes	51.1%	32.7%	58.4%	75.0%	62.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
No	48.9%	67.3%	41.6%	25.0%	38.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

If you could not get a professional Auslan interpreter at a private hospital, what did you do?

	Frequency	% of respondents
I went ahead with my medical treatment without an interpreter	167	47.8%
I went to the private hospital with a friend or family member to interpret	162	46.3%
I postponed/delayed my medical treatment until a professional interpreter was available		
Other	30	8.6%

If you used a professional Auslan interpreter at a private hospital, who paid for the interpreter?

	Frequency	% of respondents
The hospital provided the interpreter free-of-charge	106	26.1%
The interpreting agency (eg the Deaf Society) provided the interpreter free-of-charge	242	59.5%
I contributed some of the cost and the interpreting agency paid the rest	7	1.6%
I paid all the cost	30	7.4%
Other	59	14.5%

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

How long do you need an Auslan interpreter for your appointments at private hospitals?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than 1 hour	224	4.6	48.1	48.1
	Between 1 and 2 hours	153	3.1	33.0	81.1
	More than 2 hours	88	1.8	18.9	100.0
	Total	465	9.5	100.0	
Missing	System	4435	90.5		
Total		4900	100.0		

Number of appointments with other health professionals in last 12 months

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	2503	51.1	53.7	53.7
	1-4	1304	26.6	28.0	81.6
	5-9	408	8.3	8.8	90.4
	10-14	218	4.5	4.7	95.0
	15+	231	4.7	5.0	100.0
	Total	4665	95.2	100.0	
Missing	Non-zero, unable to determine number	235	4.8		
Total		4900	100.0		

Proportions of appointments with other health professionals at which a professional Auslan interpreter was provided when needed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0%	1041	21.2	55.4	55.4
	0>50%	117	2.4	6.2	61.6
	50>100%	21	.4	1.1	62.7
	100%	700	14.3	37.3	100.0
	Total	1878	38.3	100.0	
Missing	System	3021	61.7		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

In the past 12 months were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at appointments with other health professionals?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	700	14.3	37.1	37.1
	No	1185	24.2	62.9	100.0
	Total	1885	38.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3015	61.5		
Total		4900	100.0		

In the past 12 months were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one at appointments with other health professionals?

		State							
		NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
		Valid %							
Yes		39.9%	16.9%	50.3%	23.3%	70.0%	17.5%	.0%	68.1%
No		60.1%	83.1%	49.7%	76.7%	30.0%	82.5%	.0%	31.9%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	.0%	100.0%

If you could not get a professional Auslan interpreter for appointments with other health professionals, what did you do?

	Frequency	% of respondents
I went to the appointment without an interpreter	922	55.9%
I went to the appointment with a friend or family member to interpret	541	32.8%
I postponed/delayed the appointment until a professional interpreter was available	79	4.8%
I cancelled the appointment	100	6.1%
Other	246	14.9%

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

If you used a professional Auslan interpreter for appointments with other health professionals, who paid for the interpreter?

	Frequency	% of respondents
The health professional provided an interpreter free-of-charge	304	23.4%
The interpreting agency (eg the Deaf Society) provided the interpreter free-of-charge	617	47.6%
I contributed some of the cost and the interpreting agency paid the rest		
I paid all the cost	65	5.0%
Other	457	35.2%

How long do you need an Auslan interpreter for your appointments with other health professionals?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Less than 1 hour	842	17.2	55.2	55.2
Between 1 and 2 hours	583	11.9	38.3	93.5
More than 2 hours	99	2.0	6.5	100.0
Total	1524	31.1	100.0	
Missing				
System	3376	68.9		
Total	4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Number of appointments for legal or financial matters in last 12 months

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0	2764	56.4	58.1	58.1
	1-4	1438	29.3	30.2	88.4
	5-9	364	7.4	7.7	96.0
	10-14	129	2.6	2.7	98.7
	15+	61	1.2	1.3	100.0
	Total	4754	97.0	100.0	
Missing	Non-zero, unable to determine number	145	3.0		
Total		4900	100.0		

Proportion of legal or financial meetings at which a professional Auslan interpreter was provided when needed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0%	835	17.0	44.3	44.3
	0>50%	155	3.2	8.2	52.5
	50>100%	31	.6	1.6	54.1
	100%	865	17.7	45.9	100.0
	Total	1885	38.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3015	61.5		
Total		4900	100.0		

In the past 12 months were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one for legal or financial matters?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	865	17.7	45.9	45.9
	No	1020	20.8	54.1	100.0
	Total	1885	38.5	100.0	
Missing	System	3015	61.5		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

In the past 12 months were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one for legal or financial matters?

