

DEVELOPMENT STUDIES GRADUATE

SCOTT FAGAN

**CURRENT ROLE: SUPPORT COORDINATOR
THE DEAF SOCIETY**

**PREVIOUS ROLE: LINKER
ST VINCENT DE PAUL**

**DEGREE: BACHELOR OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE**



Scott is an incredibly passionate and caring person who loves his work within the deaf community. Although Scott did not have a plan in place, on reflection it is easy to see how his actions have led him into his current career.

WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO SINCE GRADUATING?

Scott has been working with The Deaf Society on the Central Coast as a Support Coordinator for the last two years. In NSW the Deaf Society is the leading provider of services for deaf or hard of hearing people. Scott's role is to assist clients with accessing services that can help them achieve their goals. Scott is aware of both the formal and informal systems that are available in the community that provide a service for deaf or hard of hearing people. Scott can link the client to the beneficial systems, depending on the client's goals and needs. Scott thoroughly enjoys his role every day and working within the deaf community.

“My proudest moments in the role have been when I have been working with someone one on one and just being there as they achieve their goals for the first time.”



Image: Scott as the MC for a small conference.

Before his role with The Deaf Society, Scott worked with the St Vincent de Paul Society on the [Ability Links](#) program. Part of Scott's role was working with and building connections with some of the deaf community and The Deaf Society on the Central Coast. A barrier that had been identified within the deaf community on the Central Coast was the lack of open captions in local cinemas. Open captions are similar to subtitles, however open captions describes all of the audio, such as a door banging, rather than just the dialogue. Most local cinemas at the time did not provide this service. Scott became aware of this gap in the community after speaking with one of his Auslan teachers at University. This role allowed Scott to apply what he had learnt in his Development Studies degree in a practical setting. He identified a community need as well as holistic and sustainable solution to providing for that need. During this project Scott worked with and built connections with some of the deaf community and The Deaf Society on the Central Coast. Scott's transition from this role to The Deaf Society felt organic, as one role led to the other.

HOW RELEVANT HAS YOUR DEGREE BEEN SINCE YOU GRADUATED?

In the last year of his degree, Scott reassessed what he wanted to achieve before graduating. Learning a language is something that he had always wanted to do and so he picked up [Auslan](#) as his elective. Studying Auslan was a great opportunity to meet and interact with other students. Scott recommends learning a language and building cultural awareness as this will allow you to be more aware of the challenges that are faced within a range of communities.

Scott was keen to contribute back to his community and volunteered with the [Australian Red Cross](#) and [Samaritans](#) while he was studying. At the Red Cross Scott was part of the [Telecross](#) service, a service that provides welfare calls to people who are vulnerable or aged. Scott was provided with a person's profile and phone number, and his responsibility was to call and check in with each person. This role was rewarding and allowed Scott to connect with a diverse range of people from several different communities. After being in this role for a year, Scott felt the need to challenge himself

again and looked for a different volunteering opportunity. This is when he started to volunteer with the Samaritans. In this new role, people in vulnerable positions would come seeking support, and Scott was the person they met with. Scott was now working face to face and finding solutions to barriers people were facing. Scott was again developing his skills as well as diversifying his resume, networks and referees.

Scott learnt from his Development Studies degree how to take a step back and look at the community you are working with as a whole and approach problems with a holistic view. Scott learnt that it was crucial to assess the people you are working with, what the main barriers that they face are and to see if there was a service or equipment issue or shortage. Using his skills from Development Studies, Scott looks at his responsibilities as a community member, as a worker and what can he do to positively influence his community. Scott has applied this knowledge throughout his volunteering, paid work and personal projects.

[The Joust NRL Podcast](#) is a podcast series on the Newcastle Knights, run by Scott and his friends. They love the Knights and they felt like there was nothing out there for the community at the time. Scott and his friends had identified a need, as his background in Development Studies had shown him and they developed a solution. The Joust is something that they are passionate about, have control over and get a lot of enjoyment out of.

After graduating and working fulltime for nine months Scott began to feel like there was something missing. For years Scott had been balancing studying and working, and without his degree he felt that there was something lacking. Identifying that he enjoyed and wanted to continue studying and learning, Scott enrolled in a Diploma of Auslan which he has recently completed.

“I think it was a natural progression. At the time I didn’t have a plan, but on reflection I feel like this was all happening.”

ADVICE: DON'T PANIC

Scott’s advice is simply, don’t panic.

Development Studies is such a unique program that provides a unique and diverse skill set. Inevitably as you approach the end of your degree, you may be overwhelmed by the amount of choice you have. While you’re studying, try to work out what classes you are interested in, think about the courses or topics that stick out in your mind. Think about what jobs you want to do and what experience you need to get there. Then consider how you can breakdown the experience you need for a role, into smaller bite size chunks. You can gain experience through volunteering or other roles and continue to develop yourself and build the necessary knowledge and skills needed.

Within the last six months of his degree, Scott was looking online on [Ethical Jobs](#) or [Seek](#), at what relevant work was available. Scott set himself a small checklist when looking at selection criteria: does he have the skills and experience for the role and would it provide him the challenges and experience he was looking for.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Working within the deaf community, developing his Auslan and giving back to his community is what Scott is passionate about. Scott’s long-term goal is to continue studying and qualify as an Auslan Interpreter. Scott has met many Auslan Interpreters in his line of work and sees the role as a challenge and fantastic goal to aim towards.

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For more information about the [Bachelor of Development Studies](#) you can contact:
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