



HCCA - Consumer experiences of  
looking for information about COVID-19  
(People with Disabilities)

## **Report from HCCA Survey 1 – COVID-19**

### **Subset – People with Disabilities**

### **Consumer experiences of looking for information about COVID-19 (Coronavirus)**

25 March 2020

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## Executive Summary

- HCCA Survey 1 – *Consumer experience of looking for information about COVID-19 (Coronavirus)* ran from Friday 20 March to Monday 23 March (approx. 60hrs)
  - The total number of respondents was 243 people. Most were from the ACT (89%) with 11% from surrounding areas in NSW. The survey population contained more women and people in the 55-75yrs age group, and fewer in the 18-35yrs age group, than compared with 2016 ACT Census data.
  - HCCA recognises that health information and advice on COVID-19 is changing rapidly, and that this may have had an impact on the data collected across the survey period.
  - This report provides detail about survey responses, particularly **focusing on the subset of people with disabilities**, including questions identified by consumers that they do not feel are being answered in current communications. While evidence-based answers to these questions may be available, the responses suggest a lack of clear access for consumers to information in certain areas.
  - From the total survey respondents, main sources of information tended to be websites (82%) or radio (42%). Of those using websites, the common responses were:
    - Online news websites (60%)
    - Australian Government Department of Health COVID-19 website (51%)
    - ACT Health COVID-19 website (44%)
    - Facebook (33%)
- Other internet sites mentioned included covid19data.com.au, websites connected to particular health organisations or health conditions, news media (particularly ABC and SBS) and online podcasts including ABC's Coronacast.
- Key issues raised included:
    - Comments reflected fear and uncertainty from some consumers about the lack of clear advice about what they should be doing right now, in day-to-day life, to protect themselves and their community.
    - Consumers in the ACT and surrounds are seeking information about COVID-19 (Coronavirus) that is:
      - clear
      - easy to understand
      - evidence-based
      - consistent.
    - Consumers are looking for expert health and medical advice on how to respond to COVID-19, and how to limit transmission at an individual and community level.
    - Consumers want honest, transparent and coordinated advice about the government's plans and future expectations for COVID-19.

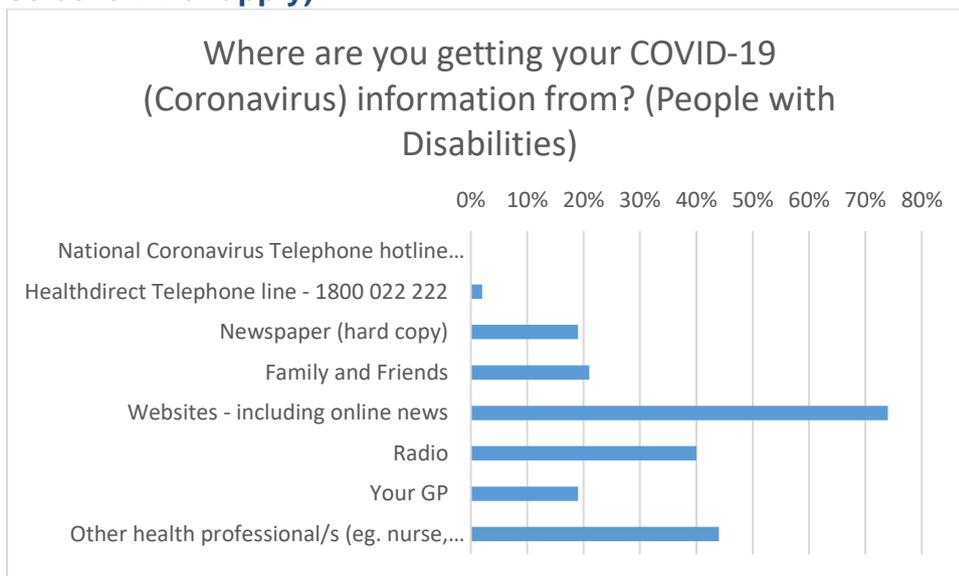
## Survey Data Summary

- HCCA Survey 1 – *Consumer experience of looking for information about COVID-19 (Coronavirus)* ran from Friday 20 March to Monday 23 March (approx. 60hrs)
- The total number of respondents was 243 people. Most were from the ACT (89%) with 11% of respondents from surrounding areas in NSW.
- **This report looks at the subset of data from the total number of respondents of those who identified as people with disabilities (a total of 43 respondents). The rest of the report will refer to this group as the cohort.**

