



DBV MEMBER SURVEY 2020

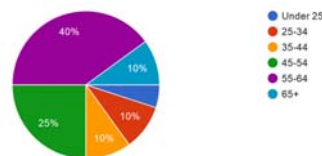
The DBV member survey was conducted in person at DBV Café events, in the DBV office, and online. There were 20 respondents. The results are summarised below.

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1. DBV members' age and location

DBV members come from all age groups, with the majority (65%) aged between 45 and 65. 90% are over 35. As deafblindness is often progressive, an older membership is not surprising.



The majority (75%) of respondents live in the suburbs of Melbourne, spread across the south, east, north and west. 25% live outside Melbourne and some travel long distances to come to DBV events.

2. Communication preferences

75% of DBV members use Auslan. 75% use written English, with most using large print. 30% said they could communicate in spoken English (using lipreading, hearing aids, etc). 25% have some braille, and one more said they would like to learn. Only 15% are proficient braille users (grade 2).

Most prefer to get DBV news by email (81%), followed by SMS (43%) and Facebook (38%) (note that respondents could select more than one answer).

3. Support

100% of respondents use at least one support service – more than half mentioned Able Australia, and a few named Expression Australia. The main services are communication guides (“commguides”) and interpreters. Other support services

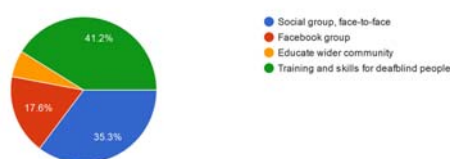
referred to by single individuals include a mental health worker, an art therapy group, Traveller's Aid volunteers, and a guide dog.

Of those who use commguides and interpreters, 100% have had to cancel plans because one of these supports was not available. Cancellations due to lack of interpreters occur monthly for many members, and cancellations due to lack of commguides is even more frequent. One respondent mentioned avoiding making plans due to an expectation of limited support, and another said they felt guilty asking for support when others might need it more than them.

4. What members want from DBV

In order of preference, members want DBV to provide:

1. training/skills for deafblind people
2. a deafblind social group
3. a Facebook group
4. education to the wider community about Deafblindness



Specifically, they want training in tactile Auslan (50%), braille (43%) and technology (31%).

At deafblind café events, the most requested topic (or guest speaker) was for emergency services. Two people just wanted a social event. Other suggestions included vision services, nursing homes, government departments, advocacy and travel.

5. Travel, transport and mobility

Safety, cost and lack of support were the main barriers to travel and mobility.

Most respondents (80%) travel to DBV events by train. Of these, many can't travel on a train without a commguide, family member or Traveller's Aid volunteer. A few use taxi/Uber, tram or bus. Some members don't trust or feel safe with taxis, and some found them expensive. Two said buses were not accessible. Several mentioned struggling with train service disruptions that were not communicated to them, and not being able to read signs.

More than half have used Traveller's Aid, and many positive comments from DBV members suggest that this is a vital service for those attending DBV events.

Several members (40%) were not confident using public toilets independently, and the shortage of male commguides was cited as a particular problem.

60% are not comfortable travelling at night and two said they had never tried it. One person said they prefer to travel at night because there is less glare.

6. Advocacy

The biggest barrier faced as a deafblind person was communication for 40% of those who answered. For most, this meant communicating with the Hearing world. For others, it was struggling with Auslan, or with reading.

The next most common barriers were lack of services (commguides & interpreters), loneliness, and mobility (all equal at 25%).

35% said they didn't know what "advocacy" means. When something happens to them that is not right, 64% felt incapable of speaking up. Several mentioned that they would ask an interpreter, commguide, or family member for help. Two said they would just put up with it. Only one named DBV as a place to go for help.

When asked what is the most important issue for DBV to campaign on, two issues stood out, with half of all respondents (50%) citing access to interpreters and/or commguides, and half (50%) citing the NDIS. 31% also mentioned travel/transport.

Respondents wished the wider community understood more about deafblindness – specifically how to communicate with deafblind people, and the diversity of deafblind people. Some wished the wider community would be more patient and more respectful when interacting with deafblind people.

When asked specifically about interpreters, respondents overwhelmingly suggested a need for improved skills and knowledge about working with deafblind people.