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Department of Broadband,  
Communications and the Digital Economy

Anti-Discrimination Policy and ICT Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities in Australia

# 2nd Regional Workshop on the Enhancement of Information and Communication Technology Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities

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## Anti-Discrimination Policy and ICT Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities in Australia

### Overview

1. Australia's ratification of the UN Convention and the Government's Social Inclusion Agenda
2. Australian regulatory framework for access to telecommunications for people with disabilities
3. Anti-discrimination policy at work



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# UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

- 17 July 2008 Australia ratified the UN Convention.
- Convention clarifies obligations on governments to promote, protect and ensure the rights of people with disabilities.
- Convention bans discrimination against people with disabilities in all areas of life.



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# • Australia's Social Inclusion Agenda

### Aims to:

- reduce disadvantage
- increase social, civil and economic participation
- provide a greater voice
- build on individual and community strengths
- build partnerships with key stakeholders
- develop tailored services
- give priority to early intervention and prevention
- use evidence and integrated data
- use location approaches



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# National Broadband Network

- \$43 billion investment
- Minimum 12 megabits per second to 90% Australian homes and businesses
- Remaining 10% will involve wireless solutions
- Will support rapidly growing and broad range of existing and new Internet6 based information and programs



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## *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*

- Ensures people with disabilities have access to facilities, goods and services on the same basis as everyone else.
- Obliges telecommunications providers that supply goods and services to provide them to people with disabilities on the same basis including price, subject to unjustifiable hardship.
- Complaints can be made to Australian Human Rights Commission.



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### *Telecommunications (Consumer Protection and Service Standards) Act 1999*

#### Universal Service Obligation

- Guarantees a standard telephone service for all Australians, including people with disabilities, wherever they live or carry on business.



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# National Relay Service

- Enables telephone communications between people who are deaf, hearing and/or speech impaired, with the broader community.
- Conversations are relayed through a call centre with the assistance of a relay officer.
- The NRS is provided at no additional cost to users.



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# Anti-discrimination Policy at Work

## Geoffrey Scott versus Telstra Corporation Limited

- Mr Scott made a complaint to Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission that he was denied access to a standard telephone service because Telstra would not supply him with equivalent equipment (TTY) as part of its Universal Service Obligation.
- Ruling provided that Telstra must provide equipment so that deaf people could access the standard telephone service.



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### Bruce Maguire versus Sydney Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (SOCOG)

- Complaint involved a website that was not accessible to blind people.
- SOCOG claimed it would involve considerable expense to update its website.
- The ruling directed SOCOG to make its website accessible.



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### Conclusion

- Consultation with people with disabilities is important.
- No one-size-fits-all solution to access.