

# **Communication Accessibility Guidelines for Meetings and Public Events**

**A Guide for Organisers**



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## **Section 1: Introduction**

One in six Australians have some form of hearing loss, with that number projected to increase to one in four by 2050<sup>1</sup>. This number represents over 4 million Australians who have various degrees of deafness.

Deafness refers to the inability to hear, either totally or partially. Symptoms may be mild, moderate, severe or profound. Deafness may occur at birth or may be acquired due to various diseases, infections and or ageing.

There are various strategies to enable these people to compensate for their deafness so they can communicate, such as lip-reading, using hearing devices that amplify sound, and using sign language. These skills require extensive training over the years in various circumstances to be competent, but they still face challenges every day.

People who are deaf or hard of hearing can function like most people in everyday life and can participate in many community activities. Their deafness is often not recognised by others around them.

There is a general assumption that when a person with a hearing loss is fitted with assistive devices, such as hearing aids or a cochlear implant, 'normal' hearing is restored. The way and degree to which an individual with a hearing loss participates in a conversation, a meeting or other event varies according to their personal circumstances. This can include the degree of hearing loss, their age at the time of onset, the effectiveness of their aids, family background, educational opportunities and achievements, and social experience.

Events such as conferences, festivals, meetings, fundraising activities and ceremonies are important parts of the lives of many people, including those who have various degrees of deafness.

Venues that offer year round public events such as sporting venues and amusement parks are often not communication accessible.

This lack of access to information means people with a hearing loss are unable to participate equally in these meetings and events unless specific provisions are made. Additional consideration may be necessary for inclusion of deaf and hard of hearing people at these venues.

Presently, there are no clear guidelines on best practice for accessible communication facilities for deaf and hard of hearing people of all ages. With the shift towards social inclusion for people with disabilities, efforts to promote dignity, rights and access is becoming the norm. These rights are enshrined in the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which Australia endorsed and ratified.

These guidelines have been developed through the experiences of deaf and hard of hearing people, as well as service providers, to make meetings and events accessible.

**These guidelines describe minimum requirements for provision of accessible facilities for deaf or hard of hearing people so they may participate equally and at all times.**

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<sup>1</sup> Listen Hear, The Economic Impact and Cost of Hearing Loss in Australia (2006) – *Access Economics*.

What are some examples of access barriers when one or more of the minimum requirements are not provided?

- A keynote speech at a conference is delivered in a room with no hearing augmentation system (a hearing loop) for people whose hearing devices are fitted with tele-coil hearing devices;
- When sign language interpreters are not employed, participants who require such support are automatically excluded by absence of this communication access;
- Where accommodation is provided at a conference venue, it is often the case that the rooms are not supplied with caption enabled television or visual emergency warning systems.
- Where public demonstrations or entertainment events are organised, the needs of sign language users are neglected.

In general terms, there are essentially two groups of people who have different communication needs and both groups should have their needs accommodated at all times. This is a critical factor to the success of social inclusion.

#### **Auslan Users**

People who communicate using Australian Sign Language (Auslan), the recognised language of the Australian Deaf Community, need sign language interpreters to facilitate the transfer of English to Auslan and vice versa.

#### **Assistive Hearing Device Users**

There are significant numbers of people in the community who wear assistive hearing devices or have cochlear implants. These people rely on hearing loops and captions to participate in group meetings and events such as conferences and awards presentations.

Both groups of people with a hearing loss have strong visual needs. Thus there is a need to make information available in highly visual formats.

**Currently Accessible Events Guidelines mainly refer to provision of appropriate physical access.**

**Communications access (covered in these Guidelines) refers to an event's capacity to facilitate the full participation of people who are deaf or hard of hearing from a communications perspective.**

## **Section 2: Core Requirements**

To enable full participation to all meetings and events for people who are deaf and hard of hearing, there are three core access requirements:

- Sign Language interpreting;
- Induction Loop (or Hearing Loop); and
- Captioning

These three core access requirements are complementary to each other and providing just one of the three access requirements should not be regarded as the only means of communication access.

### **Section 3: What the Law says**

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) prohibits discrimination towards people seeking access to services and goods. The DDA aims to ensure that people with disabilities are not treated less favourably than those who do not have a disability.

The DDA covers areas such as employment, access to goods, services and facilities, and access to education, premises and transport. The DDA defines disability very broadly and includes for example:

- People who are blind or have a vision impairment;
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing;
- People with intellectual and learning disabilities;
- People with mobility and manual dexterity difficulties;
- People with psychiatric illness;
- People who have a brain injury;
- People who have epilepsy; and
- People who have a disease-causing organism such as the HIV virus.

