

Department of Communications and the Arts

National Relay Service

Quarterly Performance Report Quarter 4 2014-2015

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Background

The NRS providers are required to submit activity and performance data each quarter. We use these reports to review and manage the delivery of the NRS.

We report on:

- the cost of delivering the NRS on a quarterly basis
- the performance of the NRS providers against the service levels and key activity measures outlined in the NRS Plan
- information on how the NRS is used, including inbound and outbound call volumes and the service options callers use to access the NRS

This provides greater transparency on the NRS providers' performance and ongoing costs in delivering the NRS. Information provided in quarterly performance reporting is consolidated in annual reporting requirements.

The NRS contracts were managed by the Telecommunications Universal Service Management Agency (TUSMA) until June 30 2015. On 1 July 2015, TUSMA's functions were transferred into the Department of Communications, including the management of the NRS contracts. This quarterly performance report has been prepared and published by the Department of Communications and Arts, but relates to a period in which TUSMA managed the NRS contracts.

Cost of delivering the NRS

The annual cost of delivering the NRS varies, as the relay service component is based on the number of call minutes relayed during the financial year. The cost of providing the NRS is funded from the telecommunications industry levy paid by eligible telecommunications carriers. The annual funding allocation for the provision of the NRS is currently \$22 million (including GST).

The cost (GST-inclusive) of providing the NRS in 2014-15 is outlined in the table below:

Cost of delivering the NRS

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Total YTD
Relay service	\$4,198,552	\$4,099,182	\$4,444,937	\$4,631,639	\$17,374,310
Outreach service	\$1,024,999	\$1,024,999	\$1,024,999	\$1,024,999	\$4,099,996
Total	\$5,223,551	\$5,124,181	\$5,469,936	\$5,656,638	\$21,474,306

Service level performance: relay service provider

The relay service provider’s performance in 2014-15 is measured monthly against the following service levels:

- Service level 1 (a): at least 85 per cent of calls are answered by a call taker within five seconds of reaching the relevant answering point for the call
- Service level 1 (b): at least 95 per cent of calls are answered by a call taker within 10 seconds of reaching the relevant answering point for the call
- Service level 2: no more than two per cent of calls abandoned after leaving the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) or being presented to the call routing queue (monthly average)
- Service level 3: no less than 95 per cent raw accuracy of words (excluding video relay). Raw accuracy is measured through monthly staff assessments of relay officers.

The relay service provider’s performance against these service levels is outlined in the table below:

Service level performance: relay service provider

	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15	May-15	Jun-15
Service level 1(a)	92.52%	93.63%	92.49%	92.94%	92.60%	93.45%	90.89%	94.28%	96.75%	95.07%	95.02%	96.17%
Service level 1(b)	93.24%	94.21%	93.15%	93.59%	93.19%	94.01%	91.68%	94.82%	97.10%	95.54%	95.52%	96.63%
Service level 2	0.7%	0.51%	0.56%	0.59%	0.72%	0.69%	0.87%	0.79%	0.70%	1.14%	0.77%	0.49%
Service level 3	97.68%	98.16%	97.83%	97.66%	97.51%	97.46%	96.71%	97.32%	97.59%	97.56%	97.67%	97.63%

The relay service provider fully met all service levels in Quarter 4 2014-15. This is the first full quarter for which service level 1 (b) has been achieved, reflecting the ongoing work by the relay service provider to improve compliance with this service level. The Department considers the performance of the relay service provider to be generally consistent with its obligations in the Relay Services Agreement.

