

INQUIRY INTO AUSLAN INTERPRETATION FOR BROADCASTING

Organisation: Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Date Received: 6 July 2022

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY



Hon Matthew Mason-Cox MLC
Chair, Procedure Committee
Legislative Council of New South Wales
By email: ProcedureCommittee@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Mr Mason-Cox

Re: Committee Inquiry into Auslan interpretation for broadcasting

I am writing on behalf of the Office of the Legislative Assembly of the Australian Capital Territory to provide information that may assist the Procedure Committee with its inquiry into Auslan interpretation for the broadcasting of proceedings.

In 2015 the ACT Legislative Assembly amended Standing Order 210 to allow Auslan interpreters onto the floor of the Assembly when it is sitting:

Except with the permission of the Speaker, who may exercise discretion for a short period in the case of Members caring for infants, or for an Auslan interpreter, only Members are permitted on the floor of the Chamber during meetings of the Assembly.

In practice, Auslan interpreters are arranged by Members of the Legislative Assembly on an as-needed basis, and the interpreter is paid for by the Office of the Legislative Assembly.

Broadcasting officers are notified when an Auslan interpreter is expected to be on the floor of the Chamber so that they know to adjust camera angles as required to ensure visibility. There is a general understanding that interpreter-assisted speeches are delivered start to finish, but this is not always possible and there can be issues when there are interjections or to-and-fro discussions. The broadcasting guidelines state the camera is to be on the Member who has the call, or on the full room wide shot. This can make it challenging to include useful vision of the Auslan interpreter.

The Office of the Legislative Assembly is investigating closed captioning software and anticipates it will commence a product trial in coming months. The use of closed captioning for Chamber proceedings may increase accessibility of proceedings for all members of the community, including those within the deaf community. This project is being undertaken with the input and assistance of both Hansard and IT teams.

The Assembly Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion is currently undertaking an inquiry into access to services and information in Auslan. More details about the inquiry can be found on the Committee's webpage, including a video produced to provide background to the inquiry and which encourages members of the ACT community – particularly deaf Canberrans – to provide a submission in a format with which they are comfortable. The Committee is due to report by December 2022.

Details about the Committee's Inquiry can be found at:

<https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/parliamentary-business/in-committees/committees/eci/inquiry-into-access-to-services-and-information-in-auslan>

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss this submission.

Yours sincerely

Julia Agostino
Acting Clerk

7 July 2022