The Australian Government has endorsed and ratified several international conventions including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. These are enshrined in several acts of legislation and disability strategies across states/territories and the Commonwealth Government (see references).

For the purpose of these Guidelines, we refer specifically to the following Conventions and Articles:

**Article 27 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*** protects the right for everyone “to freely participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits”

**Article 9: (Accessibility) of the *Rights of Persons with Disabilities*** to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life.

**Section 2:** To provide forms of live assistance and intermediaries, including guides and professional sign language interpreters, to facilitate accessibility to buildings, and other facilities open to the public.

**Article 19: (Living independently and being included in the community) of the *Rights of Persons with Disabilities*;** to ensure that equal right of all persons with disability to live in the community, with choices equal to others, and shall take effective and appropriate measures to facilitate full enjoyment by persons with disability of this right and their full inclusion and participation in the community.

**Section C:** Community services and facilities for general populations are available on an equal basis to persons with disabilities and are responsive to their needs.

**Article 21: (Freedom of expression and opinion, and access to information), of the *Right of Persons with Disabilities*** to ensure that persons with disabilities can exercise the right to freedom of expression and opinion, including the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas on an equal basis with others and through all forms of communication of their choice.

**Section A:** providing information intended for general public to persons with disabilities in accessible formats and technology appropriate to different kinds of disabilities in a timely manner and without additional costs; and

**Section B:** Accepting and facilitating the use of sign languages, Braille, augmentative and alternative communications and all other accessible means, modes and formats of communication of their choice by persons with disabilities in official interactions.

## **Section 4: Thinking ahead**

Access to communications at public events, meetings, conferences or summits is often reactive to an individual's expressed needs, provided that these needs are expressed in a timely manner. This can lead, at times, to those needs not being catered for, thus increasing the potential for discrimination and exclusion. Conversely, proactive planning will ensure that an event is accessible for deaf and hard of hearing people.

Fortunately, there are several providers that are professionally equipped to provide these services, ensuring that events are accessible. Costs may vary depending on what levels of services are required to effectively deliver accessible communications.

**It is strongly recommended that event planners enact communications access guidelines in the initial stages of planning, to appropriately allocate resources and thus the means to create successful events.**

It will often be more expensive and more time consuming to address requirements of people with various communication needs if you treat access as something you add on at a later stage.

If the event requires coordination of interpreters, materials, logistics, and other relevant tasks, it may be advisable to consider employing a Communication Access Coordinator to provide logistical support for communication access needs for the event.

Organisations listed in Section 16 of this document will be able to provide information and advice for the best possible access.

## **Section 5: Financial Support**

Providing access to meetings or events is the event organiser's responsibility. As with any costs, communication access, like catering, should be built into the registration fees. In this way, all participants share the costs of access.

The Commonwealth Government has a program known as the National Disability Conference Initiative. Organisers can apply for funding for services such as Auslan/ English interpreters, live captioning, hearing loops and/ or note takers.

Eligibility requirements and application forms for the National Disability Conference Initiative are available at: [www.fahcsia.gov.au/funding](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/funding). Please check for closing date.

## **Section 6: Venues**

Choosing a venue is likely to be one of the first things you do and one of the most important. You may have your own venue that you want to use or you might be looking for a venue to hire for your event. In both cases, there are things you can do to make it easier for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to attend and participate in your event.



### **Indoor venues**

It is essential that a chosen venue caters for communication accessibility. Some venues may be equipped with a hearing loop, others may not and a temporary loop must be installed for the event by an external supplier.

People who have a hearing loss depend on information presented in a visual way and it is essential that the venues cater for these needs. For example, large columns located within a meeting room will obstruct people's vision.

Another example is bright sunshine. Although large windows can provide a certain ambience and portal to the outside environment, bright sunshine entering a room can make reading a screen difficult. Furthermore, watching an interpreter with bright light behind them can cause eye strain for the participant. Insufficient lighting must also be avoided. A dimly lit room is not conducive to lip-reading or following the visual language provided by an interpreter. Presenters and interpreters on stage should be both well and consistently lit.

An elevated platform (or stage) should be made available at an event and should optimally be placed against a solid wall. The stage should have sufficient space for an interpreter to perform their role, ideally, next to the lectern (see Diagram A and B).

Most venues are equipped with acoustic standards which conform to building standards. But do not assume this is the case. Best to check all systems are working and can interface with communications devices such as live captioning, and induction loops, if not already installed.

### **Outdoor venues**

Events planned for outdoor venues should take into consideration the incorporation of the three core communications access requirements listed previously. In addition, information regarding the type of venue must be provided to the organising agency so they can adequately alert the interpreters. This is particularly important in adverse weather conditions.

