

MEDIA RELEASE



**Access
Easy English**

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Find an easier way to say it on Drop the Jargon Day

Tired of circling back for a fungible win-win solution to the synergy paradigm? Drop the Jargon Day on Tuesday October 24 is a great time to clean up our act – and our language.

Clear communication is vital to being safe, informed and part of your community. But 44 per cent of Australians live with low literacy, and they are often forgotten when information is being shared.

Cathy Basterfield is a speech pathologist and the driving force behind Easy English, a format that can bring any written text down to an average grade two reading level.

Easy English is backed by years of clinical research and consultation with people with low literacy. It uses simple words, pictures, and clean design to create documents almost anyone can use, regardless of age, disability, English language skills, or access to education.

Cathy says access to information is a basic human right, and that means making sure everyone can get the message. It's especially vital during and after disasters, when even people who are usually highly literate may struggle to process information due to stress, trauma, or lack of sleep.

"If you're putting out documents that have a grade 10 or grade 12 reading level, there's a whole section of the community who can't access that information," Cathy says.

"If you can't access the information, or if you have to rely on other people to read it for you and explain it to you, that's a huge blow to your independence, your agency, and your ability to make informed choices.

"In an emergency situation it can be vital for keeping people safe, and when tensions are high, everybody needs information in as simple a format as possible.

"And if that information is only available online, you're fencing out another whole section of the community.

"One in four Australians still don't have internet access. That can be due to poverty, geographic isolation, perhaps they aren't confident with technology, or don't understand the internet well enough to find information on a website.

For interviews or more comment, please contact:

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“Another 10 per cent only access the internet on their phones, which can be an access barrier in itself.”

Drop the Jargon Day was started by Victoria’s Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health as part of Health Literacy Awareness Month. It encourages health providers, community services and government agencies to consider the accessibility of their language.

Some of the words in their sights this year are *dyspnoea* (difficulty breathing), *integument* (skin), and *biopsychosocial* (the combined effect of physical, mental and social factors on a person’s health.)

For Drop the Jargon Day, let’s call a manually operated soil relocation device a spade, and commit to making sure everyone can get the message.

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More information:

- Drop the Jargon Day website: <https://www.dropthejargon.org.au/>
- Access Easy English website: <https://accesseasyenglish.com.au/>
- Easy English resources for people affected by the 2022 NSW floods: <https://accesseasyenglish.com.au/nsw-floods-project/>
- Access Easy English’s free COVID resources, developed during the pandemic: <https://accesseasyenglish.com.au/covid-19-resources/>

Ideas for audience engagement:

- Share your jargon pet peeves
- Challenge the audience to convert a complex concept into simple language - or a simple turn of phrase into the most complicated language they can!
- What’s some jargon from your industry nobody else understands?
- What’s some outdated jargon or slang you still use?
- What do we need a word for, but don’t have?
- Has anyone ever read the terms and conditions before they clicked ‘agree’?
- What did you accidentally sign up for/agree to because you couldn’t/didn’t read the fine print?

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