**GET READY**

The Get Ready project involves two prongs.

The first is educating the deaf community on what to do in the event of an emergency.

The second is providing Deaf Awareness Training to emergency services staff, how to communicate with deaf people.

Then deaf people and emergency services staff can work together to ensure that the deaf community can prepare, respond and recover from emergencies.

The Get Ready project recruited deaf Liaison Officers. The Deaf Liaison Officers were responsible to work with the deaf community and emergency services staff.

Andrew I became involved in the Get Ready project because I believe I have skills and capabilities, and I am interested in supporting my community.

Carolyn I think deaf people do face a lot of barriers, and the role of Deaf Liaison Officer is important in helping to reduce these barriers because lives are at risk.

Tracey I became interested in being a Deaf Liaison Officer because I like being involved in the community, and I also wanted to learn some new skills.

Matt I wanted to be Deaf Liaison Officer for a few reasons. The first was to develop my confidence and new skills. I also wanted to engage more with the deaf community; particularly in times of emergencies. I’m really enthusiastic about this role.

Donna I became interested in being a Deaf Liaison Officer because of the many barriers we face. I think it’s important that deaf people have access, particularly to emergency services.

Chrissie Well I wanted to develop my skills and my confidence and also see those skills reflected in the deaf community of Newcastle.

Andrew We received plenty of training thanks to the Rural Fire Service. For example there was a two day workshop that covered a series of topics, for example how a bush fire escalates, the danger of embers, and how we can prepare for such emergencies. And also to instil confidence so that in the event of an emergency we didn’t panic.

Christine I love my job

Carolyn I have learnt so much it’s been really worthwhile.

Donna This experience has been lovely!

Carolyn During the training we learned a lot of things including how to use a fire extinguisher. That was actually my favourite part of the training.

Tracey I really enjoyed the teamwork and the discussion through training.

Donna We learnt what the different emergency services were. Before training I thought they were all kind of just the one service; but, in fact, not.

Christine I really enjoyed the group discussions because we shared ideas about what to do in the event of an emergency; and how we can contribute to the Get Ready project.

We went away for two days to the Blue Mountains and I recall a fireman named Tony giving a fantastic presentation about Get Ready and the RediPlan. Genevieve also presented to the group and we participated in a lot of activities, which was great for the group dynamic. It’s important that we access all the information we can for the benefit of the community.

Donna The Get Ready project is important because it reduces pressure on the emergency services, such as the RFS, the SES and Fire and Rescue; because we help alleviate any panic from the deaf community, so that is less panic for the emergency services. So the deaf community are able to be more independent and know what action to take during emergencies.

Andrew The Deaf Liaison Officers love to joke a lot, joke with one another. It’s a really supportive group.

It’s interesting to see how engaged the deaf community were when the Deaf Liaison Officers presented workshops in their area. Even a rural Fire Service Staff member commented on their eagerness and participation, compared to workshops she’d attended in the past.

Tracey When I finished delivering my workshop I was so proud, and I really enjoyed the experience.

Matt In one on the workshops there was an elderly woman in her 90s who was fiercely independent, and refused to rely on anyone else for assistance. However, throughout the workshop she came to realise that it is ok to ask others for help. And I was really pleased to see the impact the workshops were having on people.

Donna After I delivered my workshop, I felt inspired and motivated, especially to see the discussions and smiles around the room. It was positive feedback for me to take on. People were really engaged and it seems as though they took away a lot from it.

Leonie We are at the graduation ceremony for nine Deaf Liaison Officers. It’s been a fantastic 18 month project, I believe only one of its kind in Australia. The DLO have worked alongside emergency services and the deaf community, demonstrating leadership, and it has been wonderful to observe the DLOs develop valuable skills and sharing these with the deaf community, in the context of emergency services. I look forward to what opportunities come of this project in the future.

Kate This project has set the standard for volunteer programs at The Deaf Society. We have invested a lot of support into this group to develop their skills and in turn they have demonstrated loyalty and commitment to their volunteer roles. As a group they have an energy I’ve not seen before. The DLO’s have so much potential moving forward, particularly with The Deaf Society. It’s been brilliant.

David This project has been fantastic. Based on what I have observed over the 18 months of the project, the DLO’s have developed valuable skills and confidence, and gleaned a lot of knowledge. They have also made a positive impact on Emergency services staff, such as the Rural Fire Service or SES, in helping them to understand the sorts of access deaf people need, and how important this access is.