## Survey Questions

### Question 1

**Where are you getting your COVID-19 (Coronavirus) information from? (please select all that apply)**



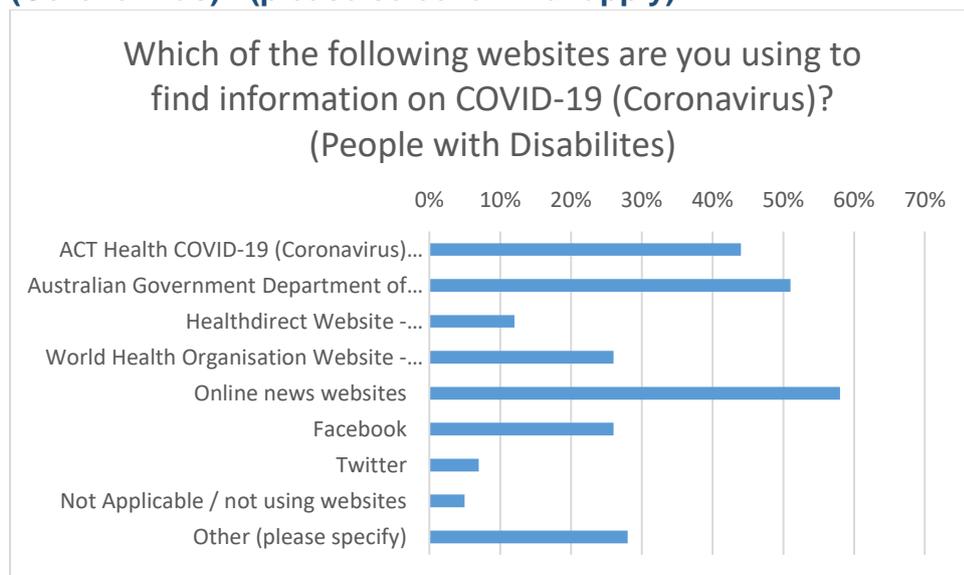
### Analysis - Question 1

- Most respondents in this cohort (74% or 32 respondents, compared with 82% of respondents in the total survey figures) indicated they are using websites to find information about COVID-19.
- A slightly lower number this cohort (40% or 17 respondents, compared with 42% of respondents in the total survey figures) are using the radio as one of their sources of information.
- The same percentage of this cohort (19% or 8 respondents, compared with 19% in the total survey figures) are using hard-copy newspapers to find information on COVID-19.
- Data indicated that this cohort were more likely to use their GP as a source of information (19% or 8 respondents, compared with 9% in the overall survey figures).

- In other sources/other health professionals, 16% of this cohort were using other health professions or disease specific organisations (consistent with the higher rate of using their GPs for information) and 9% told us they used TV, compared with 11% in the total survey figures.

## Question 2

**Which of the following websites are you using to find information on COVID-19 (Coronavirus)? (please select all that apply)**