## **Section 7: Interpreters**



Auslan/ English Interpreters are professionally trained in facilitating communication between English and Australian Sign Language (Auslan).

Provision of Auslan/ English interpreters at an event is essential for Auslan users so they can actively participate in the event. Many Auslan users may not possess proficiency in English and their proficiency may vary greatly between individuals.

Interpreters are accredited through the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) and are trained to work in a variety of settings. Additionally, accredited interpreters are bound by a Code of Ethics. Skill sets, experience and knowledge vary from interpreter to interpreter. Not all have the skills necessary for large public events.

It is important that interpreters are selected appropriately, in accordance with their skills and knowledge of the subject/s. It is generally advised that for public events, interpreters accredited at the Professional level should be engaged.

The number of interpreters required may depend on the content and structure of the event. The needs for these events will vary between technical and general workshops; events requiring group discussions/ forums or small presentations; and a major conference with multiple streams. In some situations, use of Deaf (Relay Interpreter) and/ or Deafblind Interpreters may be appropriate.

**Interpreters should be placed next to the presenter/ lectern and be afforded appropriate lighting and elevation in order to be seen. (See diagram 'A' and 'B')**

It is important to consult with local interpreting agencies to identify the best interpreter/s for various circumstances leading to, during and post event.

Furthermore, interpreters should be requested to arrive early to assist with the logistics of service provision and to meet presenters in order that they can deliver the content in an appropriate way.

**It is also important that interpreters are given access to the content of presentations *PRIOR* to the event to allow for preparation and to ensure smooth flow of information during the event.**

## **Section 8: Induction Loop (or Hearing Loop)**



Induction loop (often referred to as hearing loop) is an assistive listening device that enables hearing aid users to receive information directly to their hearing device and minimise background noise.

Some venues may have a pre-installed induction loop in some facilities. Make sure the target area of the event is accessible, most times. Pre-installed loops are complementary to use of public announcement systems and do not incur additional costs. If the venue does not have a pre-installed loop, it is recommended to source an external provider to temporarily install a loop for the duration of the event. Additional costs for installation of temporary loop will incur.

There are two types of induction loops - personal loops and loops that are installed for a group and built into a facility.

### **Personal Loop**

A personal loop device can make a difference for an individual, where a small microphone, using FM transmission, can be used to deliver the sound directly to the hearing aid user.

### **Induction Loop**

An induction loop works much the same way as a radio receiver for a group of individuals wearing assistive devices in an assigned space.

### **Induction Loop installation**

An induction loop system consists of a microphone, an amplifier and a coil of wire placed around the perimeter of a room. Sound from the microphone is transmitted through the amplifier to a coil which emits a magnetic field. The hearing aid user sits within the field with their hearing device set to the T-switch setting. The hearing aid directly picks up the sound being transmitted while minimising background noise.

Induction loops can be used with various pieces of audio-visual equipment such as televisions, telephones and sound systems. They can be helpful in many settings such as conferences, theatres, cinemas, reception desks, information kiosks and churches.

This system needs to conform to the '*Hearing Augmentation System Signage Guide*' to inform the participant that the loop is available <http://www.deafnessforum.org.au/index.php/find-out-about>.

**At least 20 per cent of the space should be looped, see diagram A and B (on page 18 and 19 of the Guide).**

### **Hearing loops may not perform as expected**

A venue may advise you that its hearing loop is functioning. However, it is not uncommon to find on the day of the event that it is not effective.

While the technical aspects might indicate full functionality of the loop, only a person wearing a hearing device can provide confirmation. This confirmation should be done before the event begins. Testing devices are also available. The link below provides further details on such devices. [http://wom.com.au/product\\_details.php?id=107](http://wom.com.au/product_details.php?id=107)

When using the induction loop, microphones are required. Use of roaming microphones (cordless microphones) are also necessary to allow all participants to contribute to the session, thus allowing everyone access to what is being said from the floor.

## **Section 9: Captions**

Captions involve translation of audio presentation into text format which is projected on a screen or video.

Captioning benefits everyone, including those who have English as their second language.

Caption providers employ a captioner who listens to the spoken word presentation and types, or uses voice recognition, to create captions. Some caption providers use high-speed stenographers, who use a shorthand machine and special software which translate shorthand codes into written English. Others employ voice captioners who use software like Dragon Naturally Speaking and then "re-speak" the words of the presenter. In each case, the words are then projected onto a screen.

The technology captioning platforms and captioner skillset can vary between providers. For example, good stenographers typically type at upward of 220 words per minute and at an accuracy rate of at least 98%.

