

New Zealand Telecommunications Relay Services Beyond 2019: Submission template

The closing date for submissions is **5.00pm, Friday 13 April 2018**.

You can make a submission by emailing RelayConsultation@mbie.govt.nz or by posting your feedback to:

NZ Relay Project Team
ICT Policy & Programmes
Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment
PO Box 1473
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

If you post your submission, please also send it electronically if possible (as a PDF or Microsoft Word document).

New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) users are also able to make video submissions in NZSL. For further information please visit <http://www.mbie.govt.nz/info-services/sectors-industries/technology-communications/communications/telecommunications-relay-service/>.

Please complete the following contact details:

Your name:	Marie Sutton
Your email address:	

Is your submission on behalf of an organisation?

✓ - copy and paste this symbol to mark your answer if completing on a computer

✓	Yes
	No

If yes, please write the name of the organisation and your position here:

Hearing Support Christchurch Inc

If you or your organisation do not wish your name to be included in any summary of submissions that the Ministry may publish, please advise here:

No, I do not want my name / organisations name published in any summary of submissions

If you or your organisation object to the release of any information contained in this submission, please advise here:

--

If completing as an individual, which region do you live in?

√ - copy and paste this symbol to mark your answer if completing on a computer

	Northland		Wellington
	Auckland		Tasman
	Waikato		Nelson
	Bay of Plenty		Marlborough
	Gisborne		West Coast
	Hawke's Bay	√	Canterbury
	Taranaki		Otago
	Manawatu-Wanganui		Southland
	Outside New Zealand. Please specify location:		

If completing as an individual, which age bracket do you (or the person you are completing the form on behalf of) fall into?

√ - copy and paste this symbol to mark your answer if completing on a computer

	Under 18		45 – 54
	18 – 24		55 – 64
	25 – 34		Over 65
	35 – 44		Prefer not to disclose

If you are comfortable doing so, please tick any communications disabilities that apply to you, the person you are completing this submission on behalf of, and/or the body of people you or your organisation represents:

√ - copy and paste this symbol to mark your answer if completing on a computer

√	Deaf
√	Hearing Impaired
	Speech Impaired
√	Deafblind
	Other (please specify)
	Prefer not to disclose

Are you a hearing recipient of relay calls, or user of the VIS?

√ - copy and paste this symbol to mark your answer if completing on a computer

√	Yes
	No

Are you a user of New Zealand Sign Language?

√ - copy and paste this symbol to mark your answer if completing on a computer

	Yes
√	No

Are you a user of any of the relay services? If so, please tick which services, and the frequency with which you use them, below:

√ - copy and paste this symbol to mark your answer if completing on a computer

	Every day	Several times a week	Once a week	1-3 times a month	Less than once a month
Teletypewriter to Voice					√
Voice Carry Over				√	
Hearing Carry Over					
Mobile Text Relay					
Internet Relay					

CapTel				√	
Web CapTel					
Video Interpreting Service				√	
Speech to Speech					
Video-Assisted Speech to Speech					

If you are a user of the relay service, please describe the purposes for which you use it. For example, for social/personal calls, to conduct business, to use interpretation services for appointments:

For demonstrating Captel to potential users on our premises so they can make an informed decision on whether it will work for them

If you are not a user of the relay service, please describe your interest in this public consultation:

We receive calls via NZ relay and work with hearing impaired users of NZ relay

Which of the current services were you aware of prior to completing this submission? Please tick the services below:

√ - copy and paste this symbol to mark your answer if completing on a computer

√	Teletypewriter to Voice	√	CapTel
√	Voice Carry Over	√	Web CapTel
√	Hearing Carry Over	√	Video Interpreting Service
√	Mobile Text Relay	√	Speech to Speech
√	Internet Relay	√	Video-Assisted Speech to Speech

Availability of Services – Please let us know if your comments relate to a specific service

1. What is your view of the current availability of the relay service (i.e. are you able to access the relay service when you need it?)

From our clients' perspective – they would like the service to operate over more hours – ideally 24/7

2. If you have encountered problems, what are these and what impact have they had?

It is difficult for some elderly to work out how to set up the phone and they can't easily follow the instructions, particularly if they have only had broadband installed for the phone and don't have a computer.

Captions are not always available even during operating hours due to operators being on other calls – when this occurs while we are demonstrating Captel it can put people off getting the service.

If this occurs for our clients at home they complain to us and can think there is something wrong with their phone.

Captions can drop out during calls if there is even a tiny dropout in Wifi – this is a regular source of frustration for many users.

Sometimes words are misheard by operators making conversations difficult to follow when incorrect words are used out of context.

The delay between the words appearing and hearing the conversation when a person has some residual hearing can be confusing and make it hard to concentrate.

Some of our clients get so frustrated they stop using the Captel service

3. What changes could be made to relay services to improve their availability, and why?

Fund more operators so the service is available over more hours and there are fewer occasions where captions are not available.

Better voice recognition technology would improve speed and accuracy.

Provide a technician to help people who are having difficulty get set up properly

Accessibility – Please let us know if your comments relate to a specific service

4. What additional measures or initiatives could be introduced to increase awareness of the relay service and its benefits to users of the service and the wider community?

More advertising publically – while we advertise the services within our community we do not have the resources to pay for advertising.

Regular TV/radio & Stuff advertising

Brochures distributed more widely eg. GPs, audiologists, available in shops that sell communication technology.

Better education of telecommunications companies. Many staff do not appear to have heard of

Capitel or NZ Relay. Advertising of service on telecommunication company websites.

5. If you had the choice between accessing a relay service from a fixed device at home or from your mobile, laptop or tablet, which would you prefer and why?

While some of the people we work with do use mobile technology, many are older and learning new technology can be difficult. A large number of our clients would still not have a computer and would only use a cellphone for emergencies because their younger family members have insisted they have one, but many struggle to use them. Dexterity is also an issue with texting/typing on a mobile phone/tablet and does not come naturally for many.

They would prefer to use a landline phone as this is what they know how to use. Although this will change significantly in the future as the next generation comes through we believe a landline option must be available while landlines continue to exist.

6. What specific relay services would you like to see available on your mobile, laptop or tablet and why?

It is a human right under the CRPD, which the NZ government has ratified, that people with disabilities have the same right to access services as anyone else. This applies to the ability to make calls/communicate via phone/mobile/portable devices.

7. For those relay services that are available on your mobile, laptop or tablet already, are there any improvements that could be made that would make them easier to use and why?

As we have not dealt with anyone using these services we can't comment on this

8. Are there any other issues related to ease of access and use with the current relay service that we should consider?

Any new technology is difficult to learn for the elderly or cognitively impaired. Provision of a

technician to educate & help people get set up would help. Having to ring someone when you can't hear or contact someone via the internet when you don't have a computer makes it very difficult.

Affordability – Please let us know if your comments relate to a specific service

9. Are the costs of connectivity a barrier to you accessing and using the relay service?

YES.

Many people do not take up the Captel service once they realise they have to pay \$323, not to mention the ongoing cost of broadband services and data. Some of the people we work with only have \$20 left at the end of the week so considering buying an iPad or smartphone is not an option.

10. If so, what are the specific problems you have encountered and what impact has this had?

We regularly encounter people who are socially isolated from friends and family who have given up using the phone and can't afford any more bills. People give up ringing them because they can't hear.

This is not only a safety issue in terms of being able to call a Dr. but also a mental health issue as many hearing impaired become depressed due to isolation

11. What changes could be made to the relay service to improve its affordability and why?

The service should be free as it was originally intended

IDEAS

Funding/discounts could be provided to those with a certain level of disability.

This could be managed through WINZ – people could then choose whether they put this toward Captel or broadband/data costs

The government could require telecommunications companies to offer broadband discounts to

people with certain level of disability top make services more accessible

Level of disability would need to be assessed by audiologist/needs assessor

Increasing affordability would in turn increase uptake of the services, improve communication and decrease social isolation, therefore reducing secondary mental health costs for the government.

Fit for Purpose – Please let us know if your comments relate to a specific service

12. Are there any particular features or changes that you think should be made to the relay service to ensure it continues to offer a good experience to users and why?

Improve speed & accuracy of captions through better voice recognition

13. Are there any relay services or equipment that you consider are no longer relevant and could be phased out or discontinued? If so, what measures or support would need to be provided to transition users to other services or mainstream devices?

Many people, particularly elderly need one on one, face-to-face support to learn new technology.

This is the biggest complaint that we get – that there is nobody to come and help them

14. Have you ever discontinued use of any of the relay services? If so which service or services, and why?

We no longer demonstrate TTY as we find that most people we deal with prefer to use their voice to communicate even though they can't hear well. Concentrating to type and spell correctly is too time consuming for an elderly or cognitively impaired person. They feel pressured knowing that a hearing person is waiting for them to finish at the other end of the

phone.

Any Other Comments – *Please let us know if your comments relate to a specific service*

15. What other comments do you have about New Zealand Telecommunications Relay Services?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this submission. Your feedback is appreciated.

Publication of submissions

Written submissions may be published at www.mbie.govt.nz. We will consider you to have consented to publication by making a submission, unless you clearly specify otherwise in your submissions.

In any case, all information provided to the Ministry in response to this discussion document is subject to the Official Information Act 1982 (OIA). **Please advise if you have any objection to the release of any information contained in a submission**, and in particular, which part(s) you consider should be withheld, together with reason(s) for withholding the information.

In particular, please clearly indicate in your submission if you do not wish your name and any other identifying details to be included in any summary of submissions that the Ministry may publish, or in any responses to OIA requests.

The Ministry will consider all such objections when responding to requests for copies and information on submissions to this document under the OIA. Please note that in certain circumstances information you have provided us may be required to be released to a requester under the OIA, even if you would prefer it to be withheld.

The Privacy Act 1993 establishes certain principles with respect to the collection, use, and disclosure of information about individuals by various agencies including the Ministry. It governs access by individuals to information about themselves held by agencies. Please contact us if you would like a copy of, or to correct, any of your personal information. Any personal information you supply in the

course of making a submission will be used by the Ministry only in conjunction with the matters covered by the documents.