Service level performance: outreach service provider

The outreach service provider's performance in 2014-15 is measured monthly against the following service levels:

- Service level 1: the service contractor personnel must answer greater than 85 per cent of all telephone calls from help desk users during the hours of operation of the Help Desk within 90 seconds;
- Service level 2: the service contractor personnel must acknowledge greater than 85 per cent of all enquiries received through public NRS email addresses or forms from the NRS website or from helpdesk users within 4 hours where the enquiry is received before 2 pm (AEST) on a business day or otherwise by 12 noon (AEST) on the next business day;
- Service level 3: the service contractor personnel must resolve greater than 85 per cent of all enquiries received from helpdesk users by telephone (that are not able to be resolved while on the call), website or email, that it is able to resolve without input from the Commonwealth or the relay service provider or a third party within 2 business days; and
- Service level 4: the service contractor personnel must resolve greater than 85 per cent of all complaints received during the month within the timeframes required under the agreement (including the complaint handling policy) for the type of complaint.

The outreach service provider's performance against these service levels is outlined in the table below:

Service level performance: outreach service provider

	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15	May-15	Jun-15
Service level 1	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	N/A*	100%	100%	100%
Service level 2	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99.82%	100%	99.85%	100%	100%	100%
Service level 3	97.8%	99.8%	100%	99.8%	99.7%	100%	100%	99.81%	99.51%	98.7%	99.4%	98.85%
Service level 4	96.3%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	85.71%	95.23%

* Compliance with service level 1 could not be measured in March 2015, due to a data collection failure that resulted in call data not being fully recorded for some days. A service charge reduction was not applied as the inability to provide the data arose from circumstances not reasonably within the control of the service provider.

The outreach service provider fully met the requirements of the service levels in Quarter 4 2014-15, generally performing well above the minimum thresholds for each service level. The Department considers the performance of the outreach service provider to be generally consistent with its obligations in the Outreach Services Agreement.

Outreach service provider performance against key activity measures (KAMs)

In addition to the service levels, the performance of the outreach service provider in 2014-15 is measured against a number of key activity measures (KAMs).

The outreach service provider's performance against the KAMs with anticipated activity levels is outlined in the table below:

Outreach service provider performance against key activity measures (KAMs)

	Q1 2014-15	Q2 2014-15	Q3 2014-15	Q4 2014-15	Actual Activity	Anticipated Activity	% Actual Activity against Anticipated
Number of participants at awareness sessions	352	451	989	1,016	2,808	2,800-3200	100%
Number of promotion/conference events	4	1	0	4	9	8-10	113%
Number of training sessions	82	74	99	114	369	380-420	97%
Number of orgs commencing Relay Service Friendly Program (RSFP)	10	13	16	18	57	30	190%
Number of orgs completing RSFP	1	1	3	6	11	20-25	55%
Number of contact centres involved in Hearing Awareness Week (HAW) 2014	292	0	0	0	292	50-60	584%
Number of contact centre agents involved in HAW 2014	27,469	0	0	0	27,469	20,000	138%

Hearing Awareness week (HAW), held annually in August, is a key opportunity for raising awareness of the NRS. The number of contact centres and contact centre agents involved in HAW outreach activities in August 2014 was substantially higher than in the previous year. This is reflected in the level of actual activity against the projected figures of the anticipated level of activity. Major business operations, local councils and government departments were among the participants in HAW outreach activities.

