

## The Australian Communication Access Symbol in 2016



2016 has been another exciting year for Australia's Communication Access Symbol.



In addition to the symbol being registered as a trade mark since 2014 in compliance with the Madrid Protocol (1989), the *rules and standards* underpinning communication access have now been accepted for registration with the *Australian Consumer and Competition Commission*. This means that any place where the Communication Access Symbol is displayed must be in compliance with the registered standards for communication access.



In 2016, Scope formalised the process of awarding the symbol through the award of three different types of communication access licences. The type of licence awarded depends on the size of the business, and the annual review requirements that have been put in place. We now have over 200 businesses, services or organisations in Victoria, Australia, that have been awarded a Communication Access Approved User Licence, and over 280 customer service points that have been assessed and awarded the Communication Access Symbol.



In 2016, Scope awarded Communication Access Approved Organisation Licences to a number of *organisations* for the first time. V/Line regional rail services (390 frontline staff trained in disability and effective communication strategies), Public Transport Victoria Call Centre (150 staff trained in effective phone communication for customers who have communication difficulties), Public Transport Victoria Hubs (40 staff trained in disability and effective communication) and the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (60 staff trained in disability and effective communication), were among those awarded an Approved Organisation Licence.

The importance of communication access and a basic human right is receiving increasing recognition with government, businesses and community services.



In addition, in the Speech Pathology 2030 report- making things happen<sup>1</sup>, Speech Pathology Australia have identified that first of eight key strategic priorities is to create communication accessible communities:

‘We will ensure through building communication accessibility that everyone is treated with dignity and respect: communication partners are skilled listeners and talkers (e.g. they provide extra thinking and talking time, they know not to finish off someone’s sentences, etc.) and other methods of communicating (e.g. communication boards, speech generating devices. Switches and eye-tracking devices etc.) will be understood, and if required, their use supported.) (vii, Speech Pathology 2030, making futures happen)

2016 has built on the awards already received by the communication access team at Scope and by its partners.



In 2013 Scope’s communication access assessor team won the Excellence in Improving Participation Award at the prestigious Victorian Disability Sector Awards. In 2014, Communication Access was a finalist in the National Disability Awards. In 2015 and 2016, Scope staff members won Lifetime Achievement Awards for work in communication access at the Victorian Disability Sector Awards. Finally, V/Line was a finalist in the 10<sup>th</sup> National Disability Awards 2016 for achievements in communication access, and was recognised as one of the four most outstanding organisations nationally in the Excellence in Inclusive Community Design Award category. V/Line was also the winner of the state Award for Corporate Social Responsibility from the Australian Marketing Institute Awards. These are highly commendable achievements and great recognition for the communication access program and the team at V/Line. A video, ‘Now we are talking- communication access at V/Line’ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zocrga4mj-k> showcases the great work that V/Line have done.



The importance of V/line’s achievements are reflected in a growing communication access ‘movement’ in the public transport sector, with many transport providers working towards creating communication accessible services

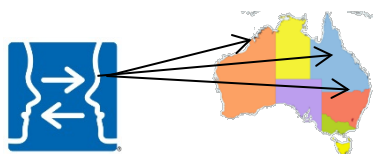


In addition, Victoria Police have commenced their journey to become communication accessible. In response to one of the recommendations of the Beyond Doubt Report<sup>2</sup> on the experiences of people

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<sup>1</sup> [www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/SP2030](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au/SP2030)

with disabilities reporting crime, Victoria Police have engaged in conversations with Scope on creating communication access within the police service. Recommendation 6 of the Beyond Doubt report stated that Victoria Police should “Gain and maintain Communication Access accreditation according to the advice of Scope...”



2017 will see the rollout of communication access across Australia. Organisations will be able to submit expressions of interest to become a Communication Access Approved Assessment Organisations to carry out communication access assessments in their states. In order to achieve this Scope has developed a Communication Access Starter Kit which includes

- The Communication Access Manual which provides guidelines for becoming an Approved Assessment Organisation
- The Communication Access Supplementary Manual, which contains hard copies of all required documents including the Communication Access Checklists, review documents templates for a range of letters, licence agreements, reports, approvals etc.
- The Communication Access USB which contains all the documents in the Supplementary Manual in an electronic form. It also includes promotional and training videos and power point presentations.

We look forward to having Approved Assessment Organisations in other states in Australia.



Some of the new communication access resources we have produced in 2016 include our animated promotional video on the 10 steps to communication access available on our website <http://www.scopevic.org.au/service/communication-access/>, and a video on communication access at a GP practice. There are also two videos about communication access in Auslan available on the website above.

We will also be employing additional communication access assessors in Victoria to meet the growing demand for communication access assessments, and large organisational contracts. Finally, we are gratified at the growing number of enquiries about communication access assessments from across the world.

If you would like further information about the Communication Access Symbol and/or the Communication Access Starter Kit, please contact:

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/our-projects-a-initiatives/experiences-of-people-with-disability-reporting-crime>