

Telco woes plague nation Australians living with disability experiencing worst service from providers during COVID-19 stress

For the fourth month in a row consumers have reported telecommunications providers as delivering the worst customer service of all essential service providers. Nationwide results for August show disproportionate challenges facing people living with disabilities.

While many people are battling confusing telecommunications websites and long call wait times, people with disability are being pushed further behind by inadequate systems and support.

- **5.7 million Australians reported having a recent negative experience with their telecommunications provider** in August, up from 4.1 million in July.
- Most commonly reported problems by consumers when contacting telecommunications providers included **long wait times** (17%), **unhelpful service** (9%), **difficulty navigating the website or phone system** (8%) or a **general lack of ability to resolve challenges** (7%).
- **Almost half of consumers with disability (43%) reported having negative experiences with telecommunications providers** – with 22% reporting long wait times, 16% had difficulty navigating the website or phone system, 13% had unhelpful service, and 12% reported unfair terms or conditions in their contract.
- **People living with disability were more likely to ask for payment assistance than Australians overall in August**, with 20% seeking assistance from their lender/mortgage provider (7% nationally), 9% seeking payment assistance from their landlord (6% nationally), 9% asking for payment help from their insurer (4% nationally) and 9% seeking help from their credit or personal loan provider (4% nationally).
- **Slightly larger proportion of Australians living with disability dipped into savings** (34%) or **used credit cards or buy now pay later services** (34%) to manage basic household expenses.



This snapshot comes ahead of the September Policy Briefing. Download the **Consumers and COVID-19: from crisis to recovery** foundational report and monthly snapshots and briefings at cprc.org.au. For more information contact office@cprc.org.au.