



Effective as of August 2010

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1. Introduction

The Deaf Society of NSW provides a wide range of services and programs to people who use Auslan (AUstralian Sign LANGUAGE) as their primary means of communication.

The vision of the Deaf Society is "Equity for deaf people" and the mission of the Deaf Society is to "Work in partnership with the Deaf Community to enhance the quality of life of deaf people, strengthen the community and advocate for changes that will ensure fundamental rights and freedoms".

Sign Language Communications NSW (SLC NSW) is a division of the Deaf Society of NSW which is committed to ensuring that high-quality and professional Auslan/English interpreting services and notetaking services are available to facilitate effective communication between deaf and hearing clients.

SLC NSW provides interpreters in any situation where deaf and hearing people wish to communicate effectively. SLC NSW responds to requests from either party, and also provides a back-up service to the Community Relations Commission and the Health Care Interpreter Service when necessary.

This manual is designed for the information of clients of Sign Language Communication NSW. **This document is a changing policy and is updated regularly. The latest version is available on the website at all times.**

Further information can be obtained from an Interpreting Services Officer, Coordinator or Manager of Sign Language Communications NSW.

2. Recruitment and Selection of Interpreters

SLC NSW maintains a register of part-time interpreters. Most interpreters are employed on a casual basis. The register includes contact information, accreditation details, availability and preferred areas of work. On commencing employment with SLC NSW, each interpreter will be required to advise SLC NSW of their availability, and update this regularly. Interpreters are expected to contact the service, either personally or by phone, to receive an orientation information package. Interpreters are also asked to meet with the Manager, SLC NSW or their delegate when they commence employment with SLC NSW.

Employment of interpreters and allocation of assignments are at the discretion of the SLC NSW service. The service endeavours to secure the most appropriately skilled interpreter for each assignment and the following is taken into consideration when contacting interpreters:

- level of accreditation (interpreters with higher accreditation are considered more favourably)
- Deaf and hearing client preference
- interpreter qualifications, training and experience and
- whether the interpreter is a part of NAATI's revalidation system

Accreditation

The National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) is the body which accredits interpreters in all languages, including Auslan.

SLC NSW aims to employ NAATI-accredited interpreters only, except in the case of Deaf (Relay) interpreters, for whom no NAATI accreditation currently exists. In the case of Deaf (Relay) interpreters, preference is given to those who hold ASLIA/NABS relay interpreter certification or have completed a TAFE course in relay interpreting.

In non-metropolitan areas, due to a lack of NAATI-accredited Auslan/English interpreters, assignments will occasionally be undertaken by non-accredited practitioners. This will occur only where the person has been assessed by SLC NSW staff as having sufficient skill and experience to undertake the assignment. If an unaccredited individual wishes to be considered for inclusion on the Interpreter Register, they must firstly attend an assessment interview. This will involve demonstrating both receptive and expressive skills in interpreting between Auslan and English, and knowledge of interpreting ethics and social/cultural aspects of the Deaf Community. Employment will also be subject to a written commitment to sit for the next available NAATI exam. Should the person not sit the exam, or fail to pass this exam, they may no longer be eligible for work from SLC NSW.

SLC NSW is committed to the employment of accredited interpreters. In every instance, the Interpreting Services Officers will endeavour to allocate an accredited interpreter. In the event that an unaccredited interpreter is allocated, all parties at the assignment will be informed.

Interpreters employed by SLC NSW will be required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement (refer to Appendix 3 for a copy) and adhere to the Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association Code of Ethics (refer to Section 4).

3. Employment Conditions

Occupational Health and Safety

When an interpreter is working without a co-interpreter, she or he will normally require a **10-minute break** during every working hour. When planning a program for which an interpreter is required, scheduled breaks need to be incorporated into that program.

