

ACCAN welcomes appointment of NRS service provider

The Australian Communications Consumer Action Network (ACCAN) welcomes the Federal Government's appointment of a service provider for the National Relay Service (NRS).

The NRS allows Australians who are Deaf or have hearing or speech impairment to access telecommunications services through the phone, web or teletypewriter (TTY). It is a vital service that allows its users to communicate for work, socially, and in emergencies.

"All Australians deserve the right to reliable communications whether they access it through traditional telco technology or through the NRS," said ACCAN CEO, Teresa Corbin.

ACCAN is pleased that the NRS will maintain existing call relay options when the new provider, Concentrix, begins delivering the service in October. This means that many users who rely upon the essential communications service will be unaffected by the new arrangement. However, ACCAN notes that users of the handset-based Captioned Relay service will need support to transition to a new technology option.

"While we know that many NRS users are now using messaging and video calls, some people do still prefer the familiarity of a phone handset when accessing the NRS," said Ms Corbin. "It's important that these users have the help they need to transition to an appropriate alternative before the NRS stops supporting these devices in February 2020."

As Australia's peak body for communications consumers, ACCAN will be actively engaging with NRS users, Concentrix, and the Department of Communications and the Arts to ensure a seamless transition process for all NRS users.

"This service is too important to all Australians to allow it to falter as changes take place in the background," explained Ms Corbin. "NRS users must be able to trust that they will have continuity of service during the transition."

With a contract now in place for the NRS until 2022, ACCAN strongly urges the government and Concentrix to make sure that the whole Australian community are adequately informed about this important service. All NRS users must also be properly supported to determine the best technology for them to access the NRS, and how to use it.

For many years, the NRS has enabled Australia to be a world-leader in delivering accessible telecommunications for those who are Deaf or have hearing or speech impairment. ACCAN is hopeful that this can continue throughout the transition and into the future.

- Ends -

NOTES TO EDITORS

- The Government has a helpdesk to support NRS users and can be contacted Monday – Friday, 8am – 6pm AEST (except national public holidays). Helpdesk staff can be contact through:
 - Phone: 1800 555 660
 - TTY – 1800 555 630
 - Fax – 1800 555 690

- Auslan users can view the [government's announcement](#) on [YouTube](#).
- Further information on the National Relay Service can be found on the Department of Communications and the Arts' [AccessHub](#)
- National Relay Service media enquiries should be directed to the Department of Communications and the Arts at media@communications.gov.au