



Making Access and Inclusion Your Business

Resource Pack

Central
Coast
Council



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Disability in Australia

In Australia one in five people, or 20 percent of the population have a disability. More than half of people aged 55 years and over have difficulties with mobility, sight and hearing.

One in six Australians are affected by hearing loss. There are approximately 30,000 Auslan users with total hearing loss.

Vision Australia estimates there are currently 575,000 people who are blind or vision impaired living in Australia.

There are approximately 380,000 Australians who have Autism.

Of all people with disability, 1.9million are aged 65 and over, representing almost half (44.5 percent) of all people with disability. This reflects both an ageing population and increasing life expectancy of Australians.

There are 21,083 people on the Central Coast who need help in their day-to-day lives due to disability.

Available data indicates that the majority of people with disability who are 15 years or older use online services to do things such as purchase goods, pay bills and conduct banking.

People with disabilities seek out the same destinations as everyone else, including:

- eating out
- shopping
- visits to the beach
- nature and cultural experiences
- quality accommodation
- travel destinations.

The personal income of Australians living with a disability is collectively worth around \$100billion annually, a figure that is only set to increase with an ageing population.

One in three customers with disability have ceased a transaction because they were not treated respectfully or fairly.

One in three customers with disability report that their customer needs are often unmet.

In 2014, the NSW Parliament passed the Disability Inclusion Act, which sets out the need for the NSW Disability Inclusion Plan. This plan is about ensuring government and the rest of the community now make the choice to consult, involve and plan with consideration for those living with disability to ensure a fully inclusive society.

The NSW Disability Inclusion Plan focuses on four areas for concentrated action identified by people with disability, the NSW Government and community stakeholders. They are:

- developing positive community attitudes and behaviours
- creating liveable communities
- supporting access to meaningful employment
- improving access to mainstream services through better systems and processes.

About this Resource Kit

Central Coast Council (CCC) has developed this resource to provide information to assist businesses to become more inclusive through extending their goods, services, experiences and opportunities to a community of under-served people.

This resource is designed to outline simple strategies that will assist to improve access to your business such as investing in staff training to build a more inclusive culture, raising awareness across digital disciplines, and adapting accessible design processes leading to an improved customer experience. CCC offer Community Grants

and Sponsorship Programs to assist eligible individuals, businesses and community organisations deliver initiatives that make a real difference to local communities and the Central Coast.

Please refer to the [Grant information resource](#) (refer to the 'Resource links' page).

A list of resources at the end of this document provides links to other relevant information sources focused on accessibility.



The Law in Australia

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) makes it against the law to discriminate against a person because of disability when providing goods, services or facilities, or access to public premises.

The DDA says that disability discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably, or not given the same opportunities as others in a similar situation, because of their disability. The disability could be temporary or permanent; a physical, intellectual, sensory, neurological, learning or psychosocial disability; a disease or illness; physical disfigurement; medical condition or work-related injury.

The DDA also protects people with disability who may be discriminated against because they are accompanied by an assistant, interpreter or reader; or a trained animal such as a guide, hearing or assistance dog; or because they use equipment or an aid, such as a wheelchair or a hearing aid.

The DDA makes it against the law to discriminate against a person because of their disability either:

- by refusing to provide them with goods or services or make facilities available; or
- because the terms or conditions on which, or the manner in which, the goods, services or facilities are provided.

Please refer to the **DDA resource** (refer to the 'Resource links' page).

Making your business more inclusive

The benefits

Making your business more inclusive will ensure that everyone can access your products and services including:

- people who use wheelchairs
- people with mental illness
- people who use aids such as mobility scooters, walking frames or crutches
- people with vision impairment or blindness
- people with hearing impairment or deafness
- people with a perceptual or cognitive disability
- people with prams and strollers
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- people with a learning difficulty, intellectual disability or brain injury
- people who are frail
- carers of people with disability.

Universal design informs the design of buildings, open space environments, products, services and provision of information that meets the needs of as many users as possible and its aim is to create a more inclusive world.