- An interpreter will not work through any scheduled breaks.
- Two interpreters will be required for assignments that are two hours or more or are particularly demanding. In these instances, interpreters will alternate every twenty to thirty minutes. This is necessary to:
 - Ensure continual flow of accurate information
 - Reduce interpreter fatigue
 - Reduce the likelihood of Occupational Overuse Syndrome
- A minimum of three interpreters will need to be booked for conferences or for full day events which are particularly demanding. For conferences or other events with multiple streams interpreter teams may need to be arranged.

Interpreters working in teams are expected to support their colleague/s at all times. Non-interpreting time is to be used to prepare (e.g. to read terminology or lecture papers) and to prompt the interpreter who is interpreting. Interpreters may not use non-interpreting time for personal business unless previously arranged with their co-interpreter and the Coordinator, Interpreting or the Manager, Sign Language Communications NSW.

Interpreter accreditation and appropriate types of work

- a) NAATI **Professional Level** interpreters (formerly Level 3) are required for court/legal work, conferences, theatre interpreting and all large group meetings.
- b) NAATI **Para-professional Level** interpreters (formerly Level 2) are suitable to be used for smaller groups/meetings and one-to-one appointments. In some situations which would normally require a practitioner of Professional standard, a Para-professional interpreter may be contracted, as long as the consent of all parties is sought and

received.

- c) **Deaf (Relay)** interpreters work with deaf clients who:
- Have minimal skills in Auslan, due to educational or linguistic disadvantage, or
 - Have minimal skills in Auslan, due to intellectual disability, or
 - Have minimal skills in Auslan, having recently migrated to Australia, or
 - Are Deafblind

Deaf (Relay) interpreters work in teams with Auslan interpreters in order to facilitate communication.

As with Auslan interpreters, Deaf (Relay) interpreters cannot fulfil other roles (such as community worker or advocate) whilst in their interpreting role.

Preparation for assignments

To assist the interpreter to provide effective communication between deaf and hearing clients, the person requesting service should provide the interpreter, in advance, and via an Interpreting Services Officer, with any relevant material, such as:

- Paperwork - agenda of the meeting, minutes of meetings (preceding and current), subject matter to be discussed, names of those attending meeting/interview/conference etc, copies of speeches/papers to be given and scripts of videos to be used (if the video/s is not subtitled)
- Terminology/specific language, jargon or acronyms commonly used
- Any other information that is relevant to the appointment.

The interpreter will aim to arrive 15 minutes before the booking in order to:

- Meet the deaf client/s and establish the appropriate level of communication to be used
- Be briefed by service providers about the content of the assignment
- If necessary, conduct pre-interviews with both hearing and deaf clients to brief them about the interpreter's role
- Negotiate work conditions specific to the assignment

Interpreters will wait for a minimum of 30 minutes for the client/s to arrive. Should the client/s fail to appear, the interpreter may leave after having consulted with the employer or their representative and contacted SLC NSW. In this situation, SLC NSW will charge for the time for which the interpreter was booked.

Interpreters are required to abide by a Code of Ethics (refer to Section 4) and to the relevant guidelines. Please also refer to Section 8.

4. Code of Ethics for Sign Language Interpreters

All interpreters contracted by SLC NSW are expected to adhere to the ASLIA Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional Conduct. As part of the tenet of Integrity of Professional Relationships, SLC NSW strongly encourages all interpreters to become members of ASLIA National and to keep up to date with any ASLIA events in their state. Further information about ASLIA (NSW) Inc. can be obtained at www.asliansw.org.au.

***Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association values
underlying Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional conduct***



po box 189 haberfield nsw 2045
info@aslia.com.au www.aslia.com.au

ASLIA values:

1. Professional accountability:

Accepting responsibility for professional decisions and actions.

2. Professional competence:

Committing to provide quality professional service throughout one's practice.

3. Non-discrimination:

Approaching professional service with respect and cultural sensitivity.

4. Integrity in professional relationships:

Dealing honestly and fairly with participants and colleagues.

5. Integrity in business practices:

Dealing honestly and ethically in all business practices.

For the full version of ASLIA's Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Professional conduct please go to www.aslia.com.au.

