

Congress of Older People's Voices from the Margins

This story was documented for the #Embolden2023 *Congress of Older People's Voices from the Margins*. A full report on Congress is available at celebrateageing.com/margins

Congress is an initiative of Celebrate Ageing Ltd. Thankyou to our 2023 Congress Principal Partner, Elder Rights Advocacy and our other partners, the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care, Older Person's Advocacy Network (OPAN), Australian Association of Gerontology, ADA Australia, The Older Women's Network NSW, QueerSpace Drummond St and Council on the Ageing.

Listening to Auslan users – Older Deaf Community by Katrina Mynard

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This paper refers to Older Deaf people who use Australian Sign Language (Auslan) to communicate. Overall the experiences of this group are

- History of institutional abuse
- Deaf child born into hearing family
- Inaccessible mainstream services
- Poor English and digital literacy
- Lack of information/ resource materials in their language (Auslan)
- Own community as key source of information
- Interpreter shortages
- Been taken advantage of by others (including hearing family).

Factors contribute to the marginalisation of Older Deaf People include:

- Lack of genuine attempt from organisations to understand the Deaf and their culture and make changes to address their communication needs
- Lack of accessible services and information
- They are a small group of people, so easy to ignore them and their needs
- Lack comprehensive understanding of their rights and how/ where to access support
- Lack of meaningful workplace inclusion/ support for Deaf people
- Unlikely to access information through the internet.

In relation to ageism and respect for older people – what is working well is:

- Being empowered through education (Auslan accessible information)
- Strong sense of Deaf culture and community
- Increased public awareness of the signing Deaf community and Auslan as a language.

In relation to ageism and respect for older people – what needs to improve is:

- All community, government and service provide information in Auslan
- Auslan interpreting to be provided at all events
- Improved access to quality and reliable interpreting services
- Deaf Awareness Training for all students and workers.

One thing that people can do right now

- Try to keep the ask simple and include information on where to go for more
- Introduce yourself to a Deaf person and ask them how they want information conveyed

Every project you develop, every information piece you create, every event you plan...ask yourself, is it accessible to a person whose first language is Auslan