



Speech by

**Hon. Curtis Pitt**


**MEMBER FOR MULGRAVE**

Hansard Thursday, 13 October 2011

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## MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

### National Week of Deaf People

 **Hon. CW PITT** (Mulgrave—ALP) (Minister for Disability Services, Mental Health and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships) (9.43 am): Today I would like to welcome some guests from the deaf and hearing impaired community who are here in the gallery this morning. I thank the Auslan interpreters for signing in the gallery. Congratulations also to the member for Gympie and the member for Pine Rivers and also the Premier for their signing talents.

People in our gallery today have come along for today's question time in the lead-up to the National Week of Deaf People 2011, which is taking place next week from the 15 to 21 October. National Week of Deaf People is about raising public awareness of living with a hearing deficit and how languages like Auslan enable people to communicate effectively.

Increased community awareness of deafness and how it affects an estimated 25,000 Australians can only lead to increased levels of social inclusion. A range of events are planned for Queensland, offering opportunities for organisations and individuals to build better relationships with the deaf community and to recognise people's achievements, aspirations and capabilities.

This government has demonstrated its ongoing commitment to deaf and hearing impaired people in Queensland. Last year that commitment was \$19.7 million, which included funding for the Auslan translation services, cochlear implants and follow-up therapy to enhance hearing services for children. This also included \$1.2 million for Deaf Services Queensland to provide interpreting and translation services that make non-government organisations more accessible to hearing impaired Queenslanders.

As this summer storm season approaches, I would like to again commend the importance of the Australian sign language interpreters and the high-profile role they had as last year's summer season of disasters unfolded. It was a great demonstration on a world stage, showing how effective Auslan interpreters can be in demonstrating real emotion and the power of non-verbal communication.

The message carried well beyond Australian shores in the media and on YouTube, with interpreters taking their place beside national leaders in Japan and New Zealand during times of crisis. It was also great to be in attendance at the ASLIA awards held last year to recognise some of those great contributions.

I am proud to say that Queensland has led the way to setting a standard for future community broadcasts and lifted the profile of all Auslan interpreters immeasurably. Other organisations to receive government funding include Better Hearing Australia in Brisbane, the Hear and Say Centre for Deaf Children and Deaf Sports and Recreation Queensland Inc.

Finally, I would like to congratulate the CEO of Deaf Services Queensland, Mr Brett Casey, on his recent appointment as the new chair of the Queensland Disability Advisory Council. We are heading in the right direction towards ensuring that we become a more inclusive society.