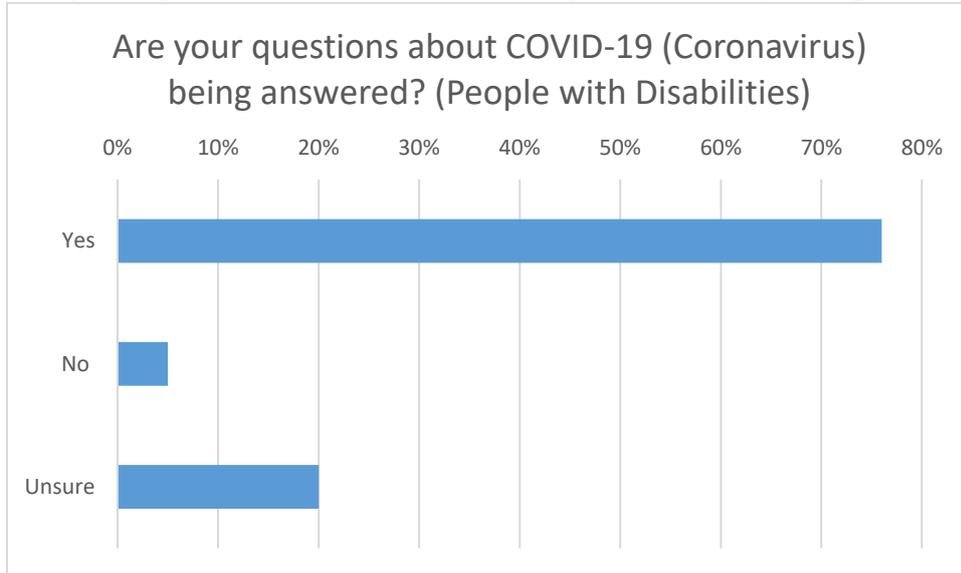


### Analysis - question 2

- This data was quite similar to the total survey data. The most popular websites this cohort is looking to for information on COVID-19 include
  - Online news websites (58% or 25 respondents, compared with 60% from total survey figures)
  - Australian Government Department of Health COVID-19 website (51% or 22 respondents, compared with 51% from total survey figures)
  - ACT Health COVID-19 website (44% or 19 respondents, compared with 44% from total survey figures)
- This cohort were a bit less likely to be using Facebook (26%, compared with 33% of total survey figures) or Twitter (7%, compared with 10% of total survey figures).
- This cohort were more likely to be using the Healthdirect website (12% compared with 7% of total survey figures).
- Of those that identified other websites (28%), these were most likely to be health/disease specific websites and social media.

### Question 3

#### Are your questions about COVID-19 (Coronavirus) being answered?



#### Analysis – question 3

A total of 76% of this cohort (compared with 68% of total survey respondents) thought their questions about COVID-19 were being answered.

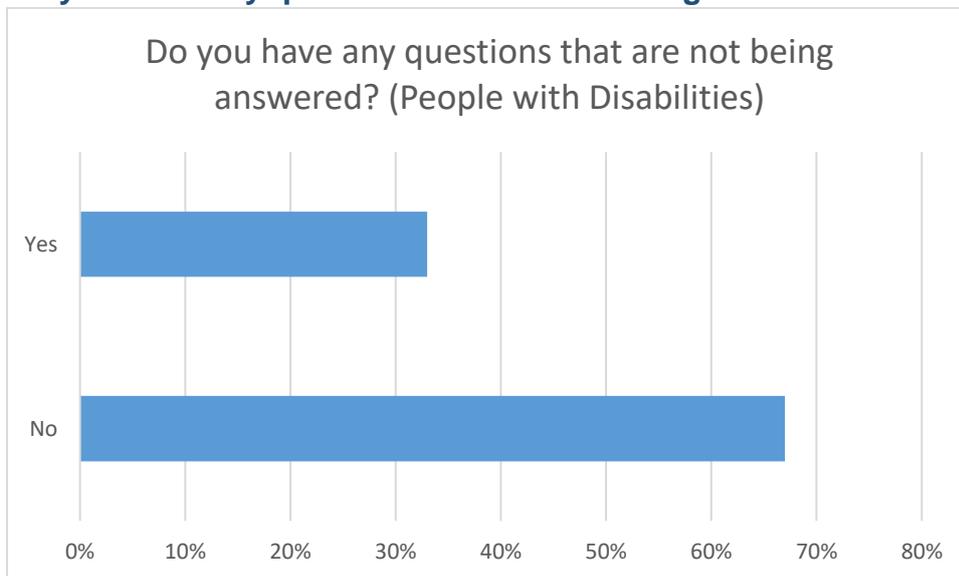
### Question 4

#### Do you feel informed or confused by the information you are reading about COVID-19 (Coronavirus)?

This question presented a scale for response, where the scale ranged from 'Confused' (0) to 'Informed' (100), with 'Neither Confused or Informed' (50). The average answer on the scale across this cohort was **69%** (compared with 67% of total survey respondents – quite similar). This suggests this cohort are feeling fairly informed but there is room for improvement.