The cost of not incorporating universal design can be significant. Inaccessible environments limit economic, education, health, social and other opportunities for people with disability, and make them more dependent on others.

Please refer to the **universal design resource** (refer to the 'Resource links' page).



It is important to consider the physical, communication and service barriers to identify possible areas for improvement in making your business more inclusive. As a community and as a business owner or operator it is important to consider how we can work towards enabling everyone in the community to have the same level of access to the things they need.

Goodrich and Ramsey (2011) found that 'accessibility appears to be an overriding issue in the service quality domain for consumers with disabilities' but that 'service intangibles' such as empathy and assurance 'have the strongest effect on perceived service quality'.

Physical barriers

There are several things you can consider changing to reduce environmental barriers that might make it difficult for everyone to patronise your business.

These include:

- ensuring at least part of your customer service area counter is at a suitable height for people who use a wheelchair
- having a chair available for those who may be older and frail
- ensuring accessible parking spaces are provided where possible
- installing ramps at the entrance of your premises
- fitting hand rails to walkways
- providing accessible toilet facilities.

Please refer to the [Australian Network on Disability](#) for information about how to make the shopping experience for people with disability more independent, pleasurable and dignified (refer to the 'Resource links' page).

Communication barriers

Communication is often a barrier for people with disability. The best approach is to make important information available to consumers in a variety of formats. Options could include electronic formats such as email, via websites and online chat services, SMS, phone, face-to-face and hard copy written material.

To address this within your business you can consider:

- ensuring websites are optimised for accessibility benefiting both your business and customers. Accessible practices such as consistent navigation, appropriate use of language and descriptive links can increase usability of your site, which can mean positive results for your business. Refer to the [Australian Government's accessibility guidelines](#) (refer to the 'Resource links' page).
- installing an audio loop in your shopfronts or offices to assist people with hearing-aids and providing an Auslan interpreter or braille option on request

- use captions on any film or videos
- understand and use the [National Relay Service](#) (refer to the 'Resource links' page).

The Australian Network on Disability provide guidelines on how to ensure your printed content reaches everyone in a meaningful and inclusive way. Using this guide to develop content you wish to communicate will ensure the information is accessible and inclusive and will be perceptible, readable and understood by your customers. Please refer to the [accessible print resource](#) (refer to the 'Resource links' page).

E-text is structured electronic text which is accessible to customers with a print disability, that is, to people who can't access information from regular print. Please refer to the [accessible e-text resource](#) (refer to the 'Resource links' page).



Service barriers

As a rule, when communicating with a customer who has a disability treat them the same as any other person. Focus on the person and address them directly. Ensure the appropriate means of communication is used for the person's disability. Allow them time to ask questions and try not to rush them. Avoid overloading them with information and make it clear you are there to help if they forget the information.

Consideration should be given to:

- training staff on how their attitudes can make the business more inclusive
- training staff on using inclusive language
- disability awareness training can assist your staff be more supportive when communicating and working with people with disability.

Research shows that people who experience disability highly rate the attitude and disability awareness of customer service staff as a very important attribute of a good retailer. These customers are prepared to move their business elsewhere when service is not up-to-scratch or the business is not accessible.

To equip your customer service staff with the necessary confidence and skills to respond effectively to customers with a disability, please see the [Australian Network on Disability resource](#) (refer to the 'Resource links' page).

Employing people with a disability

Being disability aware and confident when creating employment opportunities will give you access to a wider talent pool. Your business will be identified as an employer of choice and potentially increase the appeal of your brand to customers and the community.

When recruiting people with disability:

- be clear about the job description, specific about tasks required for the job
- check that your application process is accessible, including the availability of application forms and other material in accessible formats (html, word doc or accessible pdf)
- make sure your website is accessible and there is a point of contact for any questions relating to reasonable adjustments* and your disability employment policy.

*A 'reasonable adjustment' is a specific action or strategy developed by an employer to address the effects of a staff member's disability in the workplace.

JobAccess provides information on all aspects of employing people with a disability including financial support, tools and resources, and recruiting and retaining staff.

For more information please refer to the [Job Access resource](#) (refer to the 'Resource links' page).

Research study

Understanding the opportunity for Australia in accessible tourism

An estimate of annual expenditure by tourists with a disability (both overnight and day) based on Australia's National Visitor Survey data is around \$3.2billion annually (of which \$2.7billion is overnight spend and \$546million is day trip spend). Again, the multiplier of those travelling with a person with a disability means the true value of the sector could be as high as \$8billion (estimates are based on the domestic market only).

In Australia, it is estimated that the size of the current accessible tourism sector for overnight and/or day trip travel is around 1.3 million individuals. Many people with a disability travel with a carer. By this measure, 14 percent of the Australian population (an estimated 3.4 million people) has need of accessible tourism experiences and services for an overnight and/or day trip.

NSW is the most visited destination with 32 percent of people with a disability having visited on their most recent trip.

The research highlighted that the profile of travellers with a disability is diverse.

Mobility issues were the most common type of disability identified in this study, with 55 percent reporting difficulty with mobility in some way.

Many people with a disability may face multiple challenges with a high overlap between mental, cognitive and physical conditions. For example, 24 percent of people with a mobility issue requiring a wheelchair or scooter also had difficulty

with memory, learning or understanding, while 13 percent had difficulty hearing.

Internet search was the number one tool used by travelers with and without a disability when purchasing travellers services. Overall, travellers with a disability tended to stay in the same accommodation and visited the same destinations as the broader population.

Specifically:

- 41 percent wanted information contained on review sites like TripAdvisor that were relevant to travellers with specific needs
- 36 percent said that it would be great to have accreditation that shows businesses that have made the commitment to accessible travel
- 23 percent wanted specialised review sites for their needs.

The research found that there were still many challenges regarding the attitudes and understanding from both tourism and hospitality staff and those of the public towards travellers with a disability. It concluded that consultation should be the foundation driving accessible tourism and what is offered is informed by a thorough understanding of what travellers with disabilities want and need.

Find the full report at [MyTravel Research](#) (refer to the 'Resource links' page).



Resource links

1. Grant information resource (Central Coast Council)
centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/residents/support-programs/grants-and-sponsorships
2. Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) resource
humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/publications/access-all-improving-accessibility-consumers-disability
3. Universal design resource
universaldesignaustralia.net.au/category/practice-guidelines-for-built-environment/
4. Australia Network on Disability
and.org.au/DFD/dfd-04-01-designing-for-dignity.html
5. Australian Government's accessibility guidelines
australia.gov.au/accessibility
6. National Relay Service
communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/services-people-disability/accesshub
7. Accessible print service
printdisability.org/guidelines/guidelines-for-producing-clear-print-2011/
8. Accessible e-text resource
printdisability.org/guidelines/guidelines-for-accessible-e-text-2009/
9. Job Access resource
jobaccess.gov.au/people-with-disability/available-support/1631
10. MyTravel research
travability.travel/blog-node/understanding-opportunity-australia-accessible-tourism/

More useful links

1. Better Access Map
betteraccessmap.com.au
2. NSW Business Chamber Missed Business Guide
nswbusinesschamber.com.au/NSWBC/media/Policy/NSWBC-MissedBusiness-Guide.pdf
3. Creating Inclusive Communities Business Tool Kit
socialfutures.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Business-Toolkit-Web.pdf
4. Local Government NSW Accessible Events Tool Kit
lgnsw.org.au/files/imce-uploads/791/Toolkit%20for%20Accessible%20and%20Inclusive%20Events%202018%20%28003%29.pdf
5. Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010
legislation.gov.au/Details/F2010L00668
6. Companion Card
companioncard.org.au/
7. NSW Disability Inclusion Act 2014
legislation.nsw.gov.au
8. Disability Discrimination-Human Rights Commission
humanrights.gov.au/our-work/employers/disability-discrimination