ACCESSIBILITY GUIDE · NOVEMBER 2026

Taking National Relay Service Calls

How relay calls work from the front desk, and how to make your phones work for customers who are Deaf, hard of hearing or have speech difficulty.

The National Relay Service (NRS) is a free, confidential Australian Government service. A relay officer stays on the line and converts the conversation between speech, text and Auslan. Some businesses hang up on relay calls thinking they are scams. A relay call is a customer.

What a relay call sounds like

1. **The introduction.** The officer gives a unique name, such as "RO Kathy", and says it is an NRS call.
2. **The pause.** Silence while the customer reads or types is normal.
3. **First person.** You hear "I want to change my booking", in the customer's words.
4. **"Go ahead."** The call takes turns. Say it when you finish speaking.
5. **The goodbye.** End as usual, or "Goodbye, signing off".

Why staff hang up

- They think it is a scam
- They think privacy rules stop them
- The silence sounds like a dead line
- Call time targets push them to rush

The answers

- Officers can cut off suspected scams; scams down 80% on peak
- Privacy Commissioner recognises relay calls comply
- Wait, and say "I'm still here, go ahead"
- Log relay calls separately

Security

Run the same identity checks you use for any caller. The officer passes your questions on and relays the answers back. No special process, and no refusal.

Calling an NRS customer back

NRS option	Call	Then
SMS Relay, TTY	133 677	Give their number
Voice Relay	1300 555 727	Give their number
NRS Chat	1300 553 467	Give their number
NRS Captions	1300 018 342	Give their number
Video Relay	1300 149 715	Give their video relay contact

Menus and AI that wait

- Three or four options, most common first
- No key pressed goes to a person, not a hang up
- Hold messages that inform, not advertise
- AI agents transfer relay calls to a person

Other ways in

- Two way SMS from your business number
- Email for anything long
- Video calls for lip reading or an interpreter
- Record each customer's preferred method

The law in plain terms

General information, not legal advice. The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 makes it unlawful to discriminate because of disability when providing goods or services. Businesses are expected to make reasonable adjustments unless they cause unjustifiable hardship. Accepting relay calls costs nothing.

Staff script

Do not hang up. Greet as normal and say "go ahead". Speak to the customer as "you". One question at a time. Usual ID checks. Ask which NRS option they use and note it. NRS Helpdesk 1800 555 660. VOCPhone: 1300 663 222.