

ACCESS TO INFORMATION MUST BE THE PRIORITY THIS ELECTION

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As South Australia heads toward the state election, Deaf Australia is calling on all political parties and candidates to commit with one clear principle: **equal access starts with equal access to information.**

“Access to information is a basic human right,” says Debra Swann, Chairperson of Deaf Australia. “This election, Deaf Australia urges all Members of Parliament and candidates to recognise that access to information is a basic human right. Whether it’s health, justice, education, public safety or voting, Deaf and Hard of Hearing South Australians are still being left behind. This is not about extra services. It’s about equal access so people can participate fairly and safely.”

Voting is a fundamental human right because it gives people a voice in decisions that shape their lives. Without voting information in Auslan (Australia Sign Language), deaf and hard of hearing voters in South Australia are excluded from fully participating in democracy. Access to information in Auslan is essential to ensure Deaf South Australians can exercise their right to vote equally and make informed decisions about their future.

Hon. Tammy Franks MLC reinforces the urgency:

“If it’s not accessible, it’s not acceptable. This State Election, hundreds of South Australians who are deaf or hard of hearing will be locked out of the democratic process, because South Australia lacks a fully accessible voting process for deaf or hard of hearing people.”

“At the end of the day the Electoral Commission of SA should be ensuring accessibility for all voters and here they have fallen short. Meanwhile, I urge all candidates and parties to commit to making our elections more inclusive and provide deaf and hard of hearing with support and information so they can feel fully informed and involved in the democratic process.”

Access is Failing Across South Australia

Deaf South Australians continue to face widespread, avoidable barriers:

- Essential information is still delivered only in spoken or written English, without Auslan (Australia Sign Language) or visual formats.
- Justice and police processes remains inconsistent and often inaccessible.
- Curriculum materials and school communications are inconsistent and frequently non-accessible.
- Emergency warnings, government announcements, and election information are still not consistently provided in Auslan.

These failures led to **unsafe medical decisions, compromised legal rights, missed emergency alerts, and long-term educational disadvantage.** These are not isolated incidents; they are **systemic barriers** that undermine safety, equity, and inclusion for Deaf South Australians.

For further comment contact:
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