

1.3 How to assist parties in dealing with the AAT

There are a range of services that the AAT makes available to parties to ensure we are accessible.

1.3.1 Special services to ensure accessibility to the AAT

National 1800 number

Parties can call the AAT on 1800 228 333 from anywhere in Australia.

Callers from fixed phone lines will be charged at local call rates, calls from mobiles may cost more.

Non-English speakers

The AAT aims to meet the needs of service users who speak a language other than English by:

- providing interpreters free of charge; and
- translating brochures into key community languages.

Parties can also call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask the Translating and Interpreting Service to call the AAT.

Booking interpreters for non-English speakers

See Chapter 8 - Hearing related procedures for more information about booking interpreters for hearings.

Accessibility for people with disabilities

The AAT has implemented a number of initiatives to make access easier for people with a disability. They include:

- wheelchair access at each registry;
- the availability of large print and audio tape versions of Tribunal information brochures;
- the installation of hearing induction loops in Tribunal premises including conference and hearing rooms and at most registry counters;
- a TTY machine with national access Freecall is available and advertised;
- a Service Charter setting out the AAT's commitments to the provision of services;
- a reasonable adjustment policy (adjustments to the workplace and workplace practices to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities);
- an Employee Assistance Program for all employees, members and immediate family; and
- a Workplace Diversity Plan.

Access for people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment

Users who are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment can call through the National Relay Service (NRS). The NRS provides various call options which will enable AAT users to access services where the user:

- can speak but not hear;
- can hear but not speak;
- cannot hear and does not use his or her voice; or
- is hard to understand on the phone.

AAT staff can also call an AAT user known to have hearing or speech impairments through the National Relay Service.

More information about these services can be found on the [NRS website](#).

Tribunal initiated contact with users with hearing or speech impairments

When the AAT needs to contact a user who uses the NRS, the AAT can contact the service which will organise the call.

Hearing (induction) Loops are available at each AAT registry counter and in hearing and conference rooms.

Booking Auslan interpreters

See Chapter 8 - Hearing related procedures for more information about booking Auslan interpreters for hearings

1.3.2 Legal assistance

The AAT hosts legal advice schemes in cooperation with legal aid organisations in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australia. A legal aid solicitor attends each registry on a regular basis – usually weekly or fortnightly – and provides advice and minor assistance to self-represented parties.

Further assistance, such as representation, may be provided if a person makes a success application for legal aid.

The AAT advises self-represented parties of the service and makes the appointments for them. The majority of these appointments are for self-represented parties in the social security jurisdiction (check with specific services available in your registry).

The AAT also refers self-represented parties to community legal centres and other legal service providers that may be able to provide advice or representation.

For a list of community and legal aid organisations in your state, see [National Legal Aid](#) and [National Association of Community Legal Centres](#).

1.3.3 Outreach for self-represented applicants

The AAT's Outreach program aims to help self-represented parties and parties represented by a relative or friend understand the AAT's processes and give them an opportunity to ask questions about its practices and procedures.

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In addition to explaining the review process, staff can assess what further information may be of assistance and identify whether the person will require an interpreter or assistance because of a disability.

More detailed information about Outreach is contained in Chapter 3 – Acknowledging receipt, notifying other parties, listing, T documents and outreach.