

# Australia



## Auslan Bible Translation

**Project: N/A**  
**Tax Deductible**



# >16,000

people in Australia use Auslan at home  
(2021 Australian census)

# 2

complete Bible books only (John and  
Acts) translated in Auslan

# 4%

of the Old Testament translated, 37%  
of the New Testament translated

### Overview

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Bible Society Australia (BSA) is helping to coordinate the Auslan Bible Project, to make the Bible accessible to the Australian Deaf community in their primary language. Auslan (short for Australian Sign Language) is a distinct visual language with its own grammar and vocabulary used by over 16,000 people in Australia.

### The Need

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The Australia Census report (2021) indicates that just over 16,000 people use Auslan in Australia. This number includes both first language and second language users. Sign languages are unique languages with their own linguistic structures.

The Auslan Bible Project aims to translate the Bible into Auslan, allowing Deaf Australians to engage with Scripture in their primary language. This project addresses several crucial needs. Firstly, it enables direct access to God's word for the Deaf community in Australia. Secondly, it recognises and affirms Auslan as a unique language, as well as acknowledging the cultural identity of the Deaf community in Australia.

Although in the past, the books of Jonah, Ruth, Mark and Luke were all completed, the material is no longer viable due to technology advancements over the last few decades. To date, 4% of the Old Testament and 37% of the New Testament has been translated into Auslan, though the only two books we currently have full translations of are John and Acts.

*But as the Scriptures say, “Those who were not told about him will see, and those who have not heard about him will understand.” - Romans 15:21, ERV*

## Goals

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The new Auslan Bible website is set to be launched in 2025. This website has been tailor made for those who use Auslan as their primary language, where the focus is on visual rather than written communication.

In 2025, this project will also aim to translate more Bible stories for children, with an initial goal of 12 stories about Jesus.

The Auslan Bible project team will also continue to connect with the wider Deaf Christian community in Australia through forums, conferences, and workshops to find out what parts of the Bible should be translated next, and also to give people the opportunity to learn how they can become involved in different aspects of Bible translation work.

Another long-term goal is to update some of the materials which were recorded in the early days of the project and are no longer accessible due to changes in technology. In the coming months, work will begin on re-recording the book of Jonah.

## Impact

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In 2024, Bible Society Australia and Wycliffe Bible Translators collaborated to establish up a state-of-the-art video recording studio to assist in creating engaging Bible resources for the Deaf community.

Work also progressed on a new Auslan Bible website, to make translation more accessible to Auslan users.

Over the year, translation work began on a series of children's Bible stories, focused on Jesus. Four of these were translated, filmed, and published on the new Auslan Bible YouTube channel, with two more drafted and slated for release in early 2025. These resources will have a significant impact among Deaf Christians, especially for children and young adults.

Another exciting new development in 2024 was the translation and filming of an Auslan version of the Alpha course, thanks to a partnership between Bible Society Australia, Wycliffe Bible Translators and Alpha Australia. Eight sessions were recorded and are planned for trial and release in 2025.

## Testimony

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*“Having the Bible in Auslan means people in the Deaf community can have full access to the Good News in their own language — not by text but on video. Their faces light up when they see the Gospel in Auslan — that is priceless!” — Trudy Fraser, Auslan Bible Project Translator*

*“I’ve been thinking a lot about creating resources for kids to put online to equip the church ... These videos provide the stories in a form that kids can easily understand. We have a dream for the Deaf community to be able to connect with the gospel.” — Rebecca Thurrowgood, Wycliffe Bible Translators*

## Prayer Points

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- Please pray for the Deaf community in Australia to access the Bible in Auslan and for more connections to better serve their unique needs.
- Pray for the translators involved in the Auslan Bible Project, that they may accurately translate the Bible in a way that resonates with the Deaf community, especially children and youth.
- Thank God for the provision of a state-of-the-art video recording studio and the partnership with Wycliffe Bible Translators, that it may lead to the creation of many Bible engagement resources.