

Great outcome for consumers who rely on captions

A recent Disability Discrimination complaint lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission against the former Communications Minister, now Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull was resolved last month with the Office of the Prime Minister committing to ensure all its future videos will now be accurately captioned prior to posting to the web.

The conciliated outcome with the Prime Minister's Office ensures that people who rely on captions will now have the same real-time access to information as the rest of the community.

The complaint was lodged in August 2015 by Lyn Lockrey who for some time has been concerned about the poor standard of captioning of videos uploaded to YouTube by government departments, individual members of parliament and senators.

The thrust of Mr Lockrey's complaint was that the then Communication Minister's YouTube channel was inaccessible to people who rely on captioning as the videos either had no captioning or only had poor quality and often inaccurate auto-captions.

On numerous occasions over the preceding 12-18 months, Mr Lockrey and his son Michael, who is profoundly deaf, made personal requests to various members of Parliament, Senate representatives and government departments, to correctly caption their YouTube videos to ensure accessibility in accordance with current Disability Discrimination Legislation and the Government's own Media Accessibility Guidelines.

In many cases, correct transcripts were already available (e.g. Hansard transcripts, or as transcripts for media dissemination) but were not being made available to consumers. On a number of occasions Mr Lockrey even provided corrected transcripts which could have been uploaded to replace the auto-captions. In most of these cases the requests and offers assistance were simply ignored.

The final straw for Mr Lockrey came when he viewed Mr Turnbull's [video interview on eBusiness](#) with Google Australia's MD, Maile Carnegie, and head of Google Asia Pacific, Karim Temsamani.

"I simply couldn't believe that such a video could be uncaptioned. If Australia's (then) Minister for Communications and two high ranking Google people couldn't make captioning happen on YouTube then we had a real problem!" stated Mr Lockrey.

Mr Lockrey and his son Michael are hopeful that this outcome will become the norm for all Parliamentarians' videos as well as those being uploaded by political parties and government agencies.

At the time of writing - the Prime Minister's Office has uploaded two more videos to his YouTube channel since the conciliated agreement was reached and both were properly captioned at the time of upload. The interview video with executives from Google is still uncaptioned showing that there is still work to be done to ensure that all government videos uploaded to YouTube are properly captioned.

In November 2015 ACCAN wrote to all Federal parliamentarians and a number of Federal Government agencies and departments calling for [accurate and readable captions](#) on YouTube videos.