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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DeafACT response to the government's response to Inquiry into access to services and information in Auslan

DeafACT, the leading advocate for Deaf, and hard-of-hearing individuals in the ACT, is profoundly disappointed with the ACT Government's response to the Auslan Inquiry recommendations. The limited progress made, particularly the rejection of three crucial recommendations, falls far short of addressing the urgent needs and concerns of our community.

Despite extensive consultations and valuable recommendations, the government's response indicates a lack of commitment to the well-being and full inclusion of Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. Out of the 25 recommendations, only one has been agreed upon, 15 have been agreed in principle, six have been noted, and three have been rejected. This response fails to adequately address the pressing issues raised in the report.

Specifically, the government's outright rejection of the Dedicated facility for Deaf and hard-of-hearing students in an ACT government school is profoundly disappointing. It demonstrates a failure to listen to the experiences of the Deaf community and ignores the struggles faced by parents in Deaf education. Burdening already overworked hearing support staff instead of providing a dedicated facility is a misguided approach that undermines the well-being and equal opportunities for Deaf individuals.

While we acknowledge the ACT Government's commitment to improving the lives of individuals with disabilities, we strongly urge them to take immediate and decisive action to fully implement the recommendations put forth by the Inquiry. The current response does not reflect the concerns and aspirations expressed by our community during the consultation process.

Although some initiatives have been implemented to enhance access to services and information, such as the use of Auslan interpreters in legal proceedings and Easy English training for government staff, these efforts are insufficient. We require comprehensive actions that dismantle the systemic barriers preventing Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals from accessing vital services and information.

DeafACT calls upon the ACT Government to demonstrate a stronger commitment and urgency in addressing the needs of our community. We believe that fully embracing and acting upon the recommendations will significantly improve accessibility, inclusivity, and overall well-being for Deaf, and hard-of-hearing individuals in the ACT.

We remain dedicated to collaborating with the ACT Government, but we emphasise the importance of open dialogue and meaningful engagement to effect tangible change. DeafACT will continue to advocate for equal opportunities, accessibility, and empowerment for our community, and we urge the government to join us in this crucial endeavour.

The rejection of three essential recommendations is deeply disappointing to DeafACT and the wider community. We implore the ACT Government to reconsider these decisions and provide a more robust and comprehensive response that aligns with the urgent needs and aspirations of our community.

For media inquiries, please contact Jacob: jacob@deafact.org.au