

Auslan

Australian Sign Language

Where used: Australia

Region: Northern dialect (NSW, QLD) and Southern dialect (all other states)

Total number of signers: 10,000

Genetic Classification: BANZSL Auslan

Auslan is the sign language used by the Australian Deaf community. It is a visual/gesture language using distinct movements called signs in place of spoken or written means. These movements include hand shapes, arms, eyes and facial expressions, head and body postures. AUSLAN, like any other language, is a means of communication. Auslan is supplemented by finger spelling of words with the fingers representing letters in the alphabet.

Auslan is a natural language distinct from spoken or written English. Its (flexible) grammar and vocabulary often do not have direct English counterparts. English may be referred to as Auslan's host language, as the Deaf community, surrounded by English, inevitably draws from it. Signers make use of English words through fingerspelling. Some words are preferably fingerspelt even when there is an equivalent sign.

Currently SSWAHS Health Care Interpreter Service employs 11 Auslan sessional interpreters.