

Our values

FOS is committed to being accessible to all people and to meeting any particular needs people using our service may have. We can provide information about our service in different formats and languages and adapt the way we communicate.

Some of the factors that may affect the ability of people to access our service include:

- language barriers, including English not being a person's first language
- physical impairments, including hearing, speech, vision and other physical impairments
- medical conditions
- literacy barriers
- mental disabilities
- social and economic barriers.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* “requires that people with disabilities be given equal opportunity to participate in and contribute to the full range of economic, social, cultural and political activities” (“Disability Discrimination Act Action Plans: A Guide for Business”, www.hreoc.gov.au).

Under section 24 of the Act, when providing its service, FOS may not discriminate against a person on the grounds of their disability:

- by refusing to provide that service to them
- in the terms or conditions on which we provide that service, or
- in the manner in which we provide that service.

Services to improve access to FOS

We will always consider the most appropriate way to communicate with someone wishing to use our service.

Detailed below are the services that FOS offers to improve access for people who would otherwise find it difficult to use our service.

Hearing and speech impairments

FOS uses the National Relay Service (NRS) to help people who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. Here are the NRS services we use:

Call service	How does it work?	Contact details
TTY/Voice	A TTY is a text phone with a keyboard and screen. A person with a TTY can communicate via text (or a mix of text and voice) with an NRS relay officer, who will communicate verbally with one of our staff. This option might suit a person who is deaf, cannot hear well or has difficulty using their voice.	133 677 (local rate)
Speak & Listen	A person with a hearing/speech impairment can talk directly to one of our staff, with an NRS relay officer listening in and re-speaking anything that is not clear. This option might suit a person who can use their own voice or voice output device but can be hard to understand on the phone.	1300 555 727 (local rate)
Internet Relay	An NRS relay officer can translate a conversation into text via the internet. This option might suit a person who is deaf, cannot hear well or has difficulty using their voice – but they must have an internet connection.	www.iprelay.com.au/call Go to this link, type in our number (1300 78 08 08) and click 'connect'.

For more information about these services, visit www.relayservice.com.au.

If we become aware that a person is hearing or speech impaired, we will give them the option of communicating by one of the above means. If these methods are not appropriate, we will consider any alternatives, such as using an AUSLAN interpreter.

Language difficulties

We have information available about our services in a variety of languages. Brochures are available on our website and can be posted on request.

We can organise an interpreter for a person who has difficulty communicating in English. If we think that a person would benefit from an interpreter, we will discuss this with them. If a person requests an interpreter, we can arrange one.

People can write to us in their own language and where appropriate we will get their correspondence translated. If a person tells us there is no-one who can assist them in reading and understanding our correspondence, we can arrange for all correspondence to be translated.

Vision impairments

If a person has a vision impairment, we can ensure our communications are printed in an appropriate font size. A standard large font size would be 16 point or larger.

On our website the page fonts can be increased as needed by the user. On request, we can send out our dispute form in a large font. We can also lodge a dispute over the telephone. We will discuss with each person how they would prefer to communicate and how we can assist.

Other impairments

We will adapt our process and service to meet the needs of the people using our service. If we are aware that due to impairment or other accessibility barriers a person may have difficulty accessing FOS, we will discuss with them how our process and service could be adapted to suit their needs.

For example, we can:

- adapt our modes of communication as required
- be flexible with our process requirements, and
- extend timeframes for response where necessary.