Depending on the technology and captioning technique used, the time for the live captions to appear on screen will vary between 2 and 10 seconds from the time the speaker says the words to the time they appear.

Remote captioning differs only in that the captioner is situated in another location. This could be another city or even a different country. Remote captioning requires that the live audio from the conference venue must be sent to the remote captioner. The captions are then transmitted back to the venue via an internet connection.

The screen onto which the captions are projected should be a suitable size so the words are clearly legible from the *rear of the room*.

In a conference room, the event organiser should consider the following options:

- Having a dedicated screen (or screens) for captions;
- A single screen that is split to receive two inputs - the captions appear at the top of the screen (preferred to placing them at the bottom for reasons explained below) and beneath them are Powerpoint images or a live output from a camera which provides a close-up of the presenter and /or interpreter. In some instances, it may also be helpful to split the screen vertically, displaying captions on one side of the screen and the Powerpoint on the other side of the screen.
- A screen for each of the separate inputs, ensuring that the captions screen and the screen receiving the Powerpoint images are placed next to each other. This reduces eye strain and general discomfort for someone reading the captions and referring to the Powerpoint images.
- Ensure that the captioner will be allowed to continue captioning the session when the session is running over its allotted time.

In some cases, the captions supplier can also allow individuals to access captions on their tablets or mobile phones. In each case, the captions supplier sets up a temporary web page to enable this form of access. Some captioning providers are also able to provide a desktop software package for the display of captions.

Some suppliers may have specific requirements such as uninterrupted access to internet (or VOIP) for remote captioning. Event organisers should consult with the supplier in the early planning stages for best delivery of captioning at the event.

### **Optimal Placement of Captions on a Screen for a live event**

While captions may be provided for people attending an event, their placement on the screen should be carefully considered.

The traditional place for captions on television and cinema is at the bottom of the screen. However, this may not be optimal placement for a live event. The audience's view of the captions may be obstructed by the speaker and lectern, interpreter and people walking onto the stage.

Due to the nature of live presentations, where delegates may be watching both Powerpoint slides and the presenter simultaneously, for example, it is important to have as many lines of caption text as possible available on screen. Having only two lines of text on screen, as is the case with television captions, does not generally work very well in a conference or meeting setting.

### **Video Materials**

Presenters using videos as part of a presentation can overlook the need for access. Best practice suggests that video materials should be captioned prior to the event. This is the responsibility of the presenter. Event organisers should remind presenters of this early in the planning process.

### **Internet streaming (Webinar)**

An increasing number of workshops, public events and summits are being made available through a dedicated website, or webinar, format. Some events delivered in this way require registration, while others are just open sites accessible to anyone.

When videoing the presenters, the camera operator will need to ensure that s/he also captures the interpreter in the screen for streaming. Alternatively, two cameras can be used to capture the

presenter and the interpreter then the vision mixed to insert the interpreter feed onto the output feed of the main presenter. The box should be no less than one third the size of the screen.

Additional resources may be required to enable the captions to be screened through the internet. Please consult with the captioning supplier.

## **Section 10. Additional Services**

### **Audio-Visual Support**

In big events, audio-visual equipment will play a significant role to broadcast the event widely in an area where participants can watch from any angle. If such support is provided, then it would be possible to include a frame of the interpreter in the box, along with captions to be shown. It would mean that, at least two video cameras would be required.

One screen can have several images shown at the same time, for example, the presenter, interpreter, captions, and powerpoint slides / video (where appropriate).

### **Networking**

Depending on the length of the event, almost all events have morning/ afternoon tea and/ or lunch. This allows opportunities for participants to meet with speakers, colleagues or other participants during the breaks and immediately after the event. The event can:

- Ensure that Auslan interpreters are available during the breaks and after the events;
- Provide a quiet room (see below) to minimise surround noise.

### **Accommodation**

In choosing a suitable hotel to provide accommodation for guests, event organisers should consider the specific needs of deaf and hard of hearing people. The hotel should:

- Ensure the appropriate systems are in place to ensure that all deaf and hard of hearing guests will be alerted to any danger (eg fire or bomb threat), within the premises at the same time as all other guests and staff. This also includes any drill or system test in the building.
- Provide a telephone with built-in or clip-on amplifier, telecoil coupler and flashing light alert
- Access to Teletype Devices (eg TTY) and/or internet
- Provide a television capable of accessing free-to-air captioning
- Where pay TV access is provided, ensure that available captioning may be accessed
- Ensure that all TV signals carrying captioning are not stripped of captioning by pay movie or pay TV equipment
- Ensure that TV remote controls contain a button for turning the captions on and off.

### **Transportation**

When transportation to and from the meeting or events is provided, it is essential that information for patrons is available visually at the pick-up and drop-off points, at the information centres and in program books (where relevant).

