



GOOD ACCESS =
GOOD BUSINESS



CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Good Access = Good Business	2
Why good access is important	4
Rights and responsibilities	6
Making your business welcoming	8
Making your business accessible	
Entrance	10
Furniture fittings	12
Making your business communication friendly	16
Making written information easy to read	16
Useful contacts	18
How accessible is your business?	20

INTRODUCTION



This guide has been developed primarily for local businesses and service providers. It will help you to increase your knowledge and understanding of what good access is, why it is important, what your legal responsibilities are as a business and how you can make your business more accessible for people with disabilities.

Small changes can be made to your business that will improve accessibility, which can attract and include new customers who have a disability. Many of these ideas are easy to put into practice, however, some will need professional advice so they are done according to the regulations. The accompanying checklist will assist you in identifying any accessibility issues at your business. By identifying areas where a small change, with minimal or no expense, can make a big difference to all customers, you can increase your customer base.

GOOD ACCESS = GOOD BUSINESS



**Everyone
benefits from
good access**

This guide will assist you in improving access to your business.

Small changes can be made to make your goods and services accessible to attract customers who have a disability, parents with prams and our older community members who use mobility aids.

In Mackay, 4.55 per cent of the population (or 5146 people) have the need for assistance in core activities (Remplan). In Australia, one in six people are estimated to have a disability or about 4.4 million people (AIHW 2020). When you include people with temporary disabilities resulting from injury or illness, together with their friends and families, the number of people affected by disability is bigger still and all these people are potentially your customers.

When we say disability, we are talking about people who:

- are blind or have trouble seeing
- are deaf or have trouble hearing
- have reduced mobility and may use a wheelchair, electric scooter, walking frame, crutches etc.
- have trouble reaching and holding things
- have trouble speaking
- have trouble understanding
- need to rest often due to illness or injury.

Providing good access also helps:

- older people with walking aids
- parents or carers with young children, prams or strollers
- people who are short in stature
- people with heavy bags or a shopping trolley
- delivery people
- staff wellbeing and safety.

WHY GOOD ACCESS IS IMPORTANT

Providing good access makes your business available for people of all ages and abilities. Not only will it help you to broaden your customer base, but you are also being supportive of people with disabilities who often face barriers as part of their everyday lives.



ONE IN SIX PEOPLE HAVE A DISABILITY

That's 20 per cent of potential customers you could be missing out on. It means there are no physical or social barriers that prevent customers from finding your business, moving around easily and receiving good service.




IT'S THE LAW

Customers with disabilities should be able to access your goods and services just like any other customer. If a person with disability can't access your business or service then it is within their right to make a complaint under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.



DISABILITY DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE

A disability can happen to anyone at any time in their life; it can be short-term or lifelong.

A photograph of a man with short brown hair, wearing a blue and white striped long-sleeved shirt, smiling as he hands a small red tomato to another person whose hand is visible in the foreground. They are in a greenhouse with tomato plants in the background. The image is decorated with colorful diagonal stripes in the top right corner and a dark grey rounded rectangle in the top left.

**Being
accessible
broadens your
customer
base**



**NOT ALL DISABILITIES
ARE PHYSICAL**

90 per cent of disabilities are invisible.

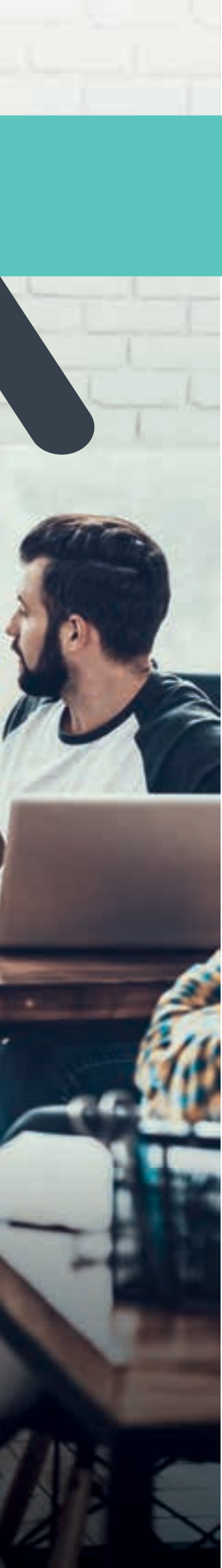


More than half of the people aged 55 years and over
have difficulties with mobility, sight and hearing.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES



Improving access is likely to make it safer for everyone!



