

ACMA praised for flood updates to the deaf community

Advocates for Australia's deaf community have praised the quick response of ACMA staff to the recent flood crisis in Queensland, which affected the operation of the National Relay Service (NRS) for several days.

The NRS provides telecommunications services, including the emergency call service, to people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. Its main Brisbane call centre had to be evacuated on Wednesday 12 January due to the flood risk, and the danger this presented to staff trying to access the call centre.

ACMA staff worked with Telstra to find a temporary location for the NRS at one of its exchanges, ensuring that the 106 number for text-based, telephone typewriter (TTY) emergency calls operated continuously throughout the flood crisis. However, the full range of services, including internet relay calls and Speak and Listen calls, was suspended temporarily.

During this time, the ACMA worked with the NRS outreach provider to communicate the situation to the deaf community, with regular updates posted on the ACMA website and the NRS website at www.relayservice.com.au. Importantly, ACMA staff developed three videos in Auslan during the course of the incident, notifying the deaf community that the NRS was affected. As well as Auslan videos, the ACMA posted a text-based NRS update on YouTube.

Karen Lloyd, Deaf Australia's Executive Officer, congratulated the ACMA for its response: 'The closure of the NRS at the height of the crisis was of serious concern to us, and affected the deaf community nationally, so the swift actions by the ACMA in making information available in Auslan helped alleviate the problem of access to information in the crisis.'

The NRS has been fully operational since midday on Thursday 13 January. 🗣️

Further information on the NRS is available on the NRS website at www.relayservice.com.au and the ACMA website at www.acma.gov.au.



The ACMA YouTube video.

Telstra CEO meets Authority members

David Thodey, who was appointed Telstra CEO in mid 2009, recently met with the Authority in Melbourne where he underlined his stated commitment to improving the carrier's customer service.

The event is part of a regular stakeholder engagement program where stakeholders meet directly and informally with the Authority Members. Several Telstra executives attended the lunch meeting, which was an opportunity for new members to be briefed on Telstra's plans for the year ahead. 🗣️



ACMA Chairman Chris Chapman and Telstra CEO David Thodey at an Authority meeting in Melbourne.