Essential information should include:

- Time
- Destinations
- Transport details (eg bus number)

Assistance for bookings of taxis may be required for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, as there may be no other way for them to book transport from the venue.

### **Quiet Room**

It is a good idea to provide a quiet room for people who are deaf or hard of hearing to use when conversing with other people. It is difficult to have conversations in noisy public areas with hearing devices that amplify surrounding sounds and make it harder to understand and to follow conversations. This can cause fatigue and distress for some people.

### **Evening Entertainment**

Some events may include a supplementary evening social event such as a dinner, barbeque, or award ceremony. These events are generally good networking opportunities for everyone, including people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

These events are also covered by the Disability Discrimination Act and communication access needs to be included eg captioning and interpreting of dinner speakers, and roving interpreters for networking opportunities.

## **Section 11: Promoting your event**

People who are deaf or hard of hearing can, in general, physically access any venue. However, many of these events are not communication accessible.

To attract wider audiences to an event and to avoid the potential for discrimination, promotion of communications accessibility reassures deaf and hard of hearing people that they can fully participate.

### **Tips for promotion:**

- If you promote your event on a website, check that website is accessible and compatible with the range of specialist hardware and software and complies with 'Double A' Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG/>.
- Provide alternative contact details such as a telephone number, fax and/ or e-mail address. Deaf or hard of hearing people will normally contact you through use of the National Relay Service. For more information about the National Relay Service, please see their website: [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)
- In all promotional videos (both broadcast and on the website), ensure that the contents are captioned.
- Having made the effort to ensure good access, don't forget to promote your event through organisations and networks aimed at people who are deaf and hard of hearing in order to fully access all possible markets.

## **Section 12: Tickets, bookings and registration**

Different types of events will involve different types of ticketing, reservations and booking systems.

### **Selling tickets**

If you are selling tickets for your event, you need to ensure the system for booking is accessible. For example, ticketing booths should have a confined induction loop/ hearing loop, or ticketing staff

should have some knowledge of Australian Sign Language (Auslan). Alternatively, they should at least know what to do when communicating with a deaf or hard of hearing person.

### **Seating Allocation**

If seats are allocated at the time of booking, you will need to consider how to make sure that deaf and hard of hearing people are not discriminated against.

Conference venues and stadiums may have allocated seating for people who use wheelchairs. These seats are generally not appropriate for people who are deaf or hard of hearing unless they specifically request these seats.

Deaf and hard of hearing people prefer to be seated in a position so they have a good view of what is happening on the stage or speaker's platform (see Diagram A and B). Following this guide will ensure that deaf patrons have good visual access to interpreters and presenters.

### **Registration forms**

Asking people to complete and return registration forms is a common feature of events such as conferences and seminars. The form should allow participants to specify what communication access s/he requires so the organisers can be informed ahead of time to ensure that all communication access requirements are covered for the event.

Suggested wording on registration form: (Tick here) 'I require communication access. I would appreciate the following services: Auslan interpreter, Induction Loop and/ or captions'.

### **Online booking**

If online bookings are available, please allow tick boxes for participants to select 'SMS', or 'text only' next to the mobile phone.

Use of auto-generated text alerts need to take into consideration how people can get in touch with the agency when required.

### **Public Competitions**

Some events may hold competitions where participants must respond to a call in order to win the prize. This type of competition seriously disadvantages people who are deaf or hard of hearing and can be discriminatory. Every competition needs to consider the inclusion of people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

## **Section 13: The Event Management Team**

Everyone in the event management team including venue staff, performers, exhibitors, session chairs, booking staff, suppliers and speakers can contribute to making your event more accessible for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

### **Your Team**

Your team is critical to the success of accessible events. If they are well prepared and trained, they will be able to deal with any problems and make any necessary changes on the day as the need arises.

You should consider deafness awareness training for you and your staff. Deafness awareness training can be tailored to meet your needs. You should expect the training to include information about the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), awareness of different types of deafness, communication issues, and how to meet the needs of people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Even after good planning around communication access, many barriers can arise throughout the event, which highlights the need for good housekeeping. Remind staff to be on the lookout for potential hazards and pitfalls. This could be inadequate lighting, a hearing loop not functioning correctly, dead batteries in microphones, or unclear captions on the screen, to name a few.

### **Venue Staff**

Many venues will supply staff covering roles such as management, catering, reception, operating car park facilities and setting up exhibition areas. They may also be responsible for technical roles such as operating lighting and PA systems.

You should ask the venue manager if you can brief the staff, including any temporary and contract staff, or ask the venue management to do so.

You should tell them about communication access and the reasons for ensuring such policies are followed.