As a business owner or operator, improving access to your business will also assist you in meeting your legal responsibilities.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) it is illegal to discriminate against a person with disability by:

- refusing access to or use of the premises or facilities, or setting special conditions of use
- failing to provide a means of entry to the premises
- requiring a person to leave a premise or stop using facilities without reason
- refusing to provide goods and services, or setting special conditions on provision to a person with disability
- providing goods and services in a way that is not accessible to a person with disability.

Making your business more accessible is also likely to make it safer for both customers and staff. This not only makes for a more satisfying experience for people with disability, but it could influence your public liability and workplace safety responsibilities.

You are not expected to make alterations that will cause you unjustifiable hardship – for instance, if you will not be able to cover the expense – however you are expected to seek alternative options.

MAKING YOUR BUSINESS WELCOMING

One of the easiest ways to improve access is to change the way you think about customer service for people with disabilities.

Simple improvements include:

- undertaking disability awareness training with your staff
- placing your “becoming accessible” sticker in a visible position
- making your customers and potential future customers aware of your accessibility by promoting features which make your business welcoming.

Consider:

- access into your business
- alternative contact methods such as SMS, email, hearing loop, website and National Relay Service
- online shopping service and home delivery service.



Guide dogs and assistance animals

People with guide dogs and assistance animals can go into all public areas including restaurants, taxis and hospitals.

The right of a person accompanied by an assistance animal are covered under the Domestic Animals Act 1994 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Both these acts override the Food Act 1984 which prohibits dogs from entering food premises.



A close-up photograph of a person's hand firmly gripping the handle of a wheelchair. The wheelchair has a silver frame and thin spokes. In the background, another wheelchair is partially visible. A solid red banner spans the top of the image, and a teal-colored circle is positioned in the lower-left quadrant. A green diagonal shape is on the right side.

MAKING YOUR BUSINESS ACCESSIBLE

**Make your
business more
attractive with
a few simple
changes**



Entrance

The pathway into your business should be:

- free from signs, tree branches, furniture and displays
- where possible, at least 1.8m from the building line or shopfront
- made from a non-slip surface, especially on any ramps
- sufficiently lighted to identify trip hazards and the light should be constant throughout your business space, especially around service counters
- painted at the entrance to your business in a colour that contrasts with the surroundings
- safety markings should be present on glass

The door to your business should:

- have safety markings so people do not walk into the door especially if it has a lot of reflective glass
- be made so it is less heavy to open or automatic which benefits all customers
- have lever-style door handles that are 900-1100mm off the ground*
- have a doorway that is wide enough for people with walking frames, wheelchairs and prams to move through easily
- have doormats that are secure and level with the floor
- and install a handrail.

If you have steps and cannot replace them with a ramp or level entry, consider:

- making available a portable ramp
- having a second entrance with better access.

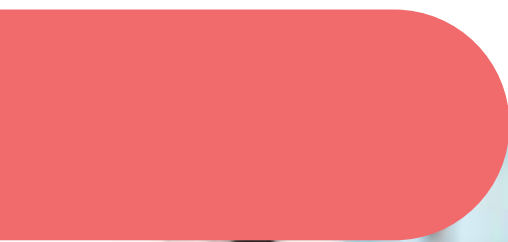
**Australian Standard (AS1428)*

MAKING YOUR BUSINESS ACCESSIBLE

Furniture fittings

Everyone should be able to move around your business, find products or access services, browse, reach items and pay for them the same way as people without a disability. They should also be able to get assistance easily if required.

- + Make aisles of 1.2m wide allow room for wheelchairs, walkers and prams to turn*
- + Aisles need to always be kept clear, free of protruding displays
- + Floors should be non-slip and clear of trip hazards (keep a visual check)
- + Think about best placement of fittings and fixtures, where they won't compromise independent movement
- + Consider customers who are blind or have low vision. They will appreciate becoming familiar with your business layout, so you can help by leaving items such as products and displays in an unchanged location
- + The counter should have one low section for people in a wheelchair (830-870mm from floor level)*

