



Deaf Australia Inc.

Media Release
For immediate release

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TV Captioning Improvements a Win for Deaf

Deaf Australia yesterday applauded Senator Stephen Conroy's announcement that the long awaited significant and vital improvements to captioning on Australia's free-to-air and subscription television services will be mandated in legislation.

The Broadcasting Services Amendment (Improved Access to Television Services) Bill 2012 was passed by Parliament on Monday, and implements changes that will increase media access for Deaf and hard of hearing Australians.

"For too long, Deaf people have missed out on vital information and media access because of sub-standard or non-existent captioning," said Deaf Australia Executive Officer Karen Lloyd AM.

"Imagine watching an emergency like the Black Saturday bushfires or the Qld floods on a television news program - seeing the SES and Government spokespersons telling everyone how to protect themselves and their families - with no or jumbled subtitles. No way to know what they are saying, how to stay safe or where to evacuate to.

"Captioning is vital to make sure that Deaf people are not left behind - not only during times of emergency, but also to simply have the opportunity to enjoy the same access to news, current affairs and entertainment as other Australians."

The Bill includes new quotas for free-to-air networks which will see captioning on primary channels rise to 100% of programs broadcast between 6am and midnight in 2013-2014.

Deaf Australia is the national peak organisation for Deaf people in Australia. It represents the views of deaf people who use Auslan and is a true consumer organisation as only deaf people have the right to vote on Deaf Australia business and to be elected to the Board. Deaf Australia's vision is that deaf people are respected and fully included in the Australian community and the right to use Auslan is legally recognised.

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