	State							
	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
	Valid %							
Yes	42.7%	38.2%	48.9%	50.0%	42.5%	100.0%	.0%	68.1%
No	57.3%	61.8%	51.1%	50.0%	57.5%	.0%	100.0%	31.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

If you could not get a professional Auslan interpreter, what did you do?

	Frequency	% of respondents
I went to the appointment/meeting without an interpreter	762	50.0%
I went to the appointment/meeting with a friend or family member to interpret	491	32.2%
I postponed/delayed the appointment/meeting until a professional interpreter was available	236	15.5%
I cancelled the appointment/meeting	78	5.1%
Other	254	16.6%

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

If you used a professional Auslan interpreter for legal or financial appointments/meetings, who paid for the interpreter?

	Frequency	% of respondents
The legal or financial institution provided an interpreter free-of-charge	447	32.3%
The interpreting agency (eg the Deaf Society) provided the interpreter free-of-charge	680	49.0%
I contributed some of the cost and the interpreting agency paid the rest	11	.8%
I paid all the costs	90	6.5%
Other	331	23.9%

Number of times an Auslan interpreter was needed for education or employment matters in the last 12 months

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0	2134	43.6	49.0	49.0
1-4	790	16.1	18.1	67.1
5-9	485	9.9	11.1	78.3
10-14	226	4.6	5.2	83.5
15+	720	14.7	16.5	100.0
Total	4355	88.9	100.0	
Missing Non-zero, unable to determine number	545	11.1		
Total	4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Proportion of education and employment matters for which a professional Auslan interpreter was provided when needed

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0%	315	6.4	12.2	12.2
	0>50%	132	2.7	5.1	17.4
	50>100%	108	2.2	4.2	21.6
	100%	2016	41.1	78.4	100.0
	Total	2570	52.5	100.0	
Missing	System	2330	47.5		
Total		4900	100.0		

In the past 12 months were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one for education or employment matters?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	2016	41.1	78.4	78.4
	No	554	11.3	21.6	100.0
	Total	2570	52.5	100.0	
Missing	System	2330	47.5		
Total		4900	100.0		

In the past 12 months were you always able to get a professional Auslan interpreter when you needed one for education or employment matters?

	State							
	NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
	Valid %							
Yes	83.9%	66.0%	74.0%	77.4%	82.6%	89.4%	100.0%	100.0%
No	16.1%	34.0%	26.0%	22.6%	17.4%	10.6%	.0%	.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

If you could not get a professional Auslan interpreter for education or employment matters, what did you do?

	Frequency	% of respondents
I went to the appointment/meeting without an interpreter	416	43.6%
I went to the appointment/meeting with a friend or family member to interpret	272	28.5%
I postponed/delayed the appointment/meeting until a professional interpreter was available	262	27.5%
I cancelled the appointment/meeting	251	26.3%
Other	124	13.0%

If you used a professional Auslan interpreter for education and employment matters, who paid for the interpreter?

	Frequency	% of respondents
The education institution, employment agency or employer provided an interpreter free-of-charge	1934	75.9%
The interpreting agency (eg the Deaf Society) provided the interpreter free-of-charge	657	25.8%
I contributed some of the cost and the interpreting agency paid the rest	9	.4%
I paid all the costs	55	2.2%
Other	260	10.2%

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

In the last 12 months, were there other times (not covered above) when you needed a professional Auslan interpreter, but were not able to get one?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	1760	35.9	47.2	47.2
	No	1968	40.2	52.8	100.0
	Total	3728	76.1	100.0	
Missing	System	1172	23.9		
Total		4900	100.0		

In the last 12 months, were there other times (not covered above) when you needed a professional interpreter, BUT were not able to get an interpreter?

		State							
		NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
		Valid %							
Valid	Yes	42.6%	53.9%	40.2%	52.9%	48.7%	100.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	No	57.4%	46.1%	59.8%	47.1%	51.3%	.0%	50.0%	.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Do you use family or friends - not professional Auslan interpreters - to interpret for you sometimes?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes - I use family and friends to interpret for me	3182	64.9	69.0	69.0
	No - I do not use family or friends to interpret for me	1427	29.1	31.0	100.0
	Total	4609	94.1	100.0	
Missing	System	291	5.9		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Why do you use family and friends – not professional Auslan interpreters – to interpret for you?

