

# COMMUNICATE

YOU  
ME

# CONNECT

## I support the Video Relay Service and my vote counts for you!

I am a [Deaf/hard of hearing/hearing] person and I support for the need to have an enhanced National Relay Service (NRS) based on the emerging National Broadband Network (NBN) which will provide accessible, affordable and available new telecommunications services for the deaf and hard of hearing community in Australia.

The existing NRS is an Australia-wide telephone access service provided for people who are Deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. To use NRS, a deaf person can use a teletypewriter (TTY) or an IP based text relay service ([www.iprelay.com.au](http://www.iprelay.com.au)) to call anyone. Since the NRS was setup in Australia in 1995, it has provided fairly accessible telecommunication services to many people (including myself) and enables us to use the 106 Text based emergency services for the last 15 years.

Australia ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008 which means the Australian government must guarantee availability, affordability and accessibility of telecommunications for deaf and hard of hearing people in Australia. Deaf Australia is very pleased that the government is planning to implement an essential SMS emergency service for deaf people.

Responses to Deaf Australia's 2005 telephony discussion paper indicated that Deaf people would happily change over from TTY to video telephony were a staggering **85% Yes** compared to a **15% No**. Also when asked to rate different telecommunications equipment currently available in terms of what Deaf people consider to be a Deaf equivalent to a voice phone. Video telephony rated the highest at 64% whilst SMS (not a real time communications tool) rated 38% and the TTY lowest at 22%.

The enhanced NRS with Video Relay Services will greatly improve the lives of Deaf and hard of hearing people, promote participation and create a more inclusive society.

**For more information, please visit Deaf Australia's website » [www.deafau.org.au](http://www.deafau.org.au)**

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