You should also know which venue staff are responsible for communication access at the event.

### **Chairs, speakers and presenters**

Session chairs, speakers and presenters need to be aware of the communication access requirements in advance of people attending the event. As outlined in Section 6 and 7, they may need to supply copies of presentations.

You should remind the speakers to explain additional services available to participants, such as an Auslan/ English interpreter, a hearing loop and captions. The speakers also need to be mindful of using a microphone at all times.

### **Communicating with people who are deaf or hard of hearing**

Communicating with a positive attitude with people who are deaf or hard of hearing is rewarding and can make a difference for everyone. How you and your team respond to requests for assistance is important.

In general terms, communicating with a deaf or hard of hearing person is not difficult and writing notes is often an easy solution to communication barriers.

How one communicates through body language is important. It is essential that the person shows attention, empathy and makes the effort to communicate. Never assume that the person has sufficient information about an issue. Always take the time to share ideas.



**Communication tips:**

- When communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, speak directly to the person. If an interpreter is being used, please look at the person you are speaking to, not the interpreter.
- There is no need to speak loudly or slowly. It is important that you speak clearly at a normal speed.
- Use language that is clear and unambiguous, and do not patronise.
- Consider environmental issues when speaking to the person, eg is the room appropriately lit, or is there too much sound that may be distracting?
- If they do not understand, do not say the same thing again. Rephrase what you are saying.
- Have paper and pen available. Some people may not be able to lip-read well, or there may be too many distractions.
- Be patient and listen.

## **Section 14: Glossary**

**Auslan (Australian Sign Language)** – Auslan is the sign language of the Australian Deaf Community which evolved in Australia during the nineteenth century from British and Irish sign languages. Its grammar and vocabulary is different from English; many sign language users have Auslan as a primary language.

**Auslan/ English Interpreter** – Interpreting is a highly complex process requiring a high degree of linguistic, cognitive and technical skills to receive a message in one language and deliver it in another. Interpreters are accredited through the National Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI).

**Captions** – Spoken words are translated into text and can be projected onto a screen or on videos.

**Deaf (Relay) Interpreter** – Deaf (Relay) Interpreters work in tandem with Auslan/ English interpreters. They have specialised skills in ‘unpacking’ the context and delivering a modified form for deaf clients that may have special or minimal language needs.

**Deafblind Interpreter** – Deafblind Interpreters work with deafblind participants who may have specific types of communication requirements. This is usually provided by Auslan/ English Interpreters who have undertaken specific training to work with deafblind participants.

**Induction Loop (or Hearing Loop)** – Assists people using hearing aids fitted with a tele-coil to allow them to hear more clearly by eliminating background noise. A loop system can be set up with a microphone and a transmitter to send signals via the loop system, which can be picked up by a hearing aid.

**National Relay Service** – A phone solution for people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. This is a free service that enables you to contact people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment or vice versa. For more information, visit: [www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au).

**Telephone Typewriter (TTY)** – A telephony device that has a keyboard and a screen and can be connected to a telephone, allowing a person who is deaf to type the message and read the reply. This equipment is often used in conjunction with the National Relay Service who will relay the calls.

## **Section 15: Check List (Audit):**

### **Interpreting**

Yes	No	Has the interpreter/s been booked? (Book well in advance, eg more than 2 months)
Yes	No	Will the interpreter/s be positioned next to speaker/ lectern and or next to table for panel forums?
Yes	No	Will the interpreter/s or agency receive information/ contents of programmes and presentation papers ahead of the event?
Yes	No	Have you secured seats for deaf patrons so they have an unobstructed view of the interpreter, presenters and visual presentations (powerpoint, captions)?
Yes	No	Is the interpreter appropriately lit? (Down-lighting may not be appropriate.)
Yes	No	Has the host been made aware of how the interpreter will function throughout the event?
Yes	No	Have presenters been told that their presentation is being interpreted? Have the presenter and the interpreter met to discuss presentation content?
Yes	No	Will interpreters be available for sign users during breaks (and immediately after the event) to allow networking opportunities?

### **Induction Loop**

Yes	No	Is the loop available on premises? (Some venues have a pre-installed loop.)
Yes	No	If no pre-installed loop is available, have you booked for installation of a temporary loop?
Yes	No	Does the loop cover at least 20 per cent of the target space?
Yes	No	Is it working? (Often, many pre-installed loops are not working properly).
Yes	No	Is there signage to inform patrons of an assigned loop area?
Yes	No	Will speakers be using a microphone when presenting? (A loop only works with a microphone connected to the system).
Yes	No	Will there be questions from the audience? Is there a spare handheld microphone to be used to maintain loop access?

