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QUEENSLAND 3:20pm May 23, 2017

Deaf woman appeal allowed over interpreter

By AAP



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A severely deaf woman who claims her repeated requests to police for an interpreter went unheeded has won an appeal to have her discrimination case reconsidered in Queensland.

Veronica Woodforth, who wears hearing aids in both ears to limited effect and has minimal lip reading ability, first took her complaint to the Anti-Discrimination Commission after she was allegedly assaulted by one of her landlords in 2011.

Later, she took the matter to the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal seeking a public apology from the state, anti-discrimination programs for the Queensland Police Service and compensation for "humiliation and distress".

The case eventually made its way to the Court of Appeal after Ms Woodforth's attempts within QCAT were unsuccessful and, on Tuesday, the state's highest court allowed the appeal - meaning it will be reheard by the tribunal at a later date.

The court noted the alleged assault took place on December 13, 2011, and Ms Woodforth said she was only able to properly explain what happened with the help of an Auslan interpreter more than a month later.

It came after multiple visits to the Ipswich Police Station, including on the day after the alleged fight. It was then that a receptionist declined to call an Auslan-compatible service, saying "it was not part of her job".

Similarly, the court noted an occasion on December 23 when Ms Woodforth went to the station and asked for an interpreter but was told one couldn't be arranged because it was the Christmas period.

It found there were problems with how the tribunal had applied the case to the state's Anti-Discrimination Act and ordered the

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matter be returned to the tribunal's appeal division for a rehearing.

The state was ordered to cover Ms Woodforth's costs for taking the matter to the Court of Appeal.

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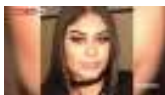


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