

# WELCOMING BUSINESS PROGRAM



How to attract more customers to  
your business by providing better access



CORANGAMITE  
SHIRE

## Did you know that people with disabilities represent a considerable proportion of your potential customer base?

Nearly four million Australians – around 19% of our population – have a physical, intellectual or other disability.

In Corangamite Shire 3,200 people have some form of disability. This figure can increase up to 6,500 if you include people with temporary disabilities and their families and friends.

As potential customers, people will make choices about your business based on how easy it is to use. Improving access not only benefits people with disabilities, it also benefits parents using strollers, older people, delivery people, or shoppers with heavy bags. In fact, good access benefits everybody – particularly when it's busy.

### Good access makes good business sense!

The Welcoming Business Program can help your business improve access. It takes you through the minimum standards required to attain 'Welcoming Business' endorsement. Remember, improving access doesn't have to be expensive... just a few changes can go a long way to making your business more attractive to existing and potential customers, including people with a disability.



The Welcoming Business Program increases your chance of making the three million people visiting the Corangamite Shire each year your customers



“Good access is just as important to me as good food. My family always eats out at the same café because it serves good food and we can get in and out easily.”

**Lisa, temporary disability**

## What is a Welcoming Business?

A 'Welcoming Business' is a business endorsed by Corangamite Shire's Rural Access Program. To receive Welcoming Business endorsement, your business must satisfy a set of minimum standards relating to physical access, communication and customer service. Most of these standards are consistent with the Australian Standards for access and mobility.



These are:

- Main entrance must be free of any steps that are more than 5mm high
- Main entrance must be at least 800mm wide
- Aisles within the business must be at least 1000mm wide
- Where toilets are provided, one must be an accessible toilet
- Height of manual door handles must be between 900-1100mm
- Doors should be easy to open and not require excessive force
- Signage promoting accessible facilities within the business should be prominent
- 'Communicating with People with a Disability' booklet must be distributed to staff
- Staff should be proactive in accommodating people with a disability

## What is a Welcoming Environment?

A 'Welcoming Environment' is a non-profit organisation endorsed by Rural Access. A Welcoming Environment must satisfy the same set of minimum standards as a Welcoming Business.



## Why become a Welcoming Business or Welcoming Environment?

By becoming a Welcoming Business or Welcoming Environment, your business can achieve a range of benefits including:

- Improving services to customers generally
- Reduce discrimination in a proactive way
- Reducing likelihood of complaints being made
- Responding to the needs of potential customers and attracting new customers
- Promotion of your business/organisation as a Welcoming Business or Welcoming Environment
- Welcoming Business logo will be promoted through various websites and publications

## Want to find out more?

Rural Access is a Department of Human Services (Disability Services) innovation located within the Corangamite Shire.

The Rural Access project seeks to work in partnership with local organisations, businesses and the community, around the issue of access for people with a disability.

To find out more about Rural Access and the Welcoming Business Program, contact Rural Access on 03 5593 7100 or visit Rural Access on the Corangamite Shire Website under the Aged and Disability section.

## What more can I do?

There is more you can do to make your business more accessible to customers, and there are a range of organisations to help you achieve this. See the Useful Contacts section below.



CORANGAMITE  
SHIRE

## Useful Contacts

### Media Access Australia

For information on captioning.

Ph: (02) 9212 6242

TTY: (02) 9212 6461

<http://www.mediaaccess.org.au>

### Association of Consultants in Access, Australia

For information on disability awareness training and access audits. Ph: (03) 5221 2820

<http://www.access.asn.au>

### Victorian Deaf Society (Vicdeaf)

For information on hiring an Auslan interpreter. Ph: (03) 9473 1111

TTY: (03) 9473 1199

<http://www.vicdeaf.com.au>

### Vision Australia

For assistance and advice to improve access to information, products, services and the built environment for people who are blind or vision impaired.

Ph: 1300 84 74 66

TTY: (02) 9334 3260

<http://www.visionaustralia.org.au>

### Companion Card

The Companion Card Information Line can provide you with further information about the Companion Card program.

Ph: 1800 650 611

TTY: 1800 898 888

<http://www.companioncard.org.au>

If changes to a business or organisation mean that it no longer meets the basic criteria of the program, Rural Access reserves the right to withdraw that business or organisation from the program. The program will review all participating businesses and organisations every three years.