	Frequency	% of respondents
There are no professional interpreters available in my area	784	24.2%
Professional interpreters are not always available when I need them	1632	50.3%
I prefer to use someone I know and trust	1305	40.2%
It is easier to use family and/or friends	1734	53.4%
I did not know there were professional interpreters available	316	9.7%
I cannot afford to pay for a professional interpreter	1441	44.4%
I have another reason for using family and friends to interpret rather than professional interpreters	848	26.1%

Overall, how good are the family and friends who interpret for you in Auslan signing skills?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Very Good	804	16.4	26.4	26.4
Good	712	14.5	23.4	49.7
Average	769	15.7	25.2	74.9
Poor	439	9.0	14.4	89.3
Very Poor	325	6.6	10.7	100.0
Total	3048	62.2	100.0	
Missing				
Don't Know/Not Applicable	11	.2		
System	1840	37.6		
Total	1851	37.8		
Total	4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Overall, how good are the family and friends who interpret for you in being ready to help you when you need Auslan interpreting?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Good	948	19.4	32.2	32.2
	Good	796	16.2	27.0	59.1
	Average	604	12.3	20.5	79.6
	Poor	386	7.9	13.1	92.7
	Very Poor	215	4.4	7.3	100.0
	Total	2949	60.2	100.0	
Missing	Don't Know/Not Applicable	19	.4		
	System	1933	39.4		
	Total	1951	39.8		
Total		4900	100.0		

Overall, how good are the family and friends who interpret for you in being at meetings on time (not being late)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Good	1383	28.2	48.9	48.9
	Good	749	15.3	26.5	75.3
	Average	490	10.0	17.3	92.7
	Poor	137	2.8	4.8	97.5
	Very Poor	71	1.4	2.5	100.0
	Total	2831	57.8	100.0	
Missing	Don't Know/Not Applicable	8	.2		
	System	2062	42.1		
	Total	2069	42.2		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Overall, how good are the family and friends who interpret for you in understanding your communication needs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Good	1353	27.6	43.1	43.1
	Good	827	16.9	26.4	69.5
	Average	674	13.8	21.5	91.0
	Poor	224	4.6	7.1	98.1
	Very Poor	58	1.2	1.9	100.0
	Total	3136	64.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1764	36.0		
Total		4900	100.0		

Overall, how good are the family and friends who interpret for you in being private and confidential with your information?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Good	1545	31.5	50.9	50.9
	Good	707	14.4	23.3	74.2
	Average	555	11.3	18.3	92.4
	Poor	94	1.9	3.1	95.5
	Very Poor	136	2.8	4.5	100.0
	Total	3037	62.0	100.0	
Missing	Don't Know/Not Applicable	8	.2		
	System	1856	37.9		
	Total	1863	38.0		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Why do you use professional Auslan interpreters – not your family and friends?

	Frequency	% of respondents
My family and friends are not always available or are unable to help	1423	35.3%
Professional interpreters provide better interpreting services	3047	75.5%
To protect my privacy	1929	47.8%
I have another reason for using professional interpreters rather than family and friends	1235	30.6%

Overall, how good are professional interpreters you use in Auslan signing skills?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Very Good	2335	47.7	56.5	56.5
Good	1289	26.3	31.2	87.7
Average	439	9.0	10.6	98.3
Poor	29	.6	.7	99.0
Very Poor	42	.9	1.0	100.0
Total	4135	84.4	100.0	
Missing System	765	15.6		
Total	4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Overall, how good are professional interpreters you use in being ready to help you when you need Auslan interpreting?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Good	1866	38.1	45.8	45.8
	Good	1200	24.5	29.5	75.3
	Average	732	14.9	18.0	93.2
	Poor	192	3.9	4.7	98.0
	Very Poor	83	1.7	2.0	100.0
	Total	4073	83.1	100.0	
Missing	Don't Know/Not Applicable	8	.2		
	System	819	16.7		
Total		827	16.9		
Total		4900	100.0		

Overall, how good are professional Auslan interpreters you use in being at meetings on time (not being late)?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Good	1876	38.3	46.9	46.9
	Good	1281	26.1	32.0	79.0
	Average	737	15.0	18.4	97.4
	Poor	71	1.4	1.8	99.2
	Very Poor	34	.7	.8	100.0
	Total	3998	81.6	100.0	
Missing	System	902	18.4		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Overall, how good are professional Auslan interpreters you use in understanding your communication needs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Good	1847	37.7	46.0	46.0
	Good	1365	27.9	34.0	80.0
	Average	695	14.2	17.3	97.3
	Poor	62	1.3	1.5	98.8
	Very Poor	46	.9	1.2	100.0
	Total	4015	81.9	100.0	
Missing	System	885	18.1		
Total		4900	100.0		