## Question 5

### Do you have any questions that are not being answered?



#### Analysis – question 5

A total of 67% of this cohort (compared with 58% of total survey respondents) indicated they didn't have any questions that weren't being answered.

From the remaining 33%, respondents who indicated they **did have questions that weren't being answered** (recognising that information is changing rapidly and some of these questions can be answered through FAQs and info on trusted websites), some of the themes and questions included:

- **Risks and data**
  - How do we know someone who has COVID-19 but is asymptomatic is not contagious?
  - Is the virus a risk on food eg fresh fruit or other food and packaging touched by other people at the supermarket?
  - Are cancer survivors who had chemo and radiotherapy in previous two years at increased risk?
  - The risk of community transmission, especially with the large number of overseas students in the ACT
- **What to do and when**
  - How can I be tested if I don't meet the testing criteria but am concerned about my health?
  - How can immunocompromised people protect themselves, particularly while going to medical appointments?
  - How can immune compromised people self-isolate on the advice of their medical team?
  - If one person is in home quarantine, is everyone in that home under quarantine?

- How do we arrange a funeral online, particularly if deceased family member is interstate?
- Given the shortages, where can I buy materials to keep me and my family safe like alcohol-based wipes and liquids?
- **Government response**
  - What is the government response?
  - Why is Australia's response different from other countries (want specifics)?
  - Is the response economically driven?
- **Role of NDIS support workers and providers**
  - What does it mean in practical terms for support workers and NDIS providers?
  - How can I get formal permission from the NDIS to use my Support Workers to work with me online and still pay them with my funds?
  - How can a Support Worker buy & prepare meals for me that are safe to eat?

**Other more specific questions:**

- Will travel within Australia be restricted? Can I be prevented from attending or returning from interstate medical appointments?

**Question 6**

**Do you have any other comments about communication around COVID-19 (Coronavirus) or how it could be improved?**

In total there were 28 responses to this question (from 43 total responses from this cohort). Some of the main themes included:

- Communication does not appear to be well coordinated. There are too many conflicting messages leading to confusion. Messages need to be consistent and simple
- Some people felt there should be one single place for trusted information. For example, the ABC could be the designated media outlet as the national broadcaster in times of emergency. They considered that there were too many official sources
- Some respondents indicated they would prefer daily updates from respected medical professionals i.e. Chief Medical Officer not politicians. The person should be someone we trust and makes us feel confident that the powers that be have a plan. People were after more health and medical advice not just government advice.
- Some people felt there was too much information. For example, the continual broadcasting of the same news throughout the day could lead to confusion and panic as people may interpret the bulletin as presenting new information (ie new outbreak).

- Need to provide continual updates of information, e.g. through emails, to prevent scams and rumours
- Communications to the disabled community including Auslan and captioning have not been as good as they should be. Local news media has been particularly bad with captions. The use of interpreters and captions is essential as not everyone understands sign language

### **Specific comments**

- Media could be promoting Government websites as sources of trusted information.
- Place warning signs in shopping centres as a reminder of social distancing
- Need very clear information for employers about their employee's rights regarding self-isolation.
- Need information on the use of pools and the suspension of gym and pool membership.
- Type 1 diabetes community leaders need to be more visible in the media about the panic buying of food and the life-threatening consequences this can have on people with Type 1 diabetes.
- The Federal and ACT Health websites are not very useful. I can't find advice on having a remedial massage, going to the hairdresser, dentist and any situation where I could be in contact with anyone.
- Unrealistic information being provided on self-isolation, especially for those who have families. Poor information on public closures, including schools. Poor evidence on behavioural alterations such as the success of reducing numbers in rooms.