

Date

(Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr Last Name) in the case of MPs,

OR

(Dear Senator' or Dear Senator Last Name) in the case of Senators

My name is (insert) and I am a member of your electorate. I'm writing to draw your attention to World Voice Day on 16th April 2024 and to seek your support.

World Voice Day is acknowledged on this date across the globe. It provides an opportunity to shine a light on the importance of voice in the everyday lives of *all people* and to raise awareness of chronic, life-changing voice disorders, also known as dysphonia.

I (know or have worked with) people who live with life-changing voice issues and I have witnessed the toll that the loss of their natural voice takes on them individually, their careers, their relationships and family lives.

(Feel free to briefly add any other relevant points).

Chronic dysphonia can develop for several reasons. It can be the result of damage to the larynx; an underlying health condition; overuse or poor vocal technique, or it can be a standalone neurological disorder like Spasmodic Dysphonia. Whilst rare, Spasmodic Dysphonia is thought to affect 1 in every 100,000 people in Australia and New Zealand including singer Jenny Morris. Overseas, celebrities like Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Scott Adams, the creator of "Dilbert," have also had their lives and careers impacted by the condition

No matter what the primary cause, the impacts on life with a chronic voice disorder will be similar. Chronic dysphonia can lead to unemployment, relationship breakdown, inability to participate in community activities, and isolation from social networks. Yet, they are frequently overlooked, or minimised as 'just one of those things'.

Approximately 30% of occupations in our society are voice-dependent. This includes performers, teachers, salespeople, politicians and lawyers, just to name just a few; so the impact of dysphonia is life-changing for people working in these areas. Yet here in Australia, there is currently no recognition of voice disorders as a disability. This means that there is no financial support for those unable to work or needing time off to rest their voice; nor is there a requirement for reasonable accommodations in the workplace.

Since 2016, the [Australian Dysphonia Network](#) has been providing connection and reassurance for those affected while advocating for increased awareness, earlier diagnosis, and research into improved management. Yet unlike vision and hearing, there is no funding for these vital activities.

I am requesting that you use **YOUR** voice in Parliament to raise these issues and to advocate on behalf of people like myself, for the recognition of chronic dysphonia as a legitimate concern worthy of inclusion under the Commonwealth Disability Act. And that you draw attention to the lack of funding for voice-related research and support.

Finally, I ask you to consider the impact on the home of Australian democracy if you and your Parliamentary colleagues lost the power of your voice.

With thanks in anticipation of your support

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