



**Hon Sue Ellery MLC  
Minister for Education and Training  
Leader of the Legislative Council**

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Our Ref: 61-15536

Ms Rebecca Evans  
Deputy Chair  
Youth Disability Advocacy Network Inc.  
PO Box 276  
LEEDERVILLE WA 6007

Dear Ms Evans

Thank you for your letter dated 11 March 2019 regarding the teaching of Australian Sign Language (Auslan) in Western Australian schools.

Congratulations on receiving a 2018 WA Youth Award and the 2018 Senses Australian Teresa Way Award. I commend your commitment to our community and to helping others.

All teachers employed by the Western Australian Department of Education are required to hold a teaching qualification from an accredited teacher education program or a teaching qualification recognised by the Teacher Registration Board of Western Australia. Although there is no further qualification required for the teaching of Auslan as a language in public schools, principals consider whether the teacher: has studied a language at university; has a Certificate IV in Applied Languages; has engagement with the community where the language is the first language; speaks the language; and/or has demonstrated experience working as a languages teacher in another state or country.

The Department provides teachers with access to practical support, information, and resources to assist them to design and deliver appropriate language learning activities. In addition, the School of Special Educational Needs: Sensory can support schools in determining if Auslan is a suitable option for their language program, and can provide information on how to access Auslan resources in the community, including Access Plus WA Deaf.

The Department supports students who use Auslan communication in deaf education in primary and secondary school settings where Auslan is embedded into the learning environment. It is also possible for secondary schools to offer students the opportunity to complete Auslan as a Certificate IV or ATAR Subject.

The School of Special Needs: Sensory employs several Teachers of the Deaf who are proficient in Auslan. Support is provided statewide for students in public and non-government schools from Kindergarten to Year 12/13 with hearing loss. Support is also provided to school staff and families to enhance development of Auslan skills.

The Department recognises that deaf people are the custodians of their language and, as such, engagement and appropriate consultation with the local deaf community is essential in Auslan program development. At the school level, principals are expected to engage in a consultative process involving the school community, to identify which languages will be taught to their students.

Thank you for raising this matter with me.

Yours sincerely



SUE ELLERY MLC  
MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- 8 APR 2019