



# Fact Sheet

## Myths and Facts

### Do all deaf people see themselves as disabled?

No, many deaf people see themselves as members of a linguistic and cultural minority and do not see themselves as disabled.

### Deaf people are always unhappy about their deafness

Deaf people are rarely unhappy about being deaf, though they may feel frustrated by discrimination and obstruction in certain areas of society.

### How do deaf people communicate?

Many deaf people use Auslan (Australian Sign Language) and many are bilingual - they use Auslan and written/spoken English with varying levels of competence in their lives.

### What is Auslan?

Auslan (Australian Sign Language) is the language of the Deaf community of Australia. Auslan is a visual, gestural language that is made up of linguistic elements that are identified as handshape, orientation, location, movement and expression. Auslan grammar and structure is different to English.

### How many deaf and hard of hearing people in Australia?

16% of the Australian population have a hearing loss of more than 25 decibels (mild hearing loss). This equates to over three million Australians.

### All deaf people can lip read

Not everyone can read lips, even the best lip-readers can only pick up 30-40% of words.

### Hearing aids and cochlear implants make hearing “normal”

These devices do not correct hearing loss in the way glasses correct vision. They amplify sound to varying degrees, however, the wearer is still deaf or hard of hearing.

### Why do the deaf community not compete at the Paralympics

Deaf athletes are physically able-bodied and can compete in sport without any restrictions apart from communication barriers that may occur when playing sport with people who can hear. There are no unique sports for deaf athletes. International sporting regulations are used for competitions - the only consideration is to make auditory cues visible.

To find out more visit [www.deafsports.org.au](http://www.deafsports.org.au) email [dsa@deafsports.org.au](mailto:dsa@deafsports.org.au) or call (03) 9473 1191 (voice) (03) 9473 1154 (tty)