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VICTORIAN GOVERNMENT ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION GUIDELINES 2014

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Contact us if you need this information in an accessible format.
For example, large print or audio.

Telephone (03) 9651 5111 or email advertising@dpc.vic.gov.au.

You can also get a PDF format on our website www.dpc.vic.gov.au.

WHAT IS 'ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION'

Accessible communication ensures everyone has the same access and opportunity to attend events, read publications, use websites, respond in emergency situations, and find out about policies and programs.

It is especially important for government communicators to build accessibility into all communication activities to make sure they reach the whole community.

Accessible communication is making sure that your messages are delivered in the most appropriate way, and reach the widest possible audience. To do this well, you need to be aware of the diverse range of needs in the community and know where to go for further assistance.

'Communication' refers to messages, events and activities used to engage and inform the community about Victorian Government programs, policies and services.

These guidelines will assist us in providing communication materials in formats that ensure the information will reach all Victorians.

APPLICATION

These guidelines apply to all Victorian Government entities, as well as any organisations that procure media services through the Master Agency Media Services (MAMS) contracts.

YOUR AUDIENCE

When these guidelines talk about people with a disability, it means a person who has an impairment that affects their physical, mental, intellectual or sensory functions. This may mean they encounter barriers to accessing information.

One in five Victorians has a disability; that's 20 per cent of the population.

All communication strategies need to include people with disabilities and mental illness.

You may also consider the communication needs of people:

- › recovering from accidents or illness
- › with chronic health issues
- › requiring some adjustments in the workplace
- › who are ageing
- › with English as a second language or who have low literacy.

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Government communicators are responsible for ensuring communication is provided in a format suitable for people who encounter barriers when accessing government information.

In Victoria, legal obligations to promote and uphold the rights of people with a disability are outlined in the following legislation:

- › The *Disability Act 2006* (Vic)
- › The *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* (Vic)
- › The *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* (Vic)
- › The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cwth)

Under the *Disability Act 2006* all government agencies are required to develop and implement a disability action plan.

Victoria's *Equal Opportunity Act 2012* includes a 'positive duty obligation' which means agencies need to take proactive and reasonable steps to address causes of discrimination, regardless of whether a complaint has been made or not.

The Victorian *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2004* helps value and protect human rights within both government and the community. Human rights must be considered when creating legislation, implementing policies or delivering services.

Under the Commonwealth's *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, agencies must ensure that people with disabilities have the same fundamental rights to access information and services as others in the community.

Victoria's *State Disability Plan 2013-16* outlines the Victorian Government's approach to reducing the barriers faced by people with a disability when accessing education, employment and other services.

In 2008, the Australian Government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), which specifically recognises (under Articles 9 and 21) access to information, communications and services, including the internet, is a human right.

Accessibility requirements for websites are mandated under government policy, legislation, and through whole-of-government commitments. The Australian Government has endorsed the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) version 2.0 for all government websites.

Departments must update all government websites to WCAG 2.0 conformance:

- › Level A should have been reached by 31 December 2012)
- › Level AA by 31 December 2014.
- › Level AAA (Triple A) is recommended where possible as this meets the highest accessibility standards.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION

PLANNING YOUR COMMUNICATION

You should always consider accessibility when planning your communication. Your communication should be easy to understand and available in alternative formats so it reaches the widest possible audience, including those with a disability.

COMMONLY USED ACCESSIBLE FORMATS INCLUDE:

- › Large print – typically a minimum 16-point font size is used, but this can be customised to suit individual requests.
- › Audio – audio, CD or podcast. This format is most useful if the information can be read from beginning to end without needing to refer to other parts of the document.
- › Braille – a tactile writing system used by people who are blind. When preparing information to be brailled, keep the document layout as simple as possible for easier transcription.
- › Easy English – is a simplified form of plain English that is used for written information. Easy English is helpful for people with a cognitive or intellectual disability or low English language literacy levels.
- › Videos with captions, Auslan interpreting and/or audio description.

For targeted communication, you should determine the particular needs of your audience and the most effective method to reach them.

The fact sheet on planning your communication provides more information on planning and preparing your communication, including publications, Word documents and PDF documents.

CLEAR AND APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

The language we use is important, for both audience reach and ensuring people with a disability are included and represented in a positive way. The key considerations are:

- › always put the person first, not the disability
- › can you use plain English (everyday words and short, concise sentences) or

Easy English (conveying information using pictures and short sentences) to help convey your message. **Scope** has a guide to using Easy English:

The fact sheet on clear and appropriate language provides more information.

PUBLICATIONS, WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Identify the essential messages or information your audience needs to know and ensure this information is in an accessible format.

Key external policy statements or documents should be produced in accessible formats, and you might consider a Braille copy or an Auslan translation. Other documents should be available in accessible formats upon request.

It is required by law that all government websites must be accessible. Some essentials to consider include:

- › appropriate font size and style
- › high-contrast colour difference
- › visitors to your website should be able to navigate it using only a keyboard or accessibility aid
- › ensure all non-text content has a text equivalent (like ALT text for images).

The fact sheet on websites and social media accessibility provides more information.

EVENTS AND VENUES

You must consider accessibility when hosting events that are open to the public, such as stakeholder briefings or community forums. Your event venue must be fully-accessible and close to public transport. Some essentials to consider when planning an event include:

- › accessibility tags (see below for more information) on invitations
- › accessible venues for all your events
- › detailed instructions on how to reach the function room (not just the venue)
- › alternatives for communicating with your audience, such as live captioning, captions on videos, provision of Auslan interpreters and visual or auditory alternatives to announcements.
- › The checklist on events and venues has a list of things to consider when planning your event.

ACCESSIBILITY TAGS

An accessibility tag provides standard and consistent wording to inform those with a disability that accessible formats, support and aids are available upon request.

Tags should be placed on all publications, event invitations and websites.

Avoid naming an individual as a contact point. Instead try to use URLs, email addresses and phone numbers that will remain current for the life of the document.

If you need advice on booking access supports such as Auslan interpreters and attendant care, follow the link to the fact sheet on using interpreters and other communication resources.

This is an example of an accessibility tag for publications which can be cut and pasted into your own document or publication:

Contact us if you need this information in an accessible format, please telephone (insert standard departmental telephone) or email (insert departmental email address).

This document can also be found in formats on our website (www.department.vic.gov.au).

This is an example of accessibility tag for events which may be cut and pasted into your event invitation:

We can help you with access at this event. For example, a car park, Auslan interpreters and attendant carers.

To make sure we can help you, contact us by (insert response date). Telephone (insert standard departmental telephone) or email (insert departmental email address).

The fact sheet on accessibility tags has more information.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- › Victorian Government Communication