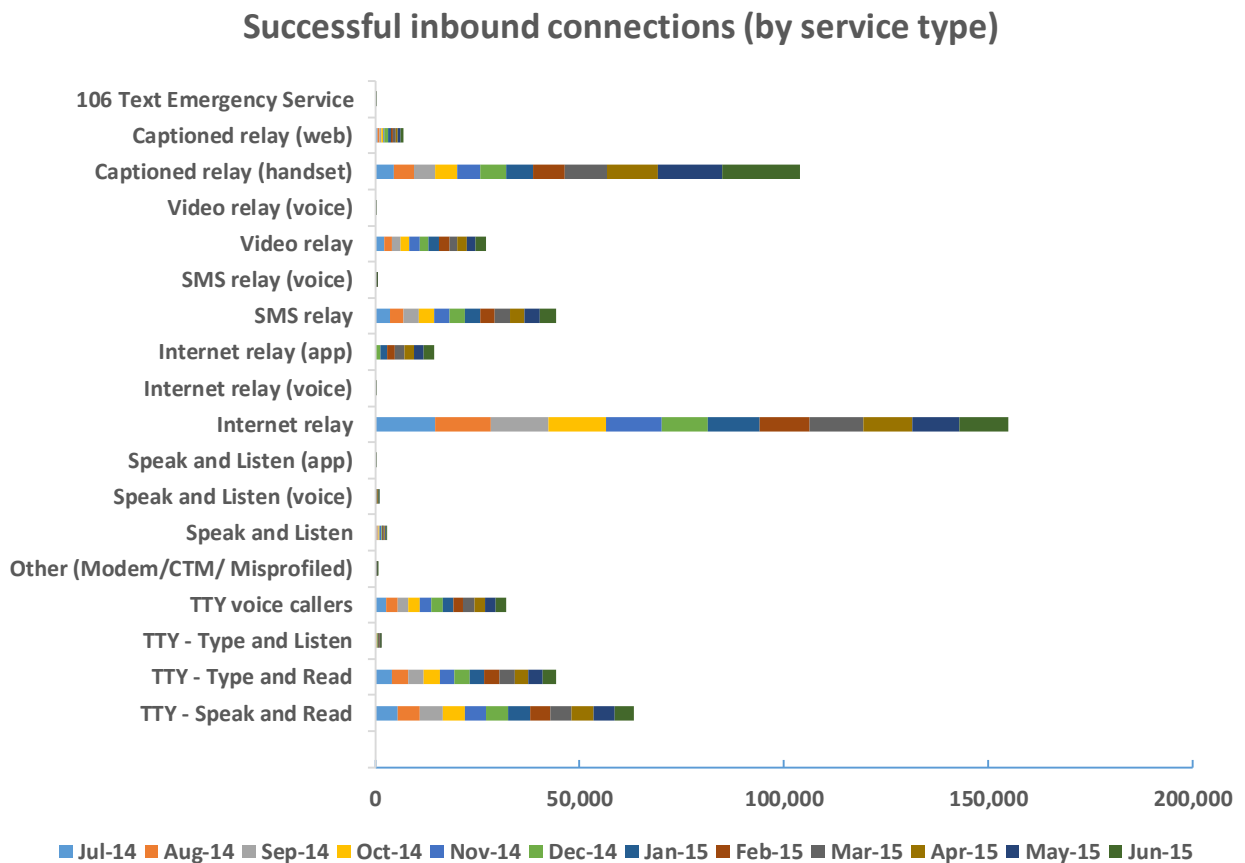
Levels of participation in awareness sessions has grown each quarter and the annual target for 2014-15 has been met. Requests for training sessions also grew over the course of 2014-15, with interest in the NRS app increasing in Quarter 4.

The number of organisations commencing the Relay Service Friendly Program (RSFP) continued to increase in Quarter 4, with 18 organisations commencing the program this quarter. The number of organisations completing RSFP in Quarter 4 exceeded those of the first three quarters combined, however the speed of completion of the program by some participants fell below the anticipated timeframe considered when establishing completion targets for 2014-15.

Successful inbound connections (by service type)

Inbound connections are made by users of the relay service – either someone with a hearing and/or speech impairment or someone wishing to contact a person with such an impairment.

The graph below shows a breakdown of the inbound calls for each service type in 2014-15:

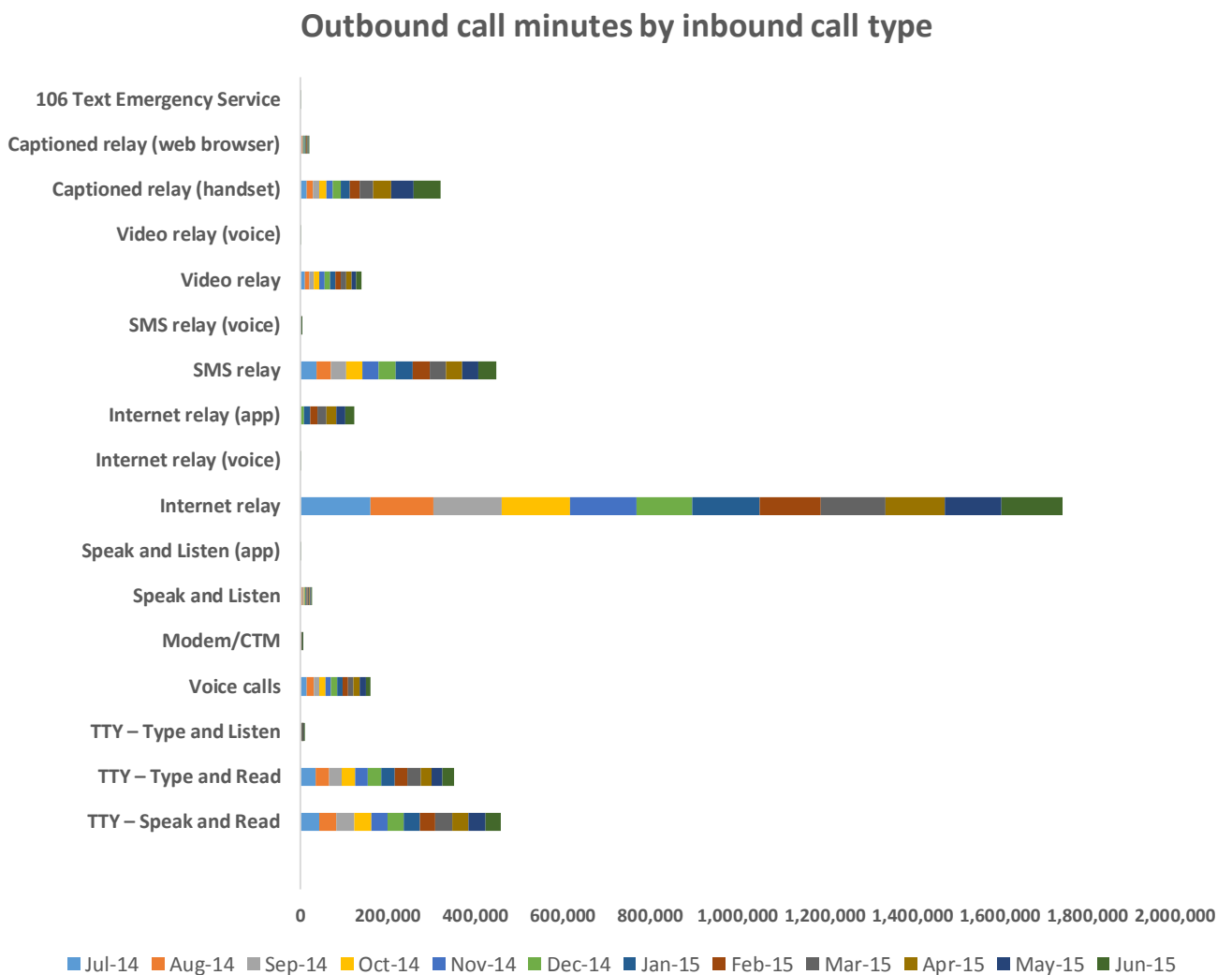


More than 144, 000 successful inbound connections were made to the NRS in Quarter 4 2014-15, compared to around 125,000 in Quarter 3. Use of captioned relay and SMS relay continued to grow this quarter, with a reduction in the number of successful connections by internet relay and TTY users in the same period.

Outbound call minutes relayed (by inbound call type)

Outbound calls are placed by the relay service on behalf of users, primarily to businesses, government organisations, friends and family.

The following graph shows a breakdown of the outbound call minutes for each inbound call type in 2014-15:

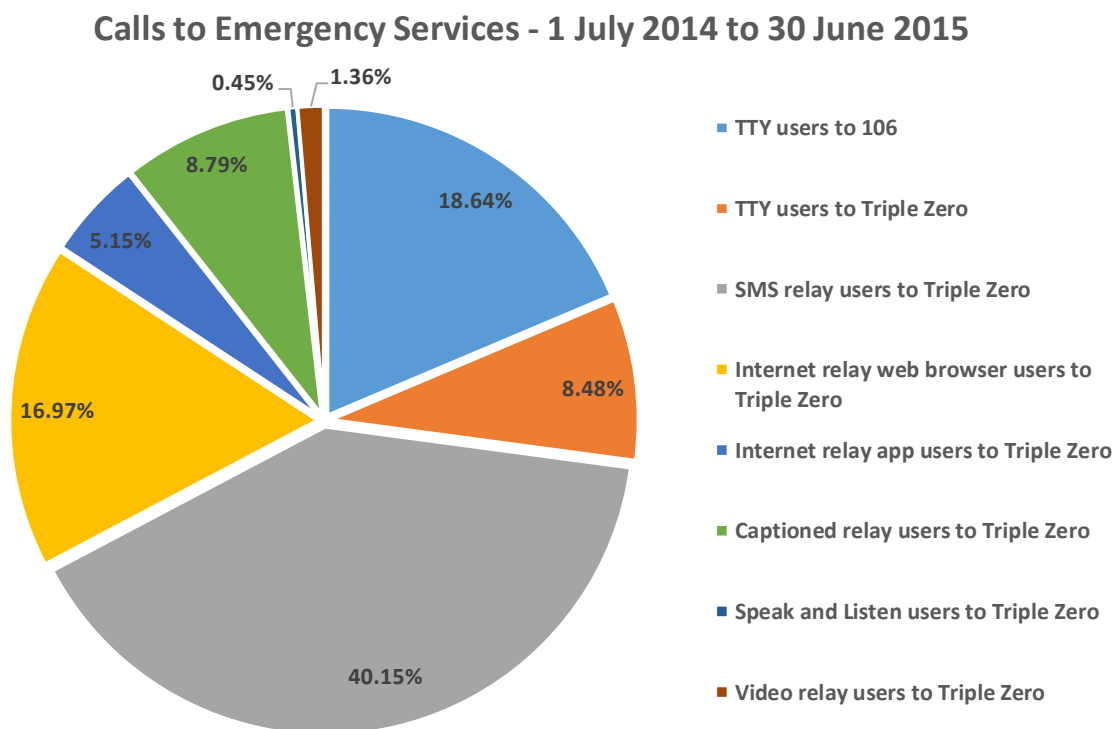


More than 3.8 million call minutes were relayed in 2014-15, compared to around 3.4 million in 2013-14. Use of internet relay (web browser and NRS app versions), SMS relay, captioned relay (handset) and TTY Speak and Read and Type and Read service access options provided the overwhelming majority of call minutes relayed in 2014-15.

Calls to emergency services relayed by the NRS

All NRS calls (except for the video relay service, which has limited operating hours) requiring emergency services are given priority access to a relay officer, before being connected to either a Triple Zero operator or directly to the appropriate emergency service organisation.

The chart below outlines the ways NRS users accessed emergency services in 2014-15:



A total of 660 calls were relayed to emergency service organisations by the NRS in 2014-15, an increase of around 18 per cent from the previous year. SMS relay provided over 40 per cent of calls to emergency services, while calls from TTY users accounted for more than a quarter of total emergency calls for the year.

Internet relay and SMS relay were the most popular options for contacting emergency services in Quarter 4, accounting for around 30 and 33 per cent of calls to emergency services in the quarter respectively.

Helpdesk enquiries

The outreach service provider provides a helpdesk support function and handles complaints and feedback about the service.

The graph below shows the types of helpdesk enquiries received in 2014-15:

