



# Good access. Good business.

Become an accessible business





# Cardinia

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Cardinia Shire Council

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# Contents

Introduction .....	<b>4</b>
Disability is diverse .....	<b>5</b>
Customers with disability.....	<b>6</b>
Benefits of being an inclusive business .....	<b>8</b>
How to make your business more accessible.....	<b>10</b>
Power Up program .....	<b>12</b>
Policy and legislation .....	<b>13</b>
Further information .....	<b>15</b>



# Introduction

Local government has a role in encouraging and supporting active participation in community life and ensuring that its services are accessible and inclusive for people with disability.

‘Good access. Good business.’ is one way Cardinia Shire Council supports local businesses to meet several of its Access and Inclusion Disability Strategy and Action Plan outcomes, including:

- reducing barriers to people with a disability in accessing goods, services, and facilities
- promoting inclusion and participation of people with a disability in the community
- achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with disability
- reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment.

‘Good access. Good business’ helps businesses understand why accessibility is important for people with disability, responsibilities, and how good access benefits both customers and your business.

This document has been produced in partnership with Cardinia Shire Access and Inclusion Committee.

# Disability is diverse

Disability can occur at any time in life. Disability can be visible (10%) or invisible (90%), temporary or permanent.

People can be born with or acquire a disability suddenly and some people have more than one disability.

In Australia, about 1 in 6 people have a disability and this increases to 50% after the age of 65 years<sup>1</sup>.

47% of Australians have one or more chronic conditions<sup>2</sup>. Chronic conditions can impact inclusion and participation in community life.



## Disability is how people:



**Move**



**Hear**



**See**



**Talk**



**Understand  
the world**

<sup>1</sup> People with disability in Australia, Prevalence of disability - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare ([aihw.gov.au](http://aihw.gov.au))

<sup>2</sup> Chronic conditions and multimorbidity - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare ([aihw.gov.au](http://aihw.gov.au))

# Customers with disability

Most complaints received about businesses, relate to the poor experience of customers with disability that could be resolved.



**29%** of customers with disability reported they stopped a purchase because they were not being treated with respect.<sup>3</sup>



**26%** of customers with disability have discouraged others from using a product or services based on their reputation for disability and inclusion.<sup>3</sup>



**1 in 3** people with disability were positively influenced by an organisation's reputation as being supportive of people with disability.<sup>3</sup>

People with disability experience more disadvantage than other Australians.

50% of all complaints to the Australian Human Rights Commission in terms of goods and services, were made under the Disability Discrimination Act.<sup>4</sup>

Often people with disability encounter barriers accessing businesses and can experience discrimination.

This can include:

- not being able to access goods or services
- assistance animals denied entry
- carers not supported to provide care

<sup>3</sup> Missing out: The business case for customer diversity (2017) Australian Human Rights Commission

<sup>4</sup> Annual Report 2022-23 | Australian Human Rights Commission

People with disability make up a sizable segment of consumers, along with their friends, family, and coworkers. Customers in large groups look for businesses for their events and activities that cater for a variety of needs.

- **90%** of people living with disability have a source of personal income, this is equal to the rest of the population<sup>5</sup>.
  - In addition to an income, **17%** of Victorians with disability are recipients of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)<sup>6</sup>.
  - The average NDIS plan in Victoria has increased to **\$113,000**. There is 16.5million dollars of unspent NDIS dollars<sup>7</sup> for people living in Cardinia Shire, the amount across Victoria is much larger.
- Funds within these plans can be spent on:
    - consumables
    - transport
    - social and community participation
    - home modifications
    - health and wellbeing
    - learning
    - aids, equipment and more

“I don’t go into my local bakery because there are only steps to enter.”

“We have NDIS funding for social activities, but we leave our local community to spend this money for accessible activities.”

<sup>5</sup> People with disability in Australia, Summary - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (aihw.gov.au)

<sup>6</sup> Victoria | NDIS

<sup>7</sup> NDIS Pricing updates 2024 available from Pricing updates | NDIS

# Benefits of being an inclusive business

All people, including people with disability, should be able to participate in everyday life.

Businesses have a role in contributing to an inclusive society. Businesses that are socially responsible are more likely to increase customer loyalty and reputation.

When people with disability access a business, profits increase. They may also bring family, friends, coworkers, and social clubs, increasing your business exposure and reputation.

With so many online options today, people still enjoy physical options for shopping, dining, entertainment, tourism, and essential services.

We can all experience temporary disability at various life stages.

People with a variety of needs benefit from good access including parents with prams and people with various mobility needs.

Businesses are also employees of people with disability, creating a diverse and inclusive workplace.

People with disability are loyal customers to businesses that are inclusive and cater for their needs. Good customer service and access result in return visits and word of mouth.

Are you missing out on potential customers? You will attract more customers by providing better access to your business!

\$13 for every \$1 spent is the potential return on investment in having universally accessible environments as shown in studies and a 20-25% increase in retail turnover compared to non-accessible environments<sup>8</sup>.



Design your business for 80% of the population = miss out on up to 25% more business.



Cater for 20% of the population = reach 100% of the business market.



<sup>8</sup> Thomascos, N. & Mcdonald, R. (2012), Economic benefits of universal access: Creating supportive, accessible and economically viable environments in the City of Melbourne. Final Report. Melbourne: City of Melbourne.

# How to make your business more accessible

Digital communication is an opportunity to promote access. Customers look for information before choosing places to visit.

Keep online information up to date and actively promote ways your business is accessible:

- Simple website layout.
- Ensure text and font are easy to read and colour contrast is strong.
- Include images of your business online with descriptions.
- Accessibility widgets allow customers modify websites to their needs helping your business reach more people.
- Multiple contact options that are easy to find.
- Booking options that include accessibility needs of customers.
- User friendly forms.
- Consider an accessibility page on your website promoting how you accommodate access needs.



“My wife and I go to our new favourite restaurant all the time because there is enough room between tables”.

There are many things businesses can do to be more accessible without being difficult or expensive.

- Clear signage with descriptive pictures that are easy to understand throughout venue.
- Welcoming and trained staff: good customer service to assist customers with any needs or items.
- Physical access: clear entry way, aisles and pathways, space between tables, chair for resting, counter can be reached, placement of products and fixtures.
- Large print materials.
- Communication boards can be a great way for employees to assist customers.
- Accommodate guide dogs and assistance dogs.
- Consider a charging station for mobility aids.
- Closed captions on television screens.
- Quiet section for people with hearing loss or sensory sensitivity.
- Good lighting.
- The National Companion Card aids fairer ticketing practices, allowing a person's care attendant free entry into participating venues and events. Your business can consider becoming an affiliate. For more information, visit **[www.companioncard.vic.gov.au](http://www.companioncard.vic.gov.au)**

For accessibility checklists and guides, please visit:  
**[www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/make-your-business-accessible](http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/make-your-business-accessible)**

# Power Up program



The Power Up Program is a Cardinia Shire initiative where power outlets across the Shire are allocated to users of electronic mobility chairs or scooters for recharging.

Improve your customer experience by applying for Council's Power Up program. Customers using electronic mobility aids can recharge at your business, increasing customer interaction and satisfaction.



To check if your eligible and to apply, visit [www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/powerupprogram](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/powerupprogram)

# Policy and legislation

## **Businesses who are not accessible could be breaking laws.**

Your business could be at risk of complaints via the Disability Discrimination Act 2006 and Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

There are Government policies to support your business.

It is within your best interests to adhere to these laws and grow your business.

### **For more information:**

- Australian Human Rights Commission  
[www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)
- Victorian Equal Opportunity & Human Rights Commission  
[www.humanrights.vic.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au)



## Guide dogs, seeing eye dogs and assistance dogs

Employers and goods and service providers must not discriminate against someone because they have an assistance dog.

It is unlawful to refuse to provide service to a person with a disability because they have an assistance dog.

You also cannot charge the person extra or ask them to keep the assistance dog somewhere else.<sup>9</sup>



## Local Laws

There are also various local laws that your business is required to follow including creating safe and accessible public spaces and pedestrian access.

For example, if you decide to add furniture on the footpath or an outdoor eating area, you may need to obtain a permit from Council.

These local laws are designed to ensure that the consumer experience remains as enjoyable as possible for everyone.

For more information contact Cardinia Shire Council on 1300 787 624 or visit [www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/locallaws](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/locallaws)

<sup>9</sup> Guide dogs, seeing eye dogs and assistance dogs | Dogs | Animal Welfare Victoria | Livestock and animals | Agriculture Victoria

# Further information

## **Access and inclusion in Cardinia Shire**

[www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/accessandinclusion](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/accessandinclusion)

## **Cardinia Business**

[www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/cardiniabusiness](http://www.cardinia.vic.gov.au/cardiniabusiness)

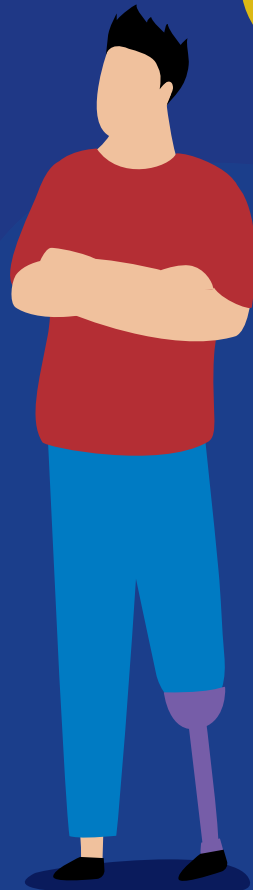
## **If your business is looking at running events**

Cardinia Shire has an event planning guide and an accessibility checklist available.

For a copy of this checklist, please phone 1300 787 624 or email [mail@cardinia.vic.gov.au](mailto:mail@cardinia.vic.gov.au)

## **For business and economic profile data**

[economy.id.com.au/cardinia](http://economy.id.com.au/cardinia)



## **Cardinia Shire Council**

### **Civic Centre**

20 Siding Avenue, Officer

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### **National Relay Service (NRS)**

TTY: 133 677 (ask for 1300 787 624)

### **Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay):**

1300 555 727 (ask for 1300 787 624)

### **Translator Interpretation Service**

131 450 (ask for 1300 787 624)