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Notes on the Code of Ethics for SLC NSW interpreters

- Interpreters should dress in a manner appropriate to the assignment (including wearing block colours which contrast with skin tone).
- Interpreters shall conduct themselves in such a manner as to maintain the integrity of the profession and of SLC NSW and provide support to colleagues in the field.
- Interpreters shall be punctual.
- SLC NSW is committed to ensuring that the privacy of its employees and clients is protected. The confidentiality of employees and consumers must be kept at all times. Personal information such as addresses, phone numbers etc is confidential, and these details will not be given out without prior approval.
- On commencing employment, interpreters are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement. (Refer to Appendix 3).
- Interpreters must refrain from counselling in any situation however may inform consumers of the availability of services provided by SLC NSW and other organisations as appropriate.
- Interpreters shall not use information obtained from an assignment for personal gain.
- Interpreters shall remain impartial and shall be seen to be impartial. Any business or vested interests which the interpreter may have in any assignment must be disclosed beforehand.

- Interpreters should decline an assignment when it is felt that it is beyond their linguistic competence or where there is a potential conflict of interest.
- SLC NSW shall not employ interpreters to interpret for members of their immediate family, unless in exceptional circumstances and with the prior approval of the Manager, Sign Language Communications NSW .

5. Cost of Interpreting Service Provision

SLC NSW believes that Deaf people should not cover the costs of access by paying for Auslan interpreting in any situation.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992), training providers, employers and service providers must provide access for people with disabilities, including Deaf people. This legislation also covers access to premises and accommodation, as well as goods and facilities.

The Commonwealth cannot claim unjustifiable hardship in relation to its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) and so will always be in a position to provide access to its departments and programs. There are also anti-discrimination and equal opportunity laws at State level to ensure that Deaf people are not discriminated against. SLC NSW considers that all Government departments, both Commonwealth and State, must make a budgetary allocation to cover the cost of interpreting service.

Memorandum Number 98/22 from the Premier of NSW states that all organisations which receive funding from any NSW Government department must budget for the cost of interpreting services.

In certain situations - for example, where a small business does not have the financial means to pay for interpreting - the fee is negotiable. In a small number of situations, SLC NSW will fund the provision of an interpreter. In both situations, the requesting organisation must show that paying for this service would constitute an unjustifiable hardship. It is important that Deaf people receive the same level of service as any other person.

Where the Deaf Society of NSW and another agency (for example, Department of Community Services, Department of Juvenile Justice.) have a client in common, the cost of the interpreting service for meetings where the client is present shall be shared equally between all service providers involved in a particular situation. This booking will be made with SLC NSW. This will be negotiated prior to the appointment. SLC NSW has a role in educating kindred agencies about their obligations under legislation.

In instances where a Deaf member of staff at the Deaf Society requests a meeting with another agency, and there are no other Deaf people present, discussion should occur regarding responsibility to pay for the interpreter. Where the agency is not in a position to pay, or does not receive government funding, SLC NSW shall bear the cost for the interpreting service required.

Training providers and organisations which provide training are, under legislation, responsible for providing access at all times. SLC NSW is not responsible for covering the costs for interpreting access for Deaf staff who enrol in professional development or training sessions. Under Commonwealth legislation, this is the responsibility of the provider, unless unjustifiable hardship can be established.

Please see Appendix 5 for SLC NSW Service fees.

6. Booking of Interpreters

When booking an interpreter, as much notice as possible should be provided (two weeks is recommended) as it may take time to find an appropriate interpreter. **Bookings with less than one week's notice may not be accepted, due to the shortage of available interpreters.**

The booking procedure is as follows:

- a) Requests are taken in writing by email, fax or the SLC NSW website
- b) The client must provide the following:
 - Name and telephone number of person requesting service
 - Name of organisation (if applicable)
 - Type of assignment – Please be as specific as possible about the nature of the assignment and any special skills or knowledge which may be required of the interpreter.
 - Day, date, time and expected duration of the assignment
 - Location of the assignment, including name of building, level/floor, name/number of room (as applicable)
 - Name and contact telephone number of contact on site
 - Name of deaf consumer
 - Consumer's preferred mode of communication (e.g. Auslan, Signed English, fingerspelling)
 - Availability of parking
 - Any special instructions
 - A signed authorisation or agreement to pay for services – where applicable
- c) The minimum fee is two hours. Please see Appendix 5 for rates.
- d) The Interpreting Service Officer will process the request and attempt to locate an appropriate interpreter as quickly as possible. The person requesting the service will receive confirmation of the interpreter/s once they are booked. In rare cases where the service is not able to allocate an interpreter the requestor will be informed more than 24 hours prior to the time of the request that the service has been unable to fulfil the request.
- e) In accordance with occupational health and safety guidelines (see Section 3), for assignments of two hours or more duration or that are particularly demanding, two interpreters will be required. A minimum of three interpreters will need to be booked for conferences or for full day events which are particularly demanding. For conferences or other events with multiple streams interpreter teams may need to be arranged. Accordingly, the requesting organisation will be invoiced for the full cost of two interpreters for that particular assignment.
- f) If a booking is cancelled by a client, the following fees are applicable:
 - more than 5 full working days nil
 - 2-5 full working days before 25% of fee
 - 1-2 full working days before 50% of fee
 - 1 full working day or less 100% of fee
- g) If a client fails to attend an assignment, or if SLC NSW has not been informed of a cancellation, the full fee will be charged.
- h) Travel expenses:
 - For assignments within the Sydney metropolitan area, fees charged are inclusive of travelling expenses.

- Where an interpreter/s has to travel greater than 100km (round trip) a travel charge applies. Travel time is charged at the hourly interpreting rate from the time the interpreter starts their trip to the assignment location until they arrive at their final destination. Kilometres are also charged at \$0.74c per km travelled. Kilometres are calculated using Google Maps from the interpreter location to the assignment address.
- Preference is given to interpreters who live in the region of a job, and a travel allowance will be paid only if the Interpreting Service Officer is unable to fill a job with a local interpreter.
- Kilometres are calculated using Google Maps from the interpreter location to the assignment address.
- Where flights and accommodation are required, it is preferred that the booking client make these arrangements. However, it is possible for SLC NSW to add these costs to the final invoice.
- Where an overnight stay is required and the accommodation is not providing meals, the booking client will be charged a meal allowance for each interpreter as per below:

Meal	Rate
Breakfast	\$20
Lunch	\$15
Dinner	\$30

- i) Interpreters are paid following the return to SLC NSW of their signed Assignment Information Form. At least one client (hearing or Deaf) needs to sign the Assignment Information Form in order to verify that the interpreter has completed the assignment. The following information is included on the form:
- date, start and finish time and total hours
 - the interpreter's name and level of accreditation
 - name of person/s for whom the interpreting service was provided
 - name/s, title, organisation and address of person to whom the interpreter reported
 - client authorisation – name, telephone number and signature of contact verifying the interpreter's attendance
 - number of kilometres travelled by car if the distance exceeds 100 kilometres and is outside the Sydney metropolitan area.
- j) Additional charges may apply for car parking fees incurred by the interpreter. This will be negotiated at the time of the booking.

7. Working with Interpreters

Practice and a little knowledge can assist in working effectively with an interpreter. The following points should be observed when using the services of an interpreter:

- Position the interpreter appropriately. Ask the deaf person and the interpreter as to seating arrangements. It is usual for the interpreter to be situated next to the speaker so that the deaf person can observe both people simultaneously.
- Speak directly to the deaf person, as you would to any client or patient. For example, say, "How are you feeling?" rather than "How is he feeling?" or "Ask him how he is feeling."
- Speak clearly and at your usual pace and volume. It is easier for the interpreter to establish the context and a natural signing flow if you speak normally. The interpreter will tell you if it is necessary to change your pace.