Overall, how good are professional Auslan interpreters you use in being private and confidential with your information?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Good	2110	43.1	54.2	54.2
	Good	1125	23.0	28.9	83.1
	Average	542	11.1	13.9	97.1
	Poor	66	1.4	1.7	98.8
	Very Poor	48	1.0	1.2	100.0
	Total	3891	79.4	100.0	
Missing	Don't Know/Not Applicable	64	1.3		
	System	945	19.3		
	Total	1009	20.6		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Overall, how good are professional Auslan interpreters you use in value for money?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Good	1137	23.2	36.0	36.0
	Good	809	16.5	25.6	61.6
	Average	897	18.3	28.4	90.0
	Poor	140	2.9	4.4	94.4
	Very Poor	176	3.6	5.6	100.0
	Total	3159	64.5	100.0	
Missing	Don't Know/Not Applicable	70	1.4		
	System	1671	34.1		
	Total	1740	35.5		
Total		4900	100.0		

How good are interpreting agencies (e.g. Deaf Society) at finding an Auslan interpreter that is good for your needs?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Good	1544	31.5	37.5	37.5
	Good	1355	27.6	32.9	70.5
	Average	801	16.3	19.5	90.0
	Poor	226	4.6	5.5	95.5
	Very Poor	187	3.8	4.5	100.0
	Total	4111	83.9	100.0	
Missing	Don't Know/Not Applicable	15	.3		
	System	773	15.8		
	Total	789	16.1		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

How good are interpreting agencies (e.g. Deaf Society) at booking Auslan interpreters for you?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Very Good	1434	29.3	36.1	36.1
	Good	1132	23.1	28.5	64.6
	Average	857	17.5	21.5	86.1
	Poor	363	7.4	9.1	95.2
	Very Poor	189	3.9	4.8	100.0
	Total	3975	81.1	100.0	
Missing	Don't Know/Not Applicable	31	.6		
	System	894	18.2		
	Total	925	18.9		
Total		4900	100.0		

I would use video remote interpreting if it became more available.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	951	19.4	22.9	22.9
	Agree	822	16.8	19.8	42.6
	Don't Know	1775	36.2	42.7	85.3
	Disagree	292	6.0	7.0	92.3
	Strongly Disagree	321	6.6	7.7	100.0
	Total	4161	84.9	100.0	
Missing	System	739	15.1		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

In many situations video remote interpreting would be an alternative to having the Auslan interpreter attend in person.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	738	15.1	18.5	18.5
	Agree	735	15.0	18.4	37.0
	Don't Know	1743	35.6	43.8	80.7
	Disagree	361	7.4	9.1	89.8
	Strongly Disagree	407	8.3	10.2	100.0
	Total	3984	81.3	100.0	
Missing	System	916	18.7		
Total		4900	100.0		

Mostly I can get a professional Auslan interpreter when I need one.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1290	26.3	28.6	28.6
	Agree	1754	35.8	38.8	67.4
	Don't Know	690	14.1	15.3	82.6
	Disagree	500	10.2	11.1	93.7
	Strongly Disagree	284	5.8	6.3	100.0
	Total	4518	92.2	100.0	
Missing	System	382	7.8		
Total		4900	100.0		

Mostly I can get a professional Auslan interpreter when I need one.

		State							
		NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
		Valid %							
Valid	Strongly Agree	24.0%	24.4%	29.9%	23.0%	50.3%	43.7%	66.7%	20.3%
	Agree	45.0%	30.9%	39.4%	45.8%	28.5%	50.3%	.0%	40.5%
	Don't Know	17.6%	16.6%	14.9%	12.6%	11.4%	6.0%	.0%	18.9%
	Disagree	9.4%	19.1%	5.6%	18.6%	2.6%	.0%	33.3%	.0%
	Strongly Disagree	3.9%	9.0%	10.2%	.0%	7.3%	.0%	.0%	20.3%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

If I needed a professional Auslan interpreter quickly, I could get one.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	733	15.0	16.6	16.6
	Agree	1094	22.3	24.7	41.3
	Don't Know	1122	22.9	25.3	66.6
	Disagree	821	16.8	18.5	85.2
	Strongly Disagree	657	13.4	14.8	100.0
	Total	4427	90.4	100.0	
Missing	System	473	9.6		
Total		4900	100.0		

If I needed a professional Auslan interpreter quickly, I could get one.

