

INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

Supporting the inclusion of people with a disability



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COMMUNICATE

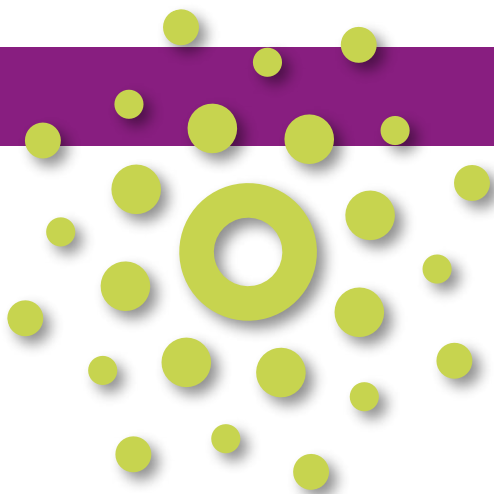
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WELCOME

WELCOME



**This booklet is available in alternate formats
on request. Please contact:**

City of Casey

MetroAccess Officer

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Fax: (03) 9704 9544

TIS: 131 450

NRS:133 677

Speak and Listen: 1300 555 727

Email: caseycc@casey.vic.gov.au

WELCOME

INTRODUCTION

Information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics shows that an estimated 13,510 Casey residents - or 5.8 per cent of the population - have disabilities causing profound or severe restriction of communication, mobility and personal self-care.

Overall, approximately 19 per cent of Casey residents have a disability. This figure includes children, adults and our older citizens. With a current population of approximately 260,000 and 6000 people moving into the area each year, the City of Casey's population is forecast to reach approximately 450,000 by 2036.

This information also shows that there are 21,870 residents in Casey with disabilities that can limit their community interaction, educational opportunities and employment prospects.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this booklet is to help you feel comfortable and confident when you interact with people with disabilities in community settings. It aims to provide practical and positive information for people who have had limited experience connecting and communicating with people with disabilities.

This publication reflects the City of Casey's commitment to supporting the development of welcoming and inclusive communities for all people.



WELCOME

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This booklet has been developed as part of the City of Casey's MetroAccess program, an initiative funded by the Department of Human Services.

The City of Casey wishes to acknowledge the valuable contribution of community members who gave feedback on format, design and content of the Inclusive Communication Booklet.

COMMUNICATE

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PEAK DISABILITY BODIES

Australian Hearing

Visit hearing.com.au

Brain Injury Australia

Visit braininjuryaustralia.org.au

Better Hearing Australia Victoria

Visit betterhearing.org.au

CRS Australia

Visit crsaustralia.gov.au

Deaf Australia

Visit deafau.org.au

**Department of Education,
Employment and Workplace Relations**

Visit deewr.gov.au

**Department of Families, Housing, Community
Services and Indigenous Affairs**

Visit fahcsia.gov.au

Guide Dogs Victoria

Visit guidedogsvictoria.com.au

Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission

Visit hreoc.gov.au

Mental Health Council of Australia

Visit mhca.org.au

National Disability Services

Visit nds.org.au

Spinal Cord Injuries Australia

Visit scia.org.au

Vision Australia

Visit visionaustralia.org.au

COMMUNICATE

When communicating with people with disabilities the most effective approach is to be honest, sensitive and flexible. Treat people as people, regardless of how they look, speak, dress or move around. Above all be respectful, polite, considerate and don't hesitate to ask questions.

The accepted terminology, 'person with a disability', puts the emphasis on the person, not the limitations or disability.

Address people who have disabilities by their first names only when extending the same familiarity to all others.

SAY	AVOID SAYING
person with a disability	victim, suffers from, deformed
person with cerebral palsy or vision impairment etc.	afflicted by/ with, or blind/can't see
person with a physical disability	crippled, the crippled, crippling, invalid, spastic
person who uses a wheelchair	wheelchair bound, confined to a wheelchair
person with a hearing impairment, hearing loss or person who is deaf	deaf and dumb, deaf mute, mute
accessible parking, accessible toilets	disabled toilets, handicapped parking

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PHYSICAL DISABILITY

A physical disability is a condition which may limit participation in one or more basic physical activities such as the persons ability to be independently mobile, walking, climbing stairs, lifting, carrying or reaching.

When communicating remember to:

- Communicate at eye level with the person, sit down if needed
- Only ever touch or push a person's wheelchair if you are asked
- Don't shout when speaking
- Speak directly to the person, not to someone who may be with them
- When crossing a kerb, ask the person if they would like to be pushed forward or backward
- Make sure that pathways and aisles are clear and free from clutter
- Never presume that because a person isn't speaking that they cannot understand or hear you
- Try to be prepared and learn where accessible entries and ramps are located

Always remember that a person's wheelchair is an extension of themselves. Don't lean or hang on their chair as this action can be quite disturbing.



COMMUNICATE

SPEECH IMPAIRMENT

People with a speech impairment may have difficulty expressing themselves and being understood.

People with speech impairment may use additional methods or aids to support their preferred communication style. These may be by using body language, Auslan or sign language, communication boards or visual prompts.