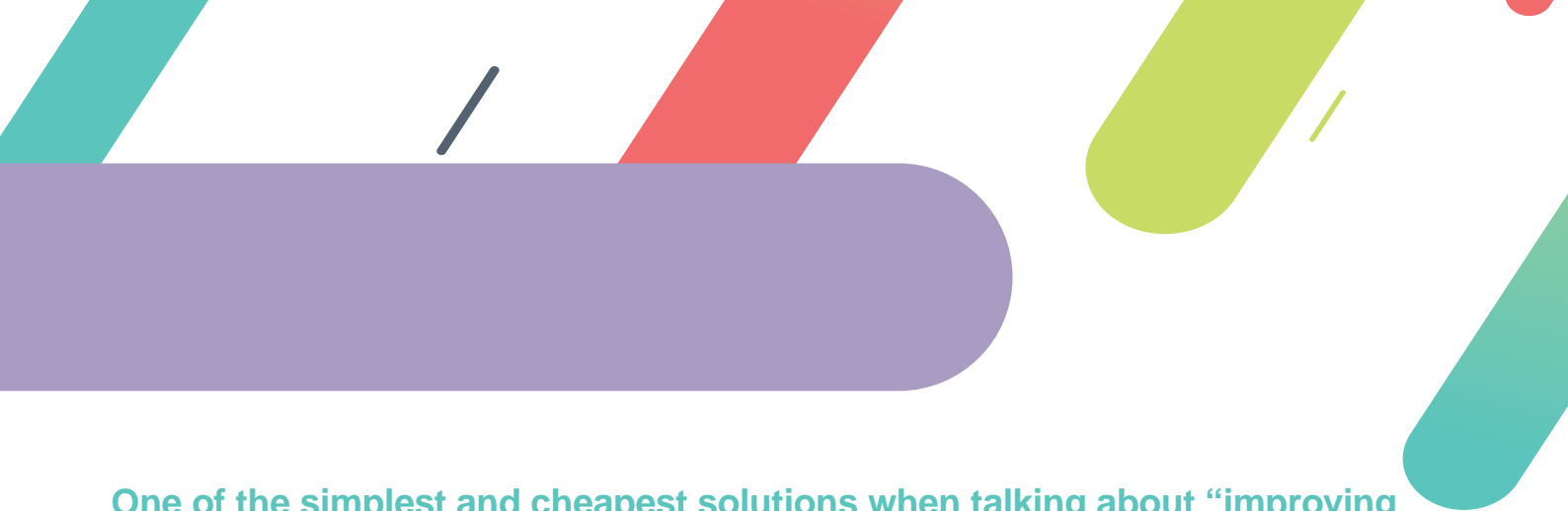


- + Customer waiting areas ideally would have chairs available with and without armrests*
- + Tables and desks need to be high enough for a wheelchair to sit comfortably. Chairs may need to be removed and legs repositioned. A modesty panel may hinder knees
- + EFTPOS machines with features for customers with blindness or low vision will be very well received
- + Wireless EFTPOS or one with a long cord will enhance privacy for those in a wheelchair
- + Accessible toilets require easy manoeuvrability of a wheelchair, so this means being free of clutter and stored items
- + If you don't have an accessible toilet, please make sure your staff know the location of the closest one.

**Australian Standard (AS1428)*

MAKING YOUR BUSINESS COMMUNICATION FRIENDLY





One of the simplest and cheapest solutions when talking about “improving access” is to change the way you think about customer service for seniors, frail residents and people with a disability. Communication difficulties for customers can be due to many different reasons including stroke, brain injury, Parkinson’s disease, cerebral palsy, dementia, stutter, non-English speaking background to name a few.

People with communication difficulties may have:

- no or very little speech
- unclear speech
- difficulty understanding questions
- difficulty reading and/or spelling

People with vision loss may find it difficult or impossible to read text or print matter.

Other ways that people may communicate are through:

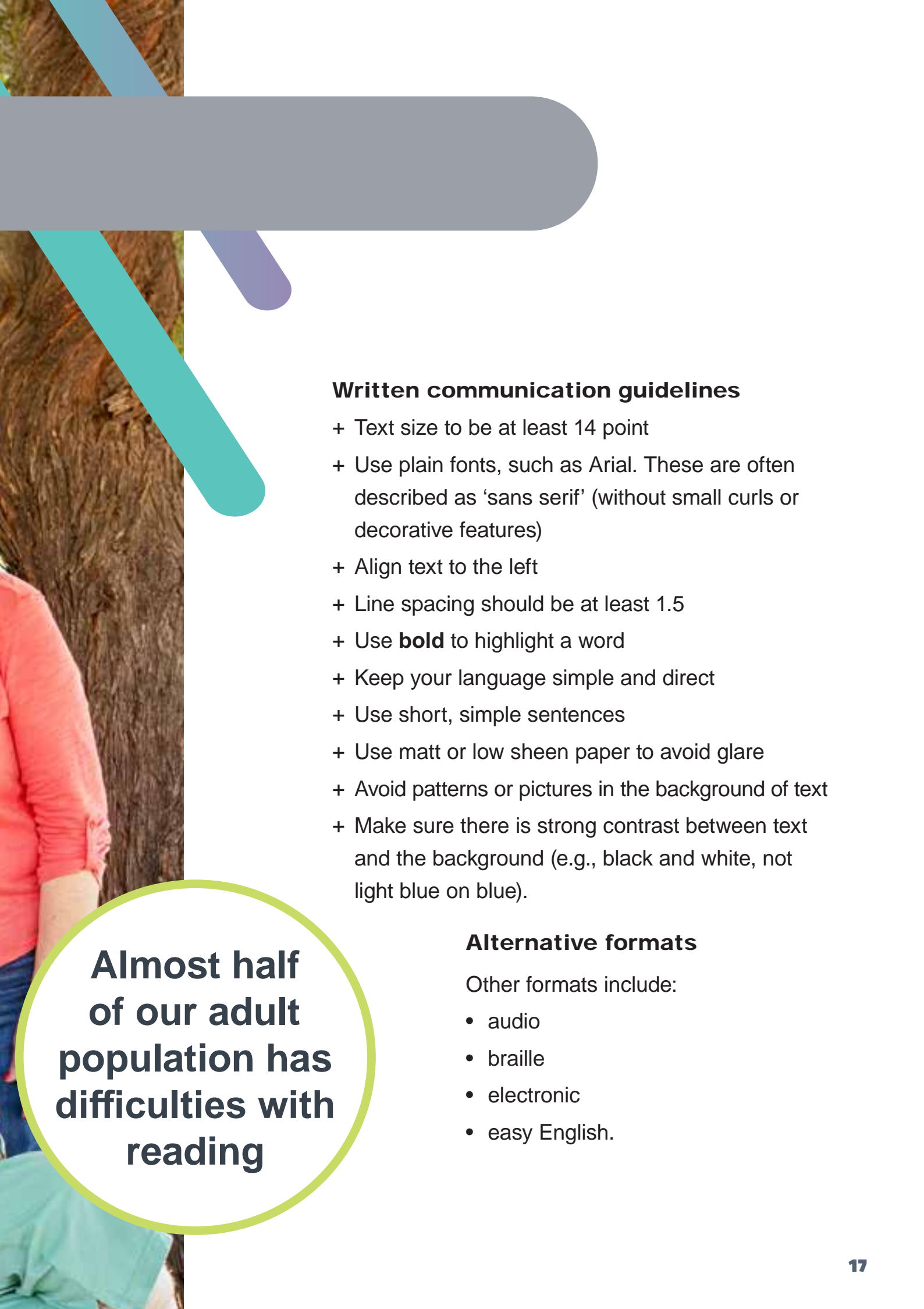
- pointing, gestures, facial expression
- writing
- pointing to pictures on a communication board
- an electronic device helping customers with communication difficulties

Ways you can help include:

- be patient
- speak in a normal clear voice
- speak to the customer directly
- ask how you can help with communication
- ask one question at a time and wait for an answer before speaking again
- ask questions that need a “yes”, “no” or short answer
- don’t pretend to understand
- ask the customer to point to or show you what they want
- have a communication or picture board. Examples can be downloaded for free from the Queensland Government website
- the National Relay Service and the Automotive Telephone Interpretive Service are Australia-wide telephone access services that relay calls.

MAKING WRITTEN INFORMATION EASY TO READ





**Almost half
of our adult
population has
difficulties with
reading**

Written communication guidelines

- + Text size to be at least 14 point
- + Use plain fonts, such as Arial. These are often described as 'sans serif' (without small curls or decorative features)
- + Align text to the left
- + Line spacing should be at least 1.5
- + Use **bold** to highlight a word
- + Keep your language simple and direct
- + Use short, simple sentences
- + Use matt or low sheen paper to avoid glare
- + Avoid patterns or pictures in the background of text
- + Make sure there is strong contrast between text and the background (e.g., black and white, not light blue on blue).

Alternative formats

Other formats include:

- audio
- braille
- electronic
- easy English.

USEFUL CONTACTS



Remember:

Not all of the suggestions mentioned in this guide will be possible or even feasible for your specific business. Nor is the list of suggestions exhaustive. The improvements that you take on don't have to be extravagantly expensive. A combination of providing easier entry and manoeuvrability and some staff training will go a long way to making your business more attractive to disabled people. As a starting point, scan your business premises with seniors, frail residents and people with a disability in mind.

For further information

Human Right and Equal Opportunity Commission

Ph: (02) 9284 9600 or
1300 369 711 (toll free)
www.hreoc.gov.au

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

www.qld.gov.au/disability/legal-and-rights

SEDA Seeing Eye Dogs Australia

Phone: 1300 847 466
www.seda.org.au

Association of Consultants in Access Australia

Phone: 03 5221 2820
Email secretary@access.asn.au
www.access.asn.au

Companion Card

Phone: 137468
Email: companioncare@dhhs.vic.gov.au
[www.qld.gov.au/disability/out-and-about/
subsidies-concessions-passes/companion-
card](http://www.qld.gov.au/disability/out-and-about/subsidies-concessions-passes/companion-card)

National Relay Service

TTY: 1800 555 630 freecall
Voice: 1800 555 660 freecall
SMS: 0416 001 350
Fax: 1800 555 690 freecall
Email: helpdesk@relayservice.com.au
www.relayservice.gov.au

Automated Telephone Interpreting Service

Phone: 1800 131 450

Guide Dogs Queensland

1978 Gympie Rd Bald Hills ,Qld 4036
Phone: 07 3500 9001
www.qld.guidedogs.com.au/

Deaf Services - LiveBetter Office

Victoria Street Mackay Qld 4740
Phone: 07 3892 8549 | SIMS; 0417 164 679

Vision Australia Mackay Office

Suite 2E 52 Macalister Street Mackay Qld 4740
Phone: 07 4434 5800

For communication tools and
resources

Queensland Government webpage.

[www.qld.gov.au/disability/children-young-
people/early-childhood/communication-tools-
for-play](http://www.qld.gov.au/disability/children-young-people/early-childhood/communication-tools-for-play)

For copies of the relevant standards
contact:

Standards Australia

Phone: 1300 654 646
www.standards.com

Mackay Regional Council

Phone: 1300 622 529
www.mackay.qld.gov.au/

HOW ACCESSIBLE IS YOUR BUSINESS?

Use this checklist with the guide to learn how you can make your business more accessible.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) it is illegal to discriminate against a person with a disability by:

- Refusing access to, or use of the premises or facilities, or setting special conditions of use
- Failing to provide a means of entry to the premises
- Requiring a person to leave a premises or stop using facilities without reason
- Refusing to provide goods and services or setting special conditions on provision to a person with a disability
- Providing goods and services in a way that is not accessible to a person with disability.

Your details

Name of Business

Business Phone Number

Person Completing Checklist

Date Completed

Review Date

For further information and/or assistance, please contact

Mackay Regional Council 1300 622 529 | council@mackay.qld.gov.au

Rights and Responsibilities

Staff are aware that improving access to your business will increase your compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act (1992)	Yes	Not yet
--	-----	---------

Making Your Business Welcoming

Staff have received disability awareness training	Yes	Not yet
Your 'Becoming Accessible' sticker has been placed in a visible position	Yes	Not yet
Staff are aware of communication strategies	Yes	Not yet
Staff are aware of the rights of customers with guide dogs and assistance animals	Yes	Not yet
Staff know the location of the nearest accessible car space	Yes	Not yet
Background noise (e.g., loud music) is kept low	Yes	Not yet
Lighting is bright enough and constant throughout your business	Yes	Not yet
Accessibility of your business is promoted (e.g., online and/or signage)	Yes	Not yet
Signs are clear, easy to read and use high contrast colours	Yes	Not yet

Making Your Business Accessible

Entrance to your business is clear of obstacles	Yes	Not yet
Furniture and fittings do not prevent access	Yes	Not yet
EFTPOS machines are accessible	Yes	Not yet
Staff know the location of the nearest accessible toilets	Yes	Not yet

Making Your Business Communication Friendly

Staff are familiar with communication strategies	Yes	Not yet
Pen and paper is available for a customer to write something down	Yes	Not yet
Communication board is available	Yes	Not yet
Staff are familiar with the National Relay Service	Yes	Not yet

Making Written Information Easy to Read

Formatting of documents is in line with written communication guidelines	Yes	Not yet
Alternative formats are available for customers	Yes	Not yet



PO Box 41, Mackay Qld 4740 | Phone 1300 MACKAY (622 529) | mackay.qld.gov.au