



Tips for

Making your business more accessible

This guide provides practical tips to improve access and inclusion for people with disability. Simple steps can have real benefits for you and your customers.

Why accessibility makes good business sense?

Accessibility isn't just the right thing to do; it is good for business and helps more people participate in everyday life.

- **One in 5 Australians is a person with disability:** Around 80% of disabilities are hidden. This means many customers and employees may have disabilities you cannot see.
- **More customers, more often:** When people feel comfortable and welcomed, they stay longer, return more often, and recommend your business to others.
- **Stronger reputation and trust:** Accessible businesses are seen as thoughtful, professional and community-minded.
- **Better workplaces:** Inclusive workplaces see better staff loyalty, punctuality and engagement. Adjustments that support one person often improve conditions for many.
- **It's the law:** But it doesn't have to be hard. Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), businesses must make reasonable adjustments so that all people can access goods, services and employment. Many are low-cost and free.
- **Employing people with disability:** About the benefits of employing people with disability, see pscouncil.info/employing-people-with-disability

Even small changes can expand your business and can make a real difference to the lives of employees and community. Accessible businesses help more locals and visitors enjoy Port Stephens.

Top 5 quick access wins

1

Learn a little; it goes a long way. Use the links in this guide to build confidence and awareness.



2

Do a 'walk-through' of your business and identify simple access improvements. Look for trip hazards, narrow paths, heavy doors or hard-to-read signs.



3

Make access information easy to find either with signs and/or online.



4

Speak directly to the person unless they ask you to communicate another way.



5

Don't assume what a person needs. Ask first how they'd like help – everyone's needs are different.



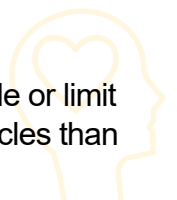
Physical access

- **Provide ramp access where possible,** or offer service at ground level. For guidance, see pscouncil.info/ramps-landings-walkways
- **Keep walkways clear and wide.** Aim for at least 1.2 metres so mobility aids and prams can move comfortably.
- **Offer sensory-friendly options where possible.** A quieter area, reduced fragrances, softer lighting, or use scheduled sensory friendly hours.
- **Improve air quality.** Good airflow and clean filters help customers with asthma, allergies and sensory sensitivities. Make spaces more pleasant for everyone.
- **Ask for accessibility feedback** from customers, disability organisations and professional access audits.
- **Plan ahead when renovating.** Features like lowered counters, varied seating and clear signage benefit many people, not just those with disability.



What you can do

Barriers are not only physical. Attitudes, communication and workplace culture can also enable or limit access and participation. Research shows communication and mindsets can be bigger obstacles than physical ones. See pscouncil.info/attitudes-improve-inclusion





Marketing your business

An inclusive approach to connecting with customers with a disability helps to prioritise digital accessibility, remove physical and communication barriers, and ensure authentic representation.



Customer service

- Ask people how you can help, or what access requirements they might need.
- Use respectful terms including person-first language such as 'a person with a disability'
- Speak directly to the person, unless they ask you to communicate another way.
- Use inclusive language – see PWDA Language Guide: bit.ly/pwda-language-guide



Digital and printed content

- **Text formatting:** Use plain language and avoid long sentences, jargon and acronyms. Break up text with headings, dot points and images.
- **Font style:** Use a sans serif (modern) font, such as Arial.
- **Font size:** Digital and web font at 16 pixels (px) minimum. Standard print at 12 point (pt) minimum. Large print at 20pt minimum.
- **Colour contrast:** Check with an analyser tool: bit.ly/vispero-colour-contrast-analyser
- **Document format:** Offer documents in PDF and Word so people can adjust text to suit their needs.
- **Information:** Clearly list your accessibility features such as entry ramps, bathrooms.



Social media

- **High contrast:** Use strong colour contrast so text stands out sharply against backgrounds.
- **Alt text:** Add descriptive alternative text to all social media and website images. See the Digital NSW guide: bit.ly/graphics-and-images
- **Video captions:** Include synced captions and text transcripts for all video content. Avoid third-party text generators for captions. See the Digital NSW article for more tips: bit.ly/closed-captions-article
- **Video styling:** Keep videos short and authentic.

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower



The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is a globally recognised symbol that allows people with non-visible disabilities such as autism, anxiety, chronic pain, ADHD, or hearing impairments to discreetly signal they may need additional support, patience or time. This may mean they need a helping hand, understanding, or more time in shops, at work, on transport or in public spaces. It provides a trigger for businesses to ask what additional support or help the individual may require. Learn more at hdsunflower.com/au

Employment

- Invite job applicants to share any access requirements.
- Check in with staff regularly. Needs can change – small adjustments can prevent bigger issues later.
- Ask employees their preferred communication methods.
- Match roles to strengths. Flexible hours or locations can unlock great talent.
- Build an inclusive workplace culture.

For further details on these, see bit.ly/mtjj-inclusive-business-guide



Access funding support

Funding may be available to help with workplace adjustments through JobAccess. For more information go to disabilityawareness.com.au/disability-awareness

Inclusive culture



Lead by example and include access in regular team discussions.



Train staff so they feel confident.



Plan for inclusion, don't leave it to chance.

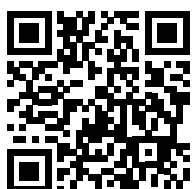


Don't assume what a person needs – ask first.

Are you interested in learning more?

There are free training courses available at disabilityawareness.com.au/disability-awareness

The Australian Human Rights Commission has resources to help businesses improve access to goods, services, facilities, premises and information for consumers with disability. For more information visit pscouncil.info/humanrightsgovresources



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