

Video Relay Service

What is VRS?

Video Relay Service (VRS) is an online interactive video teleconferencing service that lets a Deaf person using Auslan make and get phone calls from a hearing person. They do this by communicating through an interpreter on video camera, without using a TTY (text telephone).

How does VRS work?

1. The interpreter is set up with a video camera.
2. Their image is transmitted to the Deaf person, who's also set up with a video camera.
3. Both people can see each other.
4. The Deaf person uses Auslan to communicate to the interpreter, who then communicates to the hearing person on the phone.
5. VRS needs a web-cam and a high-speed internet connection to work.



Who can use VRS?

VRS is for Deaf people who don't use or find it difficult to use text based relay services (i.e. NRS in its current form).

Not all people with hearing loss use a TTY capably.

For many, Auslan is their first language, so they may not have the typing and/or language skills needed to communicate in writing.

There are other restrictions to communicating by text (typing), including:

- limited emotional expression conveyed in writing
- the speed of communicating with a TTY - it's much slower than using Auslan.

How is Video Relay Service delivered?

The Video Relay Service operates when the three people—the Deaf person, the hearing person and the interpreter—are in different locations. The difference is that telephone calls are relayed in sign language rather than in text using a TTY machine.

Our goals for VRS

Deaf Australia wants VRS to be available in Australia.

We expect the trial Video Relay Service currently being provided by Australian Communication Exchange (ACE) to demonstrate how this type of technology can enhance communications access for the Deaf community at an affordable cost. We also want to highlight the challenges of providing a comprehensive 24 hours a day / 7 days a week VRS: limitations of internet broadband speeds; and lack of appropriately trained interpreters

When will VRS be available?

When the Australian Government agrees to fund it.

Did you know?

If you use VRS,
it will be up to
four times
faster to finish
your phone
call?