### **Caption**

Yes	No	Have you booked a captioner?
Yes	No	If captions are being provided remotely, is the internet connection high speed and stable?
Yes	No	If a captioner is required onsite, will the captioner be provided with a place to perform the work? (It is best to consult with the captioning provider on the location of the captioner).
Yes	No	Will a full size screen be available next to the presentation screen for captions?
Yes	No	Will a data projector be available for caption use only?

## **Section 16: Acknowledgements**

The organisations involved in the development of this Guide are committed to best practice inclusion of deaf and hard of hearing people in the community. We have collaborated in this project to support improved practice in event management and communication inclusion. We are willing to provide additional advice as required.



[www.deafchildrenaustralia.org.au](http://www.deafchildrenaustralia.org.au)



[www.deafau.org.au](http://www.deafau.org.au)



[www.deafnessforum.org.au](http://www.deafnessforum.org.au)



[www.aslia.com.au](http://www.aslia.com.au)



[www.captioningstudio.com](http://www.captioningstudio.com)



[www.afds.org.au](http://www.afds.org.au)



[www.deafsports.org.au](http://www.deafsports.org.au)



[www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au](http://www.betterhearingaustralia.org.au)



[www.nds.org.au](http://www.nds.org.au)



[www.slcommunications.com.au](http://www.slcommunications.com.au)

An electronic copy of this guide is available at:

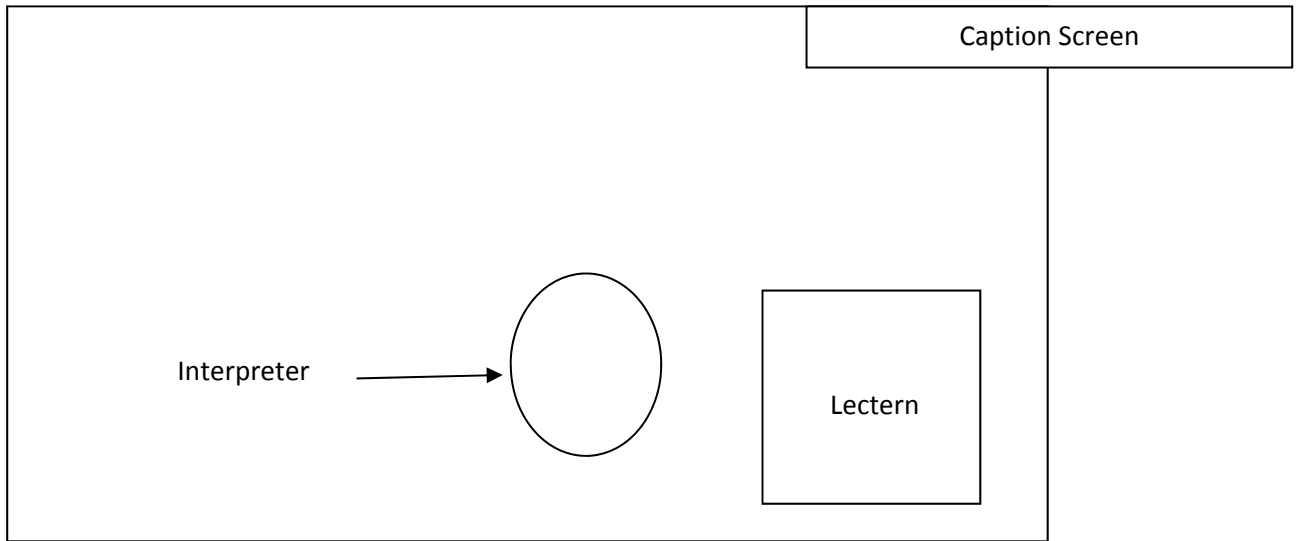
[www.deafchildrenaustralia.org.au/communication\\_accessibility\\_guidelines](http://www.deafchildrenaustralia.org.au/communication_accessibility_guidelines).

With appreciation: Meetings and Events Australia – Accessible Events – A Guide for Organisers ([www.meau.org.au](http://www.meau.org.au)).

