TITLE: Do your communications meet everyone's needs? Easy English: A strategy to increase inclusion.

ABSTRACT: There are many community members who you may describe as vulnerable who are also known to have low literacy. Consider a person with low educational attainment, First Nations people, people with English as a second language, people with life long disabilities, to name a few.

It is time to rethink how well messages are understood by the community. This includes web based information and apps. But what happens when the power is out across your area and the phone and internet towers are down. Where do your community members need to find critical safety information?

Nearly 5 in 10 Australians between the ages of 16 and 65 years old do not have the literacy skills to manage day-to-day reading tasks (ABS 2013 #4228) This does not include rural and remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people who live in institutions.

Only 2 in 5 people can engage with websites beyond 1 step of navigation.

Easy English allows people of all abilities to understand and act on emergency information. It is written in the audience's everyday language. It uses short and clear messages with clear images linked to the text. This approach significantly reduces the cognitive load required to process information. It is also an ideal way of conveying information when time is critical, and people are stressed.

How can Easy English assist emergency planning, during an emergency and after an emergency in the recovery phase? Easy English increases inclusion and more people will understand what you need them to know.

People are at the centre of our work. We will share ideas from people who need to access information in Easy English, and various projects. We will share some of the challenges people face when interpreting messages. Effective communication in an emergency can influence the risk landscape.