



*Human Rights and  
Equal Opportunity  
Commission*



## **NEW GUIDELINE FOR MAKING PAYPHONES MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**

### **Communications Alliance and HREOC provide guidance on design and provision of payphones**

**Sydney, 4 December 2006** – A new industry guideline to ensure that payphones are accessible for people with disabilities has been developed by Communications Alliance and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC).

Publication of the new payphone guideline coincides with the International Day for People with a Disability. It follows the recent registration of an industry code requiring equipment manufacturers and importers to inform people with special needs about relevant features of telephone handsets for fixed or mobile phone services.

The Accessibility of Payphones Industry Guideline (G630:2006) sets benchmarks that can be used in the design, siting and installation of payphones.

The guideline states that payphones should be installed so they can be more easily accessed by people with wheelchairs or other mobility aids; they should have features including volume control so that people with hearing impairments can use the phone; and they should have other features such as keys that are recessed or concave, with clear lettering and/or numbering that allows easy use for people with vision impairments or other physical disabilities.

Communications Alliance, in collaboration with HREOC, brought together representatives from government, the payphone industry and the disability sector to develop a draft guideline, which was subsequently released for public comment. After consideration of the responses, the guideline was finalized and approved by the Communications Alliance board last Friday, 1 December.

Communications Alliance CEO Anne Hurley encouraged payphone manufacturers, installers and operators to use the guideline in their disability action plans as a new benchmark for payphone accessibility in Australia.

“Publication of this guideline represents a commitment to the development of industry-wide best practices for increasing the level of accessibility of payphones and thus to a narrowing of the digital divide,” Ms Hurley said.

Human Rights Commissioner and Commissioner responsible for Disability Discrimination, Graeme Innes, said there was a growing number of Australians with

particular needs for whom communications equipment, including payphones, must be accessible.

“Although adoption of this guideline by the payphone industry is voluntary, we are encouraged by the cooperative spirit that has gone into its development and see this as an important achievement,” Mr Innes said.

The guideline can be viewed and downloaded from the Communications Alliance website [www.commsalliance.com.au](http://www.commsalliance.com.au)

### **About Communications Alliance**

Communications Alliance was formed in 2006 to provide a unified voice for the Australian communications industry and to lead it into the next generation of converging networks, technologies and services.

Although Communications Alliance has its genesis in the merger of the Australian Communications Industry Forum (ACIF) and the Service Providers Association Inc (SPAN), it is a new organisation created specifically to drive the industry into the future with confidence, vitality and strength of purpose.

In pursuing its goals, Communications Alliance offers a forum for the industry to make coherent and constructive contributions to policy development and debate. By providing leadership on new trends and directions, Communications Alliance fulfils a vital unifying role on behalf of the industry and its members, particularly in areas of competition, innovation and industry development.

The prime mission of Communications Alliance is to promote the growth of the Australian communications industry and the protection of consumer interests by fostering the highest standards of business ethics and behaviour through industry self-governance.

For further information see [www.commsalliance.com.au](http://www.commsalliance.com.au)

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### **About HREOC**

The Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission is an independent statutory body established in 1986 by an act of the Federal Parliament. Its goal is to foster greater understanding and protection of human rights in Australia and to address the human rights concerns of a broad range of individuals and groups.

For general human rights information see: [www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)

For information about Disability Rights see:  
[http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability\\_rights/index.html](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/index.html)

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