

**International Day of Sign Languages
– 23 September 2019 –
&
International and National Week of Deaf People
21 – 27 September 2019**



*International Week
of the Deaf*
September



**International Day
of Sign Languages**

[International Week of the Deaf](#) is celebrated worldwide in September. In Australia, the [National Week of Deaf People](#) will be held from 21 – 27 September 2019, celebrating the language and culture of Deaf individuals and the Deaf Australian community.

Coinciding with the International and National Week of the Deaf is the [International Day of Sign Languages](#) on 23rd September, raising awareness of the importance of sign language in the full realisation of the human rights of people who are deaf. It recognises the importance of preserving sign languages as part of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Sign languages are fully fledged natural languages, structurally distinct from spoken languages. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises the use of sign languages as equal in status to spoken languages and promotes the linguistic identity of the deaf community. According to the World Federation of the Deaf, there are approximately 72 million deaf people worldwide. Collectively, they use more than 300 different sign languages.

The NSW SES acknowledges the valuable contribution of our members who are deaf or hard-of-hearing and generously volunteer their time, skills and experience for the benefit of the service and the wider community.

We encourage all NSW SES members to build your awareness and skills when working with Deaf and hard of hearing Auslan users before, during and after emergency events. Take time to review the [National Auslan Communications for Emergencies](#) resources.