When communicating try to:

- Be in a quiet space, less background noise is better
- Try not to raise your voice
- Be patient and give the person plenty of time
- If you haven't understood, ask the person to repeat
- Ask if the person has an alternative method of communication
- Consider using a pen and paper to communicate
- If the person uses a communication partner, remember to always speak to the person, not their partner

When communicating with a person with speech impairment, if you are having difficulty understanding what their message is, don't pretend that you do. Some people may have difficulty understanding speech as well, but many do not, don't assume.

COMMUNICATE

HEARING IMPAIRMENT

People with hearing impairment may be profoundly deaf or have mild to moderate hearing loss. Many people with hearing impairment have the ability to lip read, read written text, write or speak.

When communicating always try to:

- Face the person that you are speaking with
- Make sure your mouth is clearly visible to assist with lip reading
- If you need to get the person's attention, wave or gently tap them on the shoulder
- Speak in a normal manner. Shouting distends the lips and distorts the sounds - it also implies anger
- If the person has a sign language interpreter, speak to the person, not the interpreter
- Communicate by writing if speech is not working for you both
- Communicate in a well lit area with reduced background noise
- Use short, clear sentences and questions

Try to relax while communicating with a person with hearing impairment. The more at ease you feel, the easier conversation will flow, enhancing understanding. Use natural gestures during conversation as this aids communication.

Further tools to support communication with people with hearing impairment.



National Relay Service: For the deaf and hearing impaired
www.relayservice.com.au/



Vicdeaf: Provider of specialised services to deaf and hard of hearing people in Victoria.
www.vicdeaf.com.au

COMMUNICATE

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY

An intellectual disability is sometimes also referred to as a cognitive impairment. People with intellectual disability process information differently. This can affect the way a person learns or interacts with other people.

People with an intellectual disability vary greatly in their abilities, so you must always respond to the individual and not make assumptions about their needs and capabilities.

When communicating and interacting with people with an intellectual disability:

- Speak directly to the person, not their support person, or someone who may be assisting them
- Allow yourself enough time, so that the person may set their own pace
- Be considerate of the persons needs
- Be patient
- Allow the person time to express their ideas and join conversation. Don't finish sentences for them, or rush their speech
- Seek alternate prompts to include the person in conversation, this may be pictures or gestures
- Offer to write instruction down. If you are asked to do so, ensure your instruction is clear and concise

Remember that all people, regardless of disability, are individuals. Everyone deserves equal respect.

COMMUNICATE

VISION IMPAIRMENT

Many people with vision impairment have some degree of sight. Some people use additional aids to assist them. This may be a guide dog, a white cane or they may be accompanied by a sighted person who is supporting them.

When communicating with a person with vision impairment:

- Introduce yourself
- Use a normal tone of voice, vision and hearing impairments are not related
- If you are asked to guide a person, offer them your arm and allow them to be in control of any movement
- Be specific when giving direction. A general 'over there' is not good enough
- When seating a vision impaired person, place their hand on the back of the seat and tell them your intention
- Good clear lighting is helpful not only to the vision impaired person, but yourself
- If using written text, the preferred font is black on white

Keep in mind that if a vision impaired person is accompanied by a Guide Dog, this dog is at work. Do not pat or distract the dog.



MENTAL ILLNESS

During their lifetime, one in five people will develop a mental health issue. Mental illness comes in many forms, many of which may be successfully treated and/or managed with counselling, various therapies, support and medication.

Changes in expected behaviour are often the result of mental illness altering a person's thinking and ability to act and respond to situations or circumstance in an acceptable manner. Social interaction is often difficult.

When interacting with a person who is experiencing mental illness:

- See the person, not the symptom
- If the person is disorientated or responding in an inappropriate manner, allow the person space and initially avoid eye contact, touch or confrontation
- Show understanding and compassion, empathise without necessarily agreeing
- Ask how you can help, they may ask you to simply sit with them, or call an emergency number they have with them
- Minimise confusion, speak in short, clear sentences, remove background noise and distractions
- Remember to always remain calm
- Create a non-threatening environment

When interacting with a person experiencing mental illness, remember to not take anything personally. Their actions or words are rarely directed toward you, you just happen to be there. Respect the person's situation and don't pressure them into receiving assistance from you if they don't want it.

COMMUNICATE

ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY

A person with an acquired brain injury (ABI) has sustained their injury after birth. This may be the result of an accident or stroke. An ABI may result in the loss of sensory, physical, cognitive, emotional and / or independent functioning.

A person with an ABI can experience changes in their behaviour and personality and well as changes to their physical and sensory abilities. They may have an increased difficulty in asking for, retaining and understanding information. They may also experience difficulty in following instruction or direction.

Some points to consider when interacting with a person with an ABI:

- Use easy, simple language
- Speak clearly and concisely
- Don't jump from topic to topic during conversation
- Converse in a quiet place
- Reduce background noise and distraction
- Give your attention to the person
- Be patient with the person
- Repeat information
- Write down information if needed
- Don't assume the person has understood direction
- Don't assume that you have understood the meaning behind what the person was saying

SUPPORT

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SUPPORT



SUPPORT

ACCESS OBLIGATIONS

The Victorian Government has in place a Disability Framework that sets out how communities and organisations can support the inclusion of all people. Community organisations need to do whatever is reasonable to help support inclusion of people with disabilities.

This includes being able to:

- Safely enter and leave a building (including in an emergency)
- Get around inside independently
- Use the facilities including tea room and toilet

These rights are protected by the Disability Discrimination Act (1992), a federal law, and the Equal Opportunity Act (1995), a state law.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

The practice of good customer service is underpinned by welcoming and serving your clients with professionalism and equality, regardless of disability, ethnicity, cultural background, language or faith.

By practising excellent customer service to all people, businesses may be enhanced by further recommendations by the public. To support customer service for people with a disability, the City of Casey has produced a *Missed Business Guide* for businesses wanting to become more accessible.

Please contact City of Casey Customer Service for a copy of the ***Missed Business Guide***:

Tel: (03) 9705 5200

www.casey.vic.gov.au

SUPPORT

SPORT AND RECREATION

People with disabilities play sport and recreation for the same reasons as everyone else - for fun, fitness, social interaction, self esteem and the feeling of being a part of the community.

Sports clubs, leisure facilities and associations can play a significant role in engaging people with a disability in the community, as well gaining the benefits of being an inclusive and welcoming club.

Why include people with a disability in your club, facility or association?

Including people with a disability in your club or organisation is about giving people an opportunity to participate in different ways. This could include playing competition, being a social member, supporting, coaching or volunteering as an official or administrator.

Sports clubs, leisure facilities and associations benefit from encouraging a more diverse membership. Improving physical access for people with a disability and by being open and welcoming may also encourage other people and sporting groups/organisations to join in.





Benefits of being an inclusive club include:

- Increased membership and participation
- More diverse club membership
- New volunteers, officials and spectators
- Enhanced club profile within the community
- Inclusive and sustainable programs and competitions
- Connections to local communities and service networks
- Access to funding opportunities

The City of Casey Access for All Abilities program can provide advice and training to sports clubs, leisure facilities and association on how to become a more inclusive club.

For more information please contact the City of Casey Access for All Abilities program on (03) 9705 5200 or email leisure@casey.vic.gov.au.

MORE INFORMATION
MORE INFORMATION



MORE INFORMATION

METRO ACCESS

What is MetroAccess?

MetroAccess has been designed to provide a comprehensive response to the key issues experienced by people with disabilities in local communities. MetroAccess is based on a whole of community approach to strengthening communities so that they are more inclusive of people with a disability, their families and carers.

The City of Casey MetroAccess Program is funded by the Department of Human Services (Southern Region Disability Services Branch) and is implemented in partnership with the City of Casey.

The key objectives of MetroAccess are:

- To mobilise and support people with disabilities to optimise participation in the life of their community
- To build and strengthen the community's capacity to provide support to people with disabilities and their families
- To facilitate integrated local community planning and co-ordination which engages and involves people with disabilities and their families and disability services
- To work with support providers to enhance their capacity to provide relevant and appropriate support in the community
- To improve access to information about relevant services and activities available to people with disabilities in their community

To find out more about MetroAccess in the City of Casey please contact the City of Casey Customer Service:

Tel: (03) 9705 5200

www.casey.vic.gov.au

MORE INFORMATION

CITY OF CASEY COMMUNITY STRENGTHENING

What we do

MetroAccess sits within the City of Casey's Community Strengthening department. We encourage and enhance community development through the organisation of arts, events and activities for community participation and volunteer participation.

Our services

- Community activities
- Community group support
- Volunteer participation
- Community grants
- Home and Community Care

Contacting us

For all enquiries phone the City of Casey Customer Service:

Tel: (03) 9705 5200

www.casey.vic.gov.au



MORE INFORMATION

SUPPORTING PUBLICATIONS AND WEBSITES

For all enquiries on Metro Access publications or relevant publications (listed below) phone the City of Casey Customer Service:

Tel: (03) 9705 5200

www.casey.vic.gov.au

Disability Services Directory

Provides information on programs and services available for people with disability, their families and carers in the City of Casey and neighbouring regions.

Missed Business Guide

This guide aims to help small business owners understand how to improve access to goods and services for a large part of our community that may be missing out - customers who have a disability.

Disability Access and Inclusion Plan

Demonstrates an enhanced awareness of, and commitment to, addressing the planning, social, cultural and economic barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities who visit, live or work in Casey. The objectives and strategies are designed to integrate their awareness into all responsibilities, activities and services of Council.

Access for All Abilities Newsletter

Receive our regular news by email. You can unsubscribe at any time.

Volunteering with City of Casey

From delivering Meals on Wheels, providing recreation opportunities for people with disabilities, using creative talents in the arts or being involved in local sporting clubs there is a volunteer opportunity to suit every resident. The backbone of the vibrant Casey Community is reinforced by a lively culture of volunteering.



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