



QUEENSLAND NARRATING SERVICE

Mission Statement

Queensland Narrating Service is a non-profit community organisation that enables people to exercise their right to access desired information in audio formats and so enables them to enrich their lives and participate in decisions that affect them. QNS uses skilled and motivated volunteers and staff to precisely convert print material into various media with due consideration for consumers' special needs. Modern technology and systems are utilised to provide a high quality, cost effective service. Consumer service is our highest priority. We operate in a fair and responsible manner in our dealings with volunteers, staff, funding providers, print-disabled agencies and the broader community.

Who and where are we?

QNS is made up of four part-time staff and around 70 volunteer narrators. QNS staff co-ordinate the production and distribution of audio materials by working with narrators to assist them in the narrating process. This is done on a specific level through on-call assistance, e-mail contact and letters and on a general level through the organization of workshops for narrators to encourage and nurture skills. QNS relies on recurring and non-recurring government grants to maintain a high level of service. QNS is a member of the Round Table on Information Access for People with Print Disabilities and the Vision Impairment Agencies network and remains in touch with issues in the field. QNS can be found at:

373 Old Cleveland Road
Coorparoo 4151

Who does QNS provide narrations for?

People who are not print disabled can read independently and are advantaged by their ability to make choices about their reading materials. They can more readily decide what they choose to read in the first place, and how they read using strategies such as reading in detail, scanning, omitting altogether, glancing, or choosing to read later. Information and recreational reading is available to them at their fingertips.

QNS provides for the print disabled person who is far more reliant on other strategies to gain the information they require, or to obtain recreational reading materials. Some people, especially those with vision impairment or blindness, use adaptive technologies, which convert text to voice, others may use Braille or large print where applicable. There is a very significant place for transcribing print into audio format for many people. Audio format also has the advantage of being relevant to almost all kinds of print disability, perhaps with the exception of hearing impaired people.



Print disability does not just relate to blind or vision impaired people, nor is it always one factor which may cause it. Print disability may be caused through stroke or brain injury, dyslexia and other reading difficulties, illiteracy, language problems, or physical impairments, which prevent the person manipulating printed materials. Narrators need to take into account the range of print disabilities, which may be experienced by the end-users of the recordings.

Service Providers who use QNS

QNS produces a range of books in various audio formats which are sold to libraries for lending to print disabled borrowers. Books recorded by QNS include Australian history, local history, thrillers, mysteries, romance and Westerns. QNS also records young adults' literature used by high school students. Another branch of our operation is the Community Information Program (CIP). Under this scheme, we transcribe Government documents, newspaper articles, newsletters, minutes of meetings, university and TAFE texts and other materials into audio for individuals and organisations.

What is a narration?

A narration or audio transcription is an audio version of a text, usually print format. A narration must bring to life the printed word for the listener (or 'reader' as some people prefer to think of it). It is skilled work to do this well. Accuracy is extremely important, and it is surprising how sighted readers can easily misread or omit a word that changes the entire meaning of the text. Emphasis given to a particular word or phrase can have great impact on the meaning. Narrating involves good preparation of texts to be read and knowing and feeling comfortable with the content so that the correct words and emphasis are used. A well-read text is free of stumbles, uncertainty or hesitation, and moves along at the correct pace with good expression and intonation. Care is also needed to develop good microphone technique, without bumping and paper rustling. Background noise should be kept to a minimum.

Some printed materials include work containing more visual components, such as graphs, tables and photos. These often require a well-prepared description for the listener, balancing economy of words with clarity of description. QNS staff give assistance in preparing visual descriptions for narrators.

Each narration produced by QNS includes an introductory and concluding statement, attaching the name of QNS and the narrator's name to the recording. QNS takes pride in offering the most professional work we can produce, and we find the most successful narrators are those who also take pride in their work and who are keen to produce a good job. The QNS process of giving narrators comprehensive feedback facilitates improved narrating skill. Successful narrators prepare their work and take on-board constructive criticism and feedback, which results in a quality end product for the consumer. In partnership we can offer narrations on which we are proud to place our names.



YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE A NARRATOR?

Thank you for showing an interest in narrating for the Queensland Narrating Service. Please read the information provided in this kit. This kit is the first stage in the recruitment process. Please find:

- a service description
- a narrator job description
- selection criteria
- what you can expect from QNS
- a questionnaire
- a cassette/CD
- an instruction sheet for your test narration
- an excerpt from a novel and some visual information
- a QNS addressed sticker (to be placed over your address on the front of this envelope)

Please complete the requirements on the instruction sheet for your test narration and place the test cassette (with your name on it) and the completed questionnaire back in the envelope, place the QNS - addressed sticker on the front and post it.

If you have access to a computer please feel free to use your computer to produce your audition audio file. If your computer does not have a recording and editing program you can download Audacity 1.3.9 Beta version from <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

This is the recording and editing program that our digital narrators are required to use.

Do not be concerned about the quality of the recording - we supply professional quality recording equipment to you if you are accepted as a narrator.

Your test narration will be monitored and you will be invited to attend a "Beginner's Workshop" which will consist of a staff member familiarising you with the narrator's recording equipment. After your attendance at the workshop you will be notified in writing whether your application is accepted. If you are accepted, you will begin a trial period of three (3) months, which will involve three (3) practice narrations. In this time you may be required to attend further narrating workshops.

We look forward to receiving your test cassette/CD with your name on it. Please call QNS if you have any questions regarding this kit on 3895 8555.



JOB DESCRIPTION

The goal of a narrator is to transcribe/narrate printed text into audio format accurately and faithfully from the printed words and/or visual images, giving a true and correct representation of the text. To achieve this, the narrator must:

- Read accurately, use correct editing procedures, and correct introductory and concluding announcements. Aim for no mistakes in any narrating work. Comments or asides are strictly not permitted. If there is content or language in any book or printed work which offends a narrator, s/he should return that material so that it can be reassigned to another narrator. QNS is obliged not to censor, amend or delete any of the texts being recorded.
- Self-monitor own work before returning it to ensure it meets the best possible standard.
- Follow carefully any written instructions given with particular narrating jobs and prepare texts to be narrated by pre-reading and marking the text where possible.
- Have a suitable place for narrating where background noise will be minimal and where reading materials and recording equipment can be safely stored.
- Complete works within the required time frame. Narrators are consulted about their availability before a job is assigned to them, and QNS will discuss possible completion dates at that time. If a narrator is unable to meet the agreed time frame due to illness or extraneous circumstances, that QNS is notified immediately (not the day before it is due for return!). This is especially important for urgent work. Narrators will always be informed of the urgency of any particular jobs.
- Participate in preparatory training sessions and complete training exercises prior to commencement of narrating. Read and follow the Narrator's Guide supplied by QNS.
- Attend on-going training sessions wherever feasible, and receive written and/or oral feedback about completed narrations. All narrators are encouraged to view their narrating work as a highly-developed skill which is deserving of the highest standards of commitment and professionalism.
- Call QNS with any particular concerns or narrating matters requiring clarification. It is much, much easier to get it right in the first place than to fix up errors later! We value narrator enquiries for this reason.
- Be prepared to embrace new methods of operation or technologies, which requires operating recording equipment and recording and editing software programs which may be unfamiliar to the narrator.



QNS PROVIDES AND OFFERS:

- training and support for volunteers in their training phase
- quality skills enhancement through feedback and educational sessions for all narrators during their narrating life
- the best quality equipment affordable with limited resources
- information and instructions to narrators specific to each narrating assignment
- assistance with the specifics of each narration through telephone, e-mail or letters
- a regular newsletter which keeps narrators informed of news, events and information
- an open-communication policy, which encourages narrators to ask for assistance and to evaluate QNS training procedures, instructions and other aspects of narration

