



Deaf Australia Inc.

Media Release
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National Curriculum to include Auslan: a win for deaf advocates

Deaf Australia yesterday applauded Minister Peter Garrett's announcement that Auslan (Australian Sign Language) will be included in the National Curriculum.

"We believe every deaf child has the right to communicate in the way that suits them best, and for many deaf children, this means being bilingual in both English and Auslan," said Karen Lloyd AM, Executive Officer of Deaf Australia. "This announcement brings us one step closer to realising this goal for young deaf Australians and will change how Auslan and deaf people are perceived by a new generation of Australians, both deaf and hearing."

The curriculum recognises the connection between young people learning their native language and achieving a secure acceptance of their own identity and helping them to develop a wider recognition and understanding of their language and culture. Many bilingual deaf Australians often identify with Auslan as a native language and find it more effective to communicate and learn using Auslan. This does not exclude the value of English, but further emphasizes the need for bilingual learning.

"It will also be valuable for hearing children to have the opportunity to learn Auslan as a LOTE and develop a better understanding of deaf people and culture," explained Ms Lloyd.

"By including Auslan in the National Curriculum, the Government is setting a standard for Auslan and raising public perception and community understanding of this language as a core communications tool of the Australian deaf community."

Deaf Australia looks forward to advising the Government on the development of the Auslan curriculum.

Deaf Australia is the national peak organisation for Deaf people in Australia. It represents the views of deaf people who use Auslan and is a true consumer organisation as only deaf people have the right to vote on Deaf Australia business and to be elected to the Board. Deaf Australia's vision is that deaf people are respected and fully included in the Australian community and the right to use Auslan is legally recognised.

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