



## Joy Burch MLA

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
MINISTER FOR POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES  
MINISTER FOR DISABILITY  
MINISTER FOR RACING AND GAMING  
MINISTER FOR THE ARTS

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MEMBER FOR BRINDABELLA

Mr Tom Duncan  
Clerk  
ACT Legislative Assembly  
GPO BOX 1020  
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Mr Duncan

Thank you for your letter of 25 November 2014 about e-petition No 18-14 received by the Legislative Assembly on 25 November 2014.

The petition relates to the delivery of Auslan courses at the Canberra Institute of Technology and states:

The following residents of the ACT draw to the attention of the Assembly that the Auslan course at CIT will not run in 2015 as they have been deemed to be financially unviable.

Your petitioners, therefore, request the Assembly commit ongoing funding of the Auslan courses at CIT as a community obligation.

In accordance with Standing Order 100, I provide you with the following response to the petition for presentation to the Assembly.

Auslan interpreting is an essential service for Auslan users. The availability of accredited Auslan interpreters for the ACT deaf community has been raised as a significant concern in recent times. While many Auslan users may rely on family or friends to interpret for them due to a lack of availability of professional interpreters, there is a small but important need to increase the number of accredited Auslan interpreters.

Encouraging more people to choose a professional career in Auslan Interpreting is an important first step to address this need. The language course alone does not qualify a person to become an interpreter – they need to become proficient in using Auslan first which usually takes years of informal practice outside of formal language studies. Language proficiency is the first step to becoming an interpreter.

Gaining national accreditation through the National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) can be achieved through sitting a NAATI accreditation test or through completing a NAATI approved interpreting course

(usually at a Diploma or Advance Diploma level offered through TAFEs and Universities across Australia). Both channels of accreditation require proficiency in the English language as well as the language to be interpreted.

The Certificate II and III Auslan, courses currently offered through the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT), develop Auslan language skills and provide a potential pathway for further study to become an interpreter. CIT Solutions also run a number of programs in conversational Auslan throughout the year which achieve similar outcomes.

The demand for the certificate courses at CIT has remained low, which makes them financially unviable to run. Many students do not complete the full qualification indicating a lack of need for official certification. The short courses at CIT Solutions, in both Auslan 1 and Auslan 2, are fully subscribed anecdotally suggesting that the demand is in the development of conversational language skills in Auslan.

The Auslan certificate courses offered at CIT were developed and accredited by the Kangan Institute of TAFE in Victoria. The nationally recognised Victorian Auslan program will expire in 2015. As a registered Training Organisation, CIT must comply with the teach-out requirements regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority for an expired course.

CIT offered the Certificate II in Auslan in 2013 and 2014 and is offering the Certificate II in Auslan in 2015 for existing students to enable those students who have begun the Certificate II to complete the qualification, should they wish to do so.

CIT is also offering the Certificate III in Auslan in 2015 for full-time students. However, this will require sufficient enrolments for the course to proceed.

Until further information is available on the national reaccreditation of the Auslan certificate courses, CIT must plan for its cessation. CIT is examining how best to meet the needs of students and the community in future years. This may include ongoing and more flexible offerings through CIT Solutions.

Yours sincerely



Joy Burch MLA  
Minister for Education and Training  
18 February 2015

ACT LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY