

Inclusive Banyule - Inclusive Business

Age & Disability-friendly

Guide for traders and businesses

Inclusive practice is good for business

In Banyule, it is estimated there are more than 23,000 residents with disabilities: around one in five of our local population.

The number of differently abled residents increases year-on-year, as Banyule's population ages. Half of people 65 years and over live with chronic illness or disability.

It is important to be inclusive of people with disabilities; they are a significant segment of the community – and your business! Inclusive practice makes good business sense.

'Disability' is very diverse. Some people with disabilities might have problems with expressing their needs or eating.

Older adults may experience difficulties with mobility, vision or hearing impairment, strength and balance, memory loss and chronic diseases such as arthritis and diabetes.

Some older people experience more than one chronic health problem, so may need support to conduct business with you.

A few practical changes can make your business both welcoming and accessible:

- Making buildings more accessible opens up your business to a greater variety of customers, including people in wheelchairs and on mobility scooters, parents with young children, and delivery workers.
- Identifying and addressing barriers in your built environment is important. But potential customers may also experience social barriers in your business or workplace culture. This might include staff stereotyping the needs of older people and people with disabilities.

continued overleaf...

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'Ageism' (bias against older people) and 'ableism' (bias against differently abled people) are attitudes that can be tackled through education and open discussion.

Our Older Adults team can provide information and advice on how to address ageism in your business or organisation. Plus, our Community and Social Planning Team can offer basic 'Inclusive Business' training in relation to disability and the diverse communities which make up 'Inclusive Banyule'.

Here are some simple and practical tips that cost little, but will make a difference:

- If space permits, small changes to your building can make a big difference: handrails, a ramp, wider doorways, and walkways without obstructions.
- Having a clear line of sight from your business' entrance to your customer service counter helps people with impaired vision and mobility.
- Wide aisles that are free of clutter will be an enormous help, not only to customers with difficulty moving around but also to those with vision impairments.
- Improved signage: large and clearly written information is both age- and disability-friendly. Think about signs and notices in toilets and change rooms, on menus, in brochures and on your website. Generally speaking, larger, 'non-serif' fonts with high colour contrast work best.
- Offer to read menu items or specials to a customer.
- A cordless EFTPOS unit can accommodate less mobile customers.
- Provide services by telephone or online to help those who might have difficulty getting to your business.
- Communication: attitudes cost nothing and make an enormous difference. Speaking directly to a person with disability (not to their carer or companion) shows respect. Clarity of speech is more important than volume.

For more information: call 9490 4222 or email enquiries@banyule.vic.gov.au