

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

Inclusive Banyule - Inclusive Business

Disability-friendly

Inclusive Language Guide

Inclusive language empowers everyone

'Ableism' is the exclusion of people with disability in our society. It's often expressed and reinforced through language. Using ableist language actually harms people with disability, whatever the user's intention. Many words and terms once commonly used to describe people with disability are now outdated. Terms such as 'moron' originally were used as a medical diagnosis, which framed disability as a 'problem' of the person. Nowadays, we understand that the problem is social: that differently-abled people are excluded by the physical and cultural barriers society imposes.

Imagine how a person who lives with disability must feel. They could be a Paralympian, put on a pedestal for winning gold medals for Australia one day, then back to normal life facing barriers and discrimination the next. But it's not just our athletes who experience this. Unfortunately, every day people with disability, and older people, experience harmful attitudes in the form of direct discrimination – an offence under Australian law. Sometimes our attitudes are shaped by 'unconscious bias', the assumptions we make about people with disability and older people, and their capacity to make decisions and think independently. We can all make errors – just apologise and keep on learning!

Here are some examples of discriminatory language and the preferred options you can use to describe people with disability and older adults:

DISCRIMINATORY LANGUAGE	PREFERRED LANGUAGE
afflicted/crippled by suffers from handicapped special needs	has a disability lives with disability has a chronic health condition women with disability, children with disability, etc
oldies biddies old man / woman	older people seniors the aged
autistic high-functioning autism profoundly autistic	person with autism neuro-atypical neurodivergent
confined to a wheelchair wheelchair-bound	wheelchair user person who uses a wheelchair
paraplegic quadriplegic	person with paraplegia person with quadriplegia
special needs mentally retarded simple	person with cognitive disability person with intellectual disability person with a learning disability

We welcome diverse abilities and ages!

- ☐ Staff are equally welcoming and friendly to all, regardless of age/ability.
- ☐ Staff are attentive and listen to customers' requests.
- ☐ Staff speak clearly and without condescension.
- ☐ Staff understand different needs and are confident to offer assistance.
- ☐ Staff are patient and ensure customers don't feel 'hurried along'.
- ☐ Customer feedback is actively sought, in ways for all ages and abilities.
- ☐ We actively consider and pursue employing mature age workers and people with disability.

Make your marketing and communications age and ability inclusive.

- ☐ Are fonts large and clear? Is there a high colour contrast between text and background?
- ☐ Do images in communication materials feature a range of ages and abilities?
- ☐ Is your website easy to navigate and up to date? You could have it tested for accessibility.
- ☐ Is the business well signed internally and externally?
- ☐ Are contact details printed on materials and easy to find? It's good to offer a range of contact points from telephone, to online and in person.

Ambience

- ☐ Excessive noise and loud music should be minimised where possible. Consider developing 'silent sessions'; for example, recreation sessions suitable for families with autism or sensory needs.
- ☐ Staff speak clearly and without condescension.

Design and accessibility

- ☐ Providing seating (with arm and back rests).
- ☐ Furniture with rounded edges to reduce possible bumps.
- ☐ Adequate space to maneuver, turn around and avoid knocks.
- ☐ Popular products within reach on lower-middle shelves.
- ☐ Seniors and carers' discounts, including membership to the seniors and carers' card programs.
- ☐ Lightweight, open or automatic doors.
- ☐ Home delivery service.
- ☐ Regular checks for trip or slip hazards.
- ☐ Personal service is available to self-checkouts.

What is one new strategy you will implement over the next year to make your business more disability and/or age friendly? _____

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