		State							
		NSW	VIC	QLD	WA	SA	TAS	ACT	NT
		Valid %							
Valid	Strongly Agree	11.8%	20.0%	16.6%	19.5%	21.2%	20.0%	.0%	40.5%
	Agree	26.4%	15.1%	19.6%	27.8%	44.5%	64.7%	.0%	40.5%
	Don't Know	29.2%	23.0%	33.5%	17.9%	17.1%	7.7%	.0%	.0%
	Disagree	19.6%	17.1%	21.0%	17.5%	9.9%	7.7%	63.0%	18.9%
	Strongly Disagree	13.0%	24.8%	9.2%	17.3%	7.3%	.0%	37.0%	.0%
	Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

I am willing to pay some of the cost for a professional Auslan interpreter.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	38	.8	.9	.9
	Agree	379	7.7	8.8	9.7
	Don't Know	996	20.3	23.1	32.8
	Disagree	849	17.3	19.7	52.5
	Strongly Disagree	2044	41.7	47.5	100.0
	Total	4307	87.9	100.0	
Missing	System	593	12.1		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

When Government agencies provide services to deaf people they regularly (or often) provide Auslan interpreters.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	1134	23.2	25.6	25.6
	Agree	1442	29.4	32.5	58.1
	Don't Know	1082	22.1	24.4	82.5
	Disagree	552	11.3	12.4	94.9
	Strongly Disagree	226	4.6	5.1	100.0
	Total	4436	90.5	100.0	
Missing	System	463	9.5		
Total		4900	100.0		

Employers regularly (or often) provide Auslan interpreters to deaf employees.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	737	15.0	17.1	17.1
	Agree	1014	20.7	23.5	40.6
	Don't Know	1136	23.2	26.3	66.9
	Disagree	724	14.8	16.8	83.7
	Strongly Disagree	702	14.3	16.3	100.0
	Total	4313	88.0	100.0	
Missing	System	587	12.0		
Total		4900	100.0		

Private service providers regularly (or often) provide Auslan interpreters to deaf customers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	661	13.5	15.3	15.3
	Agree	627	12.8	14.5	29.7
	Don't Know	1477	30.2	34.1	63.9
	Disagree	709	14.5	16.4	80.2
	Strongly Disagree	856	17.5	19.8	100.0
	Total	4330	88.4	100.0	
Missing	System	570	11.6		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Age group of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Under 25 years	757	15.5	15.5	15.5
	25 – 34 years	1150	23.5	23.5	38.9
	35 – 44 years	1389	28.3	28.3	67.3
	45 – 54 years	835	17.0	17.0	84.3
	Over 55 years	768	15.7	15.7	100.0
Total		4900	100.0	100.0	

Gender of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	2090	42.7	43.0	43.0
	Female	2774	56.6	57.0	100.0
	Total	4864	99.3	100.0	
Missing	System	36	.7		
Total		4900	100.0		

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

Employment status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Permanent employment equal to or greater than 15 hours a week	1113	22.7	23.2	23.2
	Permanent employment less than 15 hours a week	139	2.8	2.9	26.1
	Regular casual employment equal to or greater than 15 hours	363	7.4	7.6	33.7
	Regular casual employment less than 15 hours a week	208	4.2	4.3	38.1
	Irregular casual employment	247	5.0	5.2	43.2
	Unemployed	1289	26.3	26.9	70.1
	Retired	529	10.8	11.0	81.1
	Other	903	18.4	18.9	100.0
	Total	4790	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	110	2.2		
Total		4900	100.0		

What industry do you work in now?

		Frequency	% of respondents
	Retail	151	7.3%
	Manufacturing – light - heavy	325	15.8%
	Hospitality	160	7.8%
	Tourism	24	1.1%
	Service	623	30.2%
	Health	108	5.3%
	Government (Federal, State, or local)	683	33.1%
	Building	113	5.5%

Auslan user survey - Frequency results and selected State crosstabulations (Weighted)

What is the highest level of education you have completed?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than Year 10 or equivalent	1040	21.2	22.1	22.1
	Year 10 or equivalent	840	17.1	17.8	39.9
	Year 11-12 or equivalent	545	11.1	11.6	51.5
	Trade or TAFE	1016	20.7	21.5	73.0
	Diploma, Associate Diploma	447	9.1	9.5	82.5
	Degree	473	9.6	10.0	92.5
	Post Graduate Qualification	202	4.1	4.3	96.8
	Other	151	3.1	3.2	100.0
	Total	4714	96.2	100.0	
Missing	System	186	3.8		
Total		4900	100.0		

Did someone else help you complete this survey?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	1560	31.8	34.0	34.0
	No - I did not need help to complete this survey.	3031	61.9	66.0	100.0
	Total	4592	93.7	100.0	
Missing	System	308	6.3		
Total		4900	100.0		