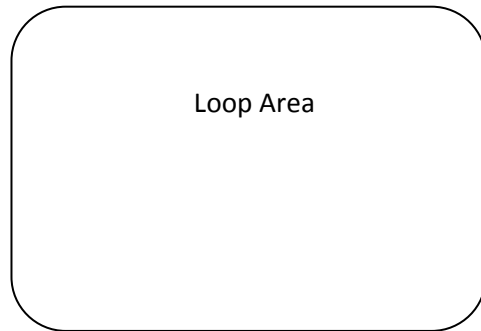
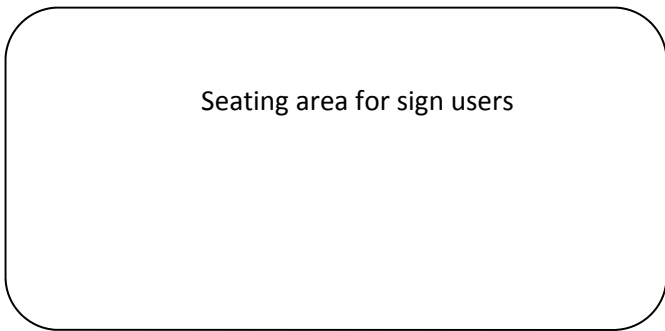
**Section 17: Diagrams**

**Diagram A.**

Placement of interpreter in presentation format, loop area and placement of caption screen.

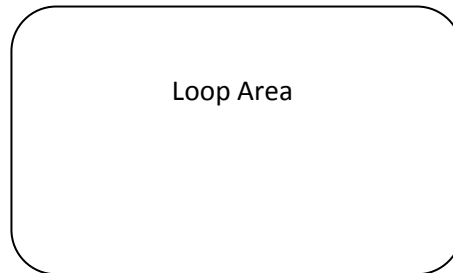
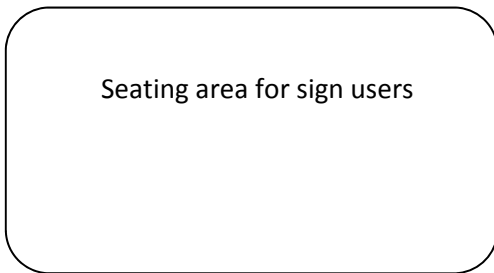
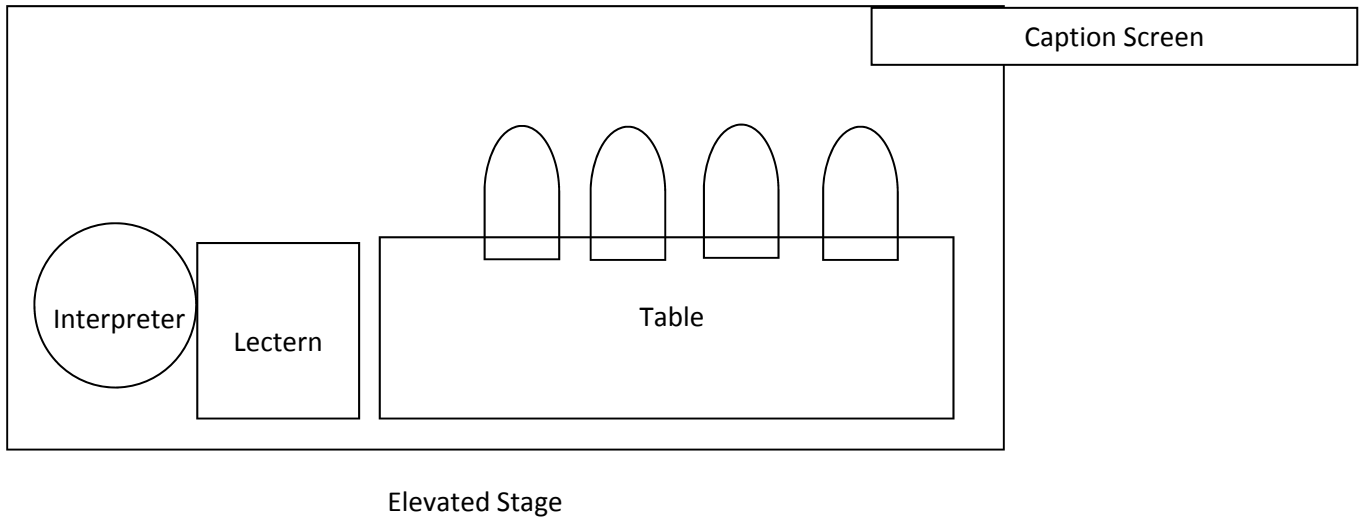


Elevated -Stage



**Diagram B:**

Placement of interpreter in panel format, loop area and placement of caption screen.



## **Section 18: Additional References:**

### **Australian References:**

Disability Discrimination Act – 1992

([http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol\\_act/dda1992264/](http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/dda1992264/))

National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

(<http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/program-services/government-international/national-disability-strategy#1>)

National Arts and Disability Strategy 2009

(<http://mcm.arts.gov.au/sites/www.cmc.gov.au/files/arts-disability-0110.pdf>)

### **International References:**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights – 1948

(<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>)

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – 2006

(<http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml>)