



Meeting Minutes

Communications Accessibility Consultative Committee Meeting Four

Date: 17/02/2026 **Time:** 2:00PM – 3:30PM
Location: Virtual
Chair: Sam Grunhard, First Assistant Secretary, Connectivity

Attendees

Name	Organisation/position
Sam Grunhard	First Assistant Secretary, Connectivity Division, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts (DITRDCA)
Kate McMullan	Assistant Secretary, Consumer Safeguards Branch, DITRDCA
Alan Chalmers	Director, Communications Accessibility, DITRDCA
Jodi Cassar	Assistant Secretary, Australia's Disability Strategy Branch, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing
Melanie Chatfield	Senior Policy Officer, Blind Citizens Australia
Brent Phillips	Chief Services Officer, Deaf Connect
Amanda Everitt	Project Manager, Deaf Connect
Debbie Celenza	Business Development Manager – Service Delivery, Expression Australia
Ben McAtamney	National Policy and Advocacy Officer, Deaf Blind Australia
Amelia Radke	Senior Policy Adviser, Australian Communications Consumer Action Network
Rosie Lane	Access and Inclusion Index Lead, Australian Disability Network
Melissa Norris	Deaf Australia
Emma Bloom	Inclusion Australia
Shirley Liu	CEO, Deaf Australia

Name	Organisation/position
Jonathon Craig	Policy and Advocacy Manager, Vision 2020 Australia
Anita Herbert	Communications and Media Manager, Inclusion Australia
Lincoln Blake	Director A/NZ Account Manager, Concentrix
Claire Rennie	Community Engagement Officer, Concentrix
Ross Cameron	Operations Manager, Concentrix
Daniel Brennan	Help Desk Manager, Concentrix

Apology:

Hayley Stone, National Director, Policy and Advocacy, Deafness Forum Australia

Minutes

Agenda item 1: Introduction

- Sam Grunhard (Chair) opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.

Agenda item 3: National Relay Service and Scam Activity

Presenters: Ross Cameron and Daniel Brennan, Concentrix

- Ross and Daniel provided an update on an upsurge in scammers using the National Relay Service and ideas for responding.
- Ross explained that following the government's \$1,000 tax return program announcement in May 2025, there was a dramatic increase in misuse of the NRS by scammers attempting to anonymise contact with the ATO and financial institutions. By October-November, up to 580 reports of misuse per month were recorded, prompting Concentrix to seek departmental approval to intervene and disconnect suspected scam calls.
- Key Points included:
 - **Implementation of Call Intervention:** Ross described the shift from a policy of non-intervention to a two-stage, two-person assessment process for identifying scam calls, allowing staff to hang up on fraudulent calls. This led to a significant drop in scam activity, reduced call handling times, and improved service for legitimate users.
 - **Tightening Registration and Identity Verification:** Ross and Daniel noted that scammers exploited flexible identity verification policies, prompting the NRS to increase requirements for identity documents. They are consulting with other government agencies, such as the NDIS, on ways to balance security with accessibility for legitimate users.
 - **Results and Ongoing Challenges:** Daniel reported that since implementing the new measures, 161 fraudulent registrations were removed, 93 active scam calls were disconnected, and scam call reports dropped from 570 in October to 86 in January. There was minimal user pushback, with only one complaint, which was resolved after reassessment. Ross also highlighted new challenges, such as scammers spoofing NRS numbers, impacting the service's reputation.