- Focus your attention and eye gaze on the deaf person, not the interpreter.
- Do not ask the interpreter's opinion.
- Do not make asides that you don't want interpreted - the interpreter is ethically obliged to interpret everything that the deaf person would have understood if he/she understood spoken English.
- Give a little extra time for the deaf person to answer any questions you have asked, as there is always a time lag as the interpreter interprets from spoken English into Auslan. The degree of delay will vary with interpreters and the complexity of the material. This is especially important during group discussions.
- Depending on the situation, some interpreters will choose to interpret consecutively – that is, they will not begin interpreting until you have finished speaking or signing. If this is the case, please speak or sign in short 'chunks' so that the interpreter can more easily remember what you have said.
- Allow time for the deaf person to take notes or read any printed material - it is impossible to watch an interpreter and read/write at the same time.

8. Quality Assurance

Interpreters will supply all deaf clients with feedback cards, which can be forwarded to SLC NSW. (See Appendix 2.)

Both hearing and deaf clients will be contacted via phone or email survey on a random basis by SLC NSW for feedback.

The information received from feedback cards, phone calls and surveys will be confidential.

The feedback is designed to enable SLC NSW to monitor the quality of the Interpreting Service.

Feedback and Complaints

SLC NSW welcomes feedback and complaints about its services from both deaf and hearing clients.

To give feedback whether positive or negative, consumers can contact any member of SLC NSW staff. To make a complaint consumers can:

- Use the complaints form on the Deaf Society website.
- Address a complaint in writing or in Auslan (on DVD) to the Complaints Officer:

Complaints Officer
Deaf Society of NSW
P O Box 1060
Parramatta NSW 2124

- Use the complaints brochure available from the Deaf Society of NSW reception desk.
- Make an appointment to meet with the Manager, SLC NSW or the Director of Services.

All complaints will be dealt with in accordance with the Deaf Society's Feedback and Complaints Procedure.

Consumers can also take action through an external complaints agency (e.g. NAATI, Disability Complaints Service, Anti Discrimination Board, Australian Human Rights Commission) at any stage.

9. Debriefing

On occasions, interpreters may be confronted with sensitive or emotionally charged situations and/or situations which are challenging ethically. The nature of the work means that interpreters frequently work in isolation from other interpreters. Interpreters may need or want to discuss difficulties encountered in the particular assignment with another person who is aware of what interpreting involves and is able to offer support and/or strategies.

The Manager, Sign Language Communications NSW (or a person nominated by the Manager) is available for debriefing all interpreters. It will be the responsibility of interpreters to request debriefing. All information discussed in these sessions will be confidential.

The Deaf Society of NSW also has an Employee Assistance Program which is available to all employees of the Deaf Society of NSW.

Appendix 1



Submitting an Interpreter request online

First time users:

1. Open Internet Explorer as your browser
2. Open <http://nsw.slcommunications.com.au>
3. Click on Register
4. Complete all relevant fields on the screen including setting your username and password
5. Click Save (top right hand corner of the screen)
6. Enter your username and password and click on Log In
7. You should now view a menu on the left side of the screen
8. Click on New Request
9. View our terms and conditions by clicking on the link provided and if you are satisfied with these click the checkbox and then click Proceed
10. Enter the details of the interpreter request and once completed click on Submit in the top right hand part of the screen
11. To check that your request has been saved successfully or to check on the status of your request you can click All Bookings and see your request listed in this screen

Existing users:

1. Enter your username and password and click on Log In
2. Select one of the options from the menu displayed on the left side of the screen
 - a. Home
 - b. New request
 - c. All bookings
 - d. My details
 - e. Log out

If you have any technical difficulties please contact one of our Interpreting Service Officers

Phone: 1300 123 SLC (752)

TTY: 02 8833 3653

Fax: 02 8212 5836

Email/MSN: slc_nsw@slcommunications.com.au

Appendix 2



Consumer Feedback Card

Appointment date: / /

Appointment time: am / pm

Job Number: _____ Interpreter name (optional): _____

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
It was easy to book an interpreter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I received confirmation of the booking	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I understood the interpreter's signing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The interpreter understood my signing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The interpreter arrived at the right time	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The interpreter wore the right clothes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The interpreter had a good professional attitude and behaviour	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The interpreter made it easy for me to talk to the hearing person	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you ticked **No**, please say why:

.....

