GUIDELINES – Applying for Auslan interpreting and equipment support through JobAccess

JobAccess is a Commonwealth funded service that offers help and workplace solutions for the employment of people with disability. Through the Employment Assistance Fund (EAF) JobAccess assists employees who are deaf/hearing impaired by providing financial assistance to purchase a range of work related modifications and services.

In consultation with JobAccess, and in the interests of consistency and equity, the following guidelines should be followed when seeking reasonable adjustment support for school-based staff who have a hearing impairment:-

1. While employees may work at different schools/sites they are entitled to only one allocation of funding of up to $6000 per annum for Level 1 interpreting services, because DETE is considered to be a single employer. Therefore, employees should register, or be registered by a school, only once in respect to their employment with DETE even if they work at a variety of DETE sites;

2. If a DETE employee also works for another Department or agency they may be able to seek separate registration in relation to their employment by a different employer;

3. An eligible employee (someone who is deaf/hearing impaired and who is working eight (8) hours a week for at least thirteen (13) weeks) may register directly with JobAccess. However, schools/regions are encouraged to undertake registration on the individual’s behalf in the interests of collaborative planning and to reduce the financial burden on employees. PLEASE NOTE: employers require permission from employees to apply for JobAccess on their behalf;

4. JobAccess will more easily be able to liaise directly with the relevant school when necessary if a specific base is nominated as the employer at the time of registration. If an employee regularly works at more than one site, a decision must be made as to the most appropriate base to nominate as the employer contact;

5. A local process of consultation and negotiation should be used to determine the most appropriate base school as this school will be primarily responsible for payment of invoices and applications for reimbursement related to the registered employee;

6. Once JobAccess approves registration of an eligible employee, a unique ID and password is created to allow access to the individual’s JobAccess account;

7. The login ID & password are attached to the individual and these details should be used for any application for support of that employee no matter at which school site the service is provided;

8. The employee/school/region will need to monitor the fair use of the available resources across different school sites ensuring costs do not exceed the JobAccess allocation. Any expenses incurred above the maximum allowance will have to be met by the specific site at which the service was provided;

9. Funding for Auslan interpreting must be applied for every 12 months: the letter of approval from JobAccess will contain the date on which registration renewal is due;

10. Retrospective reimbursement (claims for reimbursement relating to expenses incurred prior to registration) will not be considered by JobAccess.

Equipment

- If an employee is facing barriers in the workplace the EAF may be able to assist with the provision of equipment or modifications to help overcome that barrier, for example, assistive listening devices;
- Equipment/modifications must be both disability and work specific;
- The employee seeking equipment must be registered with JobAccess (see above);
- Needs and requests must be discussed with JobAccess Advisors;
- JobAccess must provide approval before any equipment is purchased;
- JobAccess will not reimburse costs which have not been pre-approved;
- If an eligible employee requires the provision of adaptive equipment at more than one school, JobAccess will assess the situation on the basis of all the circumstances of the specific case.
These guidelines are provided in addition to the published Employee Assistance Fund (EAF) Guidelines. The most relevant sections of the EAF Guidelines are reproduced below.

**Section 5.4 of the EAF Guidelines provides details regarding Auslan Assistance as follows:**

The EAF provides three levels of Auslan assistance:

**Auslan Level 1**

- Level 1 assistance provides work-related Auslan interpreting for Participants, Workers and Individuals who are deaf. This may include Remote Interpreting and Real Time Captioning within the $6,000 cap. Interpreting assistance can be used for any work-related activity that the Employer deems appropriate or for preparing for Employment.
- Level 1 assistance is capped at a maximum of $6,000 (GST inclusive) (excluding Reimbursements for travel as set out in sub paragraph 5.12) in a 12 month period, calculated from the date of final approval of the EAF application. Once approval has been obtained for the initial Auslan Level 1 assistance, the maximum amount of $6,000 will be available until 12 months has expired. If the Participant in Employment or Worker who is deaf is promoted or transferred to a new job but remains with the same Employer, a new EAF Application may be submitted and the annual cap of $6,000 and the 12 month period restarts.
- If a Participant in Employment or a Worker who is deaf, commences Employment with a different Employer, they may submit a new EAF Application and the annual cap of $6,000 and the 12 month period restarts.
- Applicants can also apply for Reimbursement for Auslan interpreter travel fees (Travel Time only) at the hourly rate of $53 (GST inclusive), where travel is in excess of two hundred (200) km for a return trip from the business location of the interpreter to the approved assignment address. Travel assistance is only available for approved Auslan Level 1 National Accredited Authority of Translators and Interpreters (NAATI) accredited Auslan interpreting. This is in addition to the $6,000 cap. Travel assistance cannot be approved for Deaf Awareness Trainers.

**Auslan Level 2**

- Level 2 assistance provides Reimbursement or Payment of Auslan interpreting for Employers, Participants, Workers and Individuals. Approval may also be considered for job interview processes that involve site visits, completion of tests and participation in information sessions provided by prospective Employers.
- Employers, Participants, Workers, Individuals and Provider Applicants on behalf of a prospective Employer, can apply for Auslan interpreting assistance for job interviews.
- There is no limit to the number of job interviews for which EAF assistance may be sought. Funding for this level of assistance is separate and in addition to Level 1 interpreting assistance.
- Travel assistance is not available for job interviews.

**Auslan Level 3**

- Level 3 assistance provides Reimbursement of some of the costs of participation in Certificate II in Auslan (nationally recognised) courses for Co-workers of employees who are deaf and use Auslan as their main method of communication.
- Reimbursement for the initial costs of Co-worker Auslan Course studies may be approved:
  - (a) for Co-workers; and
  - (b) Employers of people who use Auslan to communicate, who have paid the cost of an Auslan Certificate II Course for themselves or Co-workers in their employ.
- The maximum amount of assistance in respect to a Co-worker is $810.

For further information please visit [jobaccess.gov.au](http://jobaccess.gov.au) or call (Monday – Friday 9am – 7pm AEST) on 1800 464 800 (TTY and voice). The Employment Assistance Fund Guidelines are available at Employment Assistance Fund.

Employees are encouraged to contact Bronwyn Green, Manager Auslan Project (T +617 3240 9447 or email Bronwyn.Green@dete.qld.gov.au) for specialist support. Regional Auslan Support Officers are also a valuable point of contact and information.