Agenda item 2: Update on development of an Associated Plan for Information and Communications Services

Presenter: Jodi Cassar, Department of Health, Disability and Ageing

- Jodi highlighted work on the Associated Plan including:
 - **Technical Advisory Group Formation:** Jodi explained that a technical advisory group, co-chaired by Associate Professor Sheelagh Daniels-Mays, was established to guide the associated plan, meeting regularly and forming working groups to address specific topics.
 - **Stakeholder Engagement and Research Collaboration:** Engagement has included targeted community stakeholder sessions, collaboration with Monash University to explore accessibility standards and AI in communications, and ongoing work with the Disability Communications Working Group across Commonwealth agencies.
 - **Development of APS Training Package:** A procurement process is underway for an APS training package focused on effective communication and engagement with people with disability, aiming to upskill public servants in accessible and inclusive communication.
 - **Future Plans and Auslan Workforce Focus:** Jodi noted upcoming broader engagement activities, continued work on accessibility standards, and plans to address the Auslan interpreter workforce in collaboration with key partners and the Deaf community.

Agenda item 4: Deaf Space Report

Presenter: Brent Phillips and Amanda Everitt, Deaf Connect

- Brent and Amanda presented the findings of the Deaf Space report.
- The report draws on lived experiences from Deaf community, members, industry leaders, First Nations Deaf contributors, and international experts.
 - **Definition and Evolution of Deaf Space:** Amanda described Deaf space as any environment where Deaf people gather, shaped by connection, shared language and values, moving beyond traditional physical spaces to include virtual and rotating spaces.
 - **Community Consultation and Research:** The project involved focus groups, surveys, and consultations with 450 deaf people across Australia, as well as examination of global best practices, such as Gallaudet University's architectural principles for Deaf space.
 - **Community Priorities and Recommendations:** Key priorities identified include increasing Auslan visibility, investing in Deaf-led hubs, supporting leadership and engagement, ensuring access to events, and creating culturally safe spaces. The report emphasises co-design and collaboration with the community.
 - **Practical Examples and Initiatives:** Examples discussed include Auslan90, a daily Auslan-first news broadcast, and international models like pop-up Deaf spaces. The report provides actionable recommendations for individuals, organisations, and government.
- Committee members reflected on the importance of designing spaces for the community, and Ross requested access to the meeting recording and report for further review.

Agenda item 5: Auslan Emergency Interpreting and Wrap Around Service

Presenter: Debbie Celenza, Expression Australia

- Debbie provided an update on the Auslan Emergency Interpreting (AEI) app including:
 - **App Launch and Usage Statistics:** Debbie reported that since its launch on 12 November 2025, the AEI app has handled 118 emergency calls, with 75% occurring outside NRS hours.
 - **Service Delivery:** The AEI app operates 24/7 with a team of 30 certified interpreters and is expanding to provide post-000 call support through integration with emergency services and Healthdirect, starting with Box Hill Hospital in Victoria.
 - **Collaboration and Advocacy:** Debbie welcomed collaboration with other disability representative organisations to share positive impact stories and coordinate advocacy.
 - **Deafblind Accessibility and Feedback:** In response to Ben McAtamney's question, Debbie acknowledged the need to enhance accessibility for deafblind users, noting ongoing development and the importance of consulting widely to address diverse needs.

- **Integration Challenges and Success Stories:** Debbie discussed challenges in ensuring emergency service operators are aware of the app and shared a success story where the app enabled a Deaf person to communicate with police and avoid wrongful detention.
- Brent asked about the Government's work on an SMS 000 trial. Sam explained that the trial is aimed at the broader community, while existing NRS channels will remain available for those with specific needs.

Agenda item 6: Other business

- **Future Agenda suggestions:** Jonathan Craig suggested that future meetings address lessons learned from recent emergency events, particularly regarding communication coordination across government levels, and Sam agreed to engage the National Emergency Management Agency for further discussion.
- Sam thanked all participants for their contributions, especially the interpreters that facilitated the meeting. Sam noted that the next meeting will be scheduled for later in the year.

Action items

1. **Distribution of Deaf Space Report and Meeting Transcript:** DITRDSCSA to distribute the full Deaf Space report and the meeting transcript to all committee members.
2. **NEMA presentation:** DITRDSCSA to engage the National Emergency Management Agency for a discussion on accessibility issues arising from recent emergency events.