Get the Facts: Captioning

One in every six Australians is Deaf or hard of hearing. They are artists, arts workers, leaders, Board members, guests and audiences. Full and equal participation is a social and business imperative and a human right.

Captioning is an important access service, enabling full participation by Deaf or hard of hearing people.

Captioning is also a useful tool for people who don’t speak English as a first language, in situations where someone speaks with an accent or in a dialect that is difficult to understand, or if someone speaks quickly.

Download the Get the Facts: Captioning factsheet tagged PDF or read the information below to find out how you can use captioning to enable the full participation of Deaf and hard of hearing people in your work.

# Captioning

Captions are used on films, television, video, on various social media platforms and in live performances, talks or forums. All films on websites should also be captioned.

Captions resemble sub-titles, but as well as showing dialogue, they tell us who the speakers are, and describe sounds, such as birdsong, traffic, music playing or thunder. They enable Deaf and hard of hearing people to fully experience the event. They remedy past exclusion and discrimination.

Captioning also benefits people who experience hearing loss as they age. It helps everyone to keep up with information they might have missed.

# Captions can be open or closed

Closed captions can be turned on and off by the viewer.

Open captions are always in view and cannot be turned off.

Open or closed captions are mostly used on TV, video and film but also in other public events. The above symbols should always be used in marketing and promotions for events with closed or open captions.

# Live Remote Captioning

Live remote captions are created in real-time. Deaf or hard of hearing people can view the captioning on a laptop, phone or on a big screen instantly. Captions can be sent nationally or internationally. The viewer needs only phone and internet access.

This captioning method can be used for talks, live performances and meetings. The captions are usually delivered by a captioning service or by a trained local typist.

Captioning for online meeting platforms (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.) is developing rapidly. The platform may provide captioning (check the quality) or to ensure accuracy, you may need to arrange live remote captioning.

# How to arrange captions for your event and videos

* Include captioning costs in your budget from the planning stages.
* To arrange captioning, contact any of the suppliers listed in Useful Links below.
* Promote captioned events through targeted networks such as Disability Arts Organisations and Deaf and hard of hearing services.
* When promoting captioned events, display the open captions or closed captions symbol with your online or printed information if applicable.
* Promote your event on social media. Social media platforms are widely used in the Deaf community.
* Make sure you set aside dedicated seating that provides clear sightlines.
* Get advice from Deaf and hard of hearing consultants about which seating provides the best position for viewing captions.
* Include a provision in online bookings for seats with a clear view of the captioning.
* Include an email address and an SMS number for inquiries. They are preferred by Deaf or hard of hearing people.
* Make sure your inquiry staff are trained to receive National Relay Service (NRS) calls. This is a phone service for Deaf or hard of hearing people.

# Useful links

## Captioning services

[The Captioning Studio](http://captioningstudio.com/live-captioning) — Captioning supplier

[Red Bee Media](http://www.redbeemedia.com/) — Captioning supplier

[Ai-Media](http://www.ai-media.tv/) — Captioning supplier including online platforms such as Zoom

[Media Access Australia](https://mediaaccess.org.au/about/captioning-audio-description-and-transcription-suppliers) — A list of captioning suppliers and their details

## Other useful links

[Media Access Australia](https://mediaaccess.org.au/practical-web-accessibility/media/caption-guidelines) — TV captioning

[Expression Australia](http://www.expression.com.au/) (previously called VicDeaf)

[Hearing Matters Australia](https://www.hearingmattersaustralia.org/)

[Soundfair](https://soundfair.org.au/)

[The National Relay Service](http://www.relayservice.gov.au/)

[Choose Art](https://chooseart.com.au/become-a-promoter/) — You can advertise captioned events on this accessible arts directory