



15 May 2020

**Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and
Exploitation of People with Disability**

DRCEnquiries@royalcommission.gov.au

To whom it may concern,

Emergency Planning and Response

Thankyou for an opportunity to respond to the Emergency Planning and Response issues paper. We shall address the matter of accessible communications in this brief submission.

It is a danger to citizens' health and wellbeing that captions are increasingly not included in the Government's emergency and other special announcements when they appear on TV and on social media.

It is time that the Government stood up for its constituents who need captions by insisting that all of its broadcasts, whenever and wherever they appear, will be captioned.

Emergency broadcasts and Government announcements on television must have captions that are a permanent feature of a broadcast or recorded video, so they appear in replays, on catch-up TV services, secondary channels and on social media.

We support the current accessibility inclusion in Government announcements that includes a sign language interpreter for the 10,000 Australians whose first language is Auslan.

However, there are 1.2 million Australians who rely on captions every day.

Captions are important for people for whom English is a second language, children with learning difficulties and particularly people who may use hearing aids or cochlear implants, and the many people who have no aided support to assist with their hearing.

Captions are vital aids for hearing impaired people away from home and seeing and trying to listen to an uncaptioned emergency message on a TV they cannot control, for example at airports, hospital waiting rooms and hotels.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I do not require any confidentiality for this letter, which may be made publicly available.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S Williamson".

Stephen Williamson
Chief Executive