



## Swinburne University of Technology

### In a Nutshell

With a shortage of Auslan services and interpreters available in Australia, Swinburne University of Technology turned to Verbit to make its courses fully accessible to students. Verbit came into play prior to the pandemic, but has continued to help the university translate its face-to-face support into the online medium. Verbit's live CART services are helping to provide unparalleled accuracy and equity in remote learning environments, where many Australian students are struggling.

### The Challenges

When students' first language is Auslan, Swinburne utilized interpreters for face-to-face learning, but was challenged in filling those shoes due to the aforementioned shortage. Students would often come to class expecting support, but find themselves without it. While some students with learning difficulties were able to participate effectively with transcripts generated by Echo360 at the ASR level, others, especially those with significant hearing impairments, needed greater accuracy. As a dual-sector university, leadership needed to find a cost-effective solution to offer greater accuracy and equity to students, while adhering to the guidelines of Australia's Disability Discrimination Act.

"As I'm sure people in other countries would be experiencing with some students with disabilities, the online medium just isn't for them, and they've had to withdraw from their studies...It's been a massive struggle and we're just seeing a lot of the students disengage."



Verbit's been fantastic because there's no inconsistencies. People know that they're going to get this service and the support. I think that's really quite important."

**Genevieve Smith**, Manager AccessAbility Services, Swinburne University of Technology



**Swinburne** is a world-class **university** in Melbourne that focuses on creating future-ready graduates, innovation, and producing research with real-world impact. Swinburne has three campuses offering tertiary education for higher education, as well as Pathways and Vocational Education (PAVE).

## The Solution

Swinburne University of Technology began using Verbit just prior to the pandemic in January 2020 to account for the shortage. As a result, the school was prepared to offer accessibility in remote and hybrid scenarios and no longer needed to rely on interpreter bandwidths. Now, school leaders can rest assured that with Verbit, high-quality CART and transcription services can be easily scheduled. Students are able to participate in class and understand their daily course content without delay.

"If someone's profoundly deaf or really cannot access other ways other than the transcriptions to absorb the information, Verbit is definitely essential for them. We have students who are using CART services in a remote environment and that's working perfectly."



COVID provided the launch pad, but the technologies in Australia are still being fine tuned. There's a couple of players out there that are good, but do not have the speed and the turnaround time, and the cost - a big factor for the institution. Verbit works really well for higher education."

**Genevieve Smith**, Manager AccessAbility Services, Swinburne University of Technology

## The Results

### A reliable partner that delivers

"We know that Verbit's reliable, consistent, and once the bookings are made, we don't have to concern ourselves whether our support will turn up or not. I think that's really quite affirming for us. It takes away the administration of making bookings when there are cancellations of having to race to view shifts at the last minute."

### Accuracy that provides true equity

"The biggest differentiator is the accuracy, absolutely. We have students who can download their own content, they can access live captions when they have their synchronous classes. Without Verbit, they would be missing out on key terms."

### Dedicated customer support

"It's been amazing. That's been fantastic. We've had a brilliant experience. I have to say we feel listened to, engaged and supported. Everyone's been really friendly and helpful. Whenever the teams needed support, people have been available to answer and respond, which is fantastic. We're thrilled."

### Meeting Universal Design principles

"Accurate captioning and transcription is absolutely vital. Not just for students registered with Disability Services, but also those from different cultural backgrounds where English may not be their first language, those who have got different learning styles. When content is delivered in not just one medium, people can access content in their own time. It can help students break down learning tasks."

### Tools to make for future-ready students

"We want to help students become future ready. This is something that they will have to take with them into their working life, not just their learning life. At the higher education level, students manage their own [Verbit] booking. Having a service that they know how to access and use, means they don't have to ask permission or involve other people if they don't want to disclose. Once they've learned how to use the platform in their tertiary studies, they can then use that in their working life."

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