.....

Appendix 3



Sign Language Communications NSW

I, *(full name)* _____

of, *(address)* _____

recognise that, as an interpreter employed by SLC NSW, a division of the Deaf Society of New South Wales, I may learn certain facts and have access to records that are of a highly personal and confidential nature pertaining to clients, whether individuals or organisations.

I will also abide by the Code of Ethics as determined by the Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association. I have read also the NSW Disability Services Standards as prescribed by the NSW Disability Services Act (1993).

I agree not to disclose any information of a personal and confidential nature to any person/organisation not employed by SLC NSW, without specific consent of the person concerned.

Breach of this agreement may expose me to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Breach of this agreement may expose me to legal action by the Deaf Society of NSW or the client.

Signed: _____

Date: / / _____

Witnessed by:

Signed: _____

Name *(write)*: _____

of, *(address)* _____

Date: / / _____

Appendix 4

External Agencies Which Assist With Complaints

National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)

Complaints in writing should be directed to:

Executive Director
National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters
PO Box 40
Hawker, ACT 2614
Ph. (02) 6255 1888

Complaints should outline the details and names of other parties who would be willing to verify what has occurred. NAATI will then contact the parties referred to above and the interpreter.

If the allegation is substantiated, a warning letter will be issued to the interpreter highlighting the Code of Ethics. (It is not the role of NAATI to initiate disciplinary action against the interpreter).

Other agencies which may be of assistance include:

Disability Complaints Service

People with Disabilities
52 Pitt Street
Redfern NSW 2016
Fax: (02) 9318 1372
Ph: (02) 9319 6549

Anti Discrimination Board

Level 4, Stockland House
175-183 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000
TTY: (02) 9268 5522
Fax: (02) 9268 5500
Ph: (02) 9268 5555

Australian Human Rights Commission

Level 8
133 Castlereagh Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Fax: (02) 9284 9611
Ph: (02) 9284 9600

NSW Disability Discrimination Legal Centre

Level 2, 52 Pitt Street
Redfern NSW 2016
TTY: (02) 9310 4320
Fax: (02) 9310 7788
Ph: (02) 9310 7722

Appendix 5



Sign Language Communications NSW



SLC NSW Fees

- 1) All rates are per hour and are inclusive of GST. Fees are charged in increments of 30 minutes. For example, where an interpreter works two hours and 20 minutes, the charge will be for 2.5 hours.
- 2) There is a minimum charge of two hours per interpreter. Where an assignment finishes earlier than the original time booked fees will be charged as per the original booking.
- 3) In accordance with occupational health and safety and quality assurance requirements, two interpreters are normally required for assignments of two hours or greater duration. A minimum of three interpreters will need to be booked for conferences or for full day events which are particularly demanding. For conferences or other events with multiple streams interpreter teams may need to be arranged.
- 4) Where an interpreter/s has to travel greater than 100km (round trip) a travel charge applies. Travel time is charged at the hourly interpreting rate from the time the interpreter starts their trip to the assignment location until they arrive at their final destination. Kilometres are charged at \$0.74c per km travelled. Kilometres are calculated using Google Maps from the interpreter location to the assignment address.

	Monday – Friday 8am – 6pm	6pm – 8am OR weekend or public holiday	6pm – 8am AND weekend or public holiday
Regular fees	\$110.00	\$130.00	\$150.00
Deaf Organisation* fees	\$85.00	\$100.00	\$115.00
VRI (video relay interpreting)**	\$148.00	\$158.00	N/A

* Deaf Organisation refers to non-government, not-for-profit organisations and groups which directly involve and support the Deaf community.

** Subject to system compatibility with SLC NSW VRI equipment.