



HEARING MATTERS AUSTRALIA

Support from real life experience

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CAPTIONS

Captions are used to help people understand the soundtrack of a TV program, video or DVD by recreating the entire soundtrack in text format, usually at the bottom of the screen, so that the viewer can read it. Subtitles just show a translation of the dialogue from the spoken language used in the production into English, whereas captions record sound effects, music and other audio cues.

CAPTIONED TELEVISION IN AUSTRALIA

Closed captions — can be seen only with a decoder, a captions-capable television or a captions-capable digital set-top box. This is because they are added to the television signal after the original program or movie was recorded. For television services in Australia, closed captioning is available on most televisions by clicking on the 'cc' button on the remote control or through the digital set-top box.

Open captions — can be seen on anything you can use to watch a television program or movie. This is because they are included in the original print recording of a program.

Captions are created in different ways depending on the type of program:

Live captioning is used for news programs and other programs that are broadcast live or near-live. An operator creates live captions in real time so they usually appear on screen one word at a time with a delay of several seconds. Live captions can have a reduced level of accuracy, especially when technical terms or names are involved.

Pre-prepared captions are usually used for non-live programs such as dramas or films. An operator creates these captions in advance, checking for accuracy and timing before a program is broadcast. Pre-prepared captions usually appear one or two lines at a time with no delay.

The **Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA)** regulates television captioning in Australia. Captions must comply with requirements set out in legislation, industry codes of practice and the Television Captioning Quality Standard.

Free-to-air television broadcasters are required to caption all news and current affairs programs and any program screened on their primary or main channels between 6am to midnight, unless it's music-only or not in English.

Information sheets are shared by HMA as a service to members and those in the community who have an interest in hearing loss. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the information provided, however HMA accepts no responsibility for any adverse consequences arising from the contents of these sheets.

HMA information sheets are for personal use only. Downloads and printing allowable for whole sheets.

Contact HMA with queries or amendments.

Find out more and join HMA for additional member benefits at www.hearingmattersaustralia.org HMA INFO SHEET 12/2020



Captioning requirements on subscription television channels vary according to the type of programming, which is divided into nine categories. Subscription television licensees have annual targets on the amount of programs that must be captioned. These targets vary depending on the category of the channel. Subscription television licensees may apply to the ACMA for particular services to be exempt.

Free-to-air broadcasters are required to caption any program screened on their multi-channels if that same program was previously screened with captions on any of their channels. Subscription broadcasters are also required to caption any program screened on one of their channels if the program was previously screened with captions on another channel provided by the same channel provider.

You can complain about television captions by:

- Contacting the television broadcaster directly if it could just be a technical problem, such as captions dropping in and out.
- Writing to the ABC and SBS directly if you have a problem with their captions. You have six weeks from when the program was broadcast. If they don't answer within 30 days, you can complain to the ACMA.
- Contacting the ACMA with any other [complaints about television captioning](#).

WHERE ELSE ARE CAPTIONS AVAILABLE?

DVDs - usually located in the Subtitles menu. You do not need any special equipment to watch captions on DVD – all you need to do is turn them on.

YouTube videos are automatically captioned – select the cc option when available. YouTube captions can be edited and corrected by the person who uploads the video.

Open captioned movies (captions on screen) are screened at metropolitan cinemas in all capital cities three times a week on Friday evenings, Sunday afternoons and Wednesday mornings. Visit the Media Access website (www.mediaaccess.org.au) for more details (follow the links to Cinema, the Captioned Cinema Schedules). Alternatively, check for session times in your local paper. Open caption sessions are marked using the Supertext (**S**) logo.

Closed captioning devices that display captions on a device held by the viewer are available in cinemas.

Professional captioning services provide live or pre-recorded captioning can be arranged as a paid service. NDIS funding may be available for eligible participants for captioning.

Downloadable Apps are available for automatic captioning are available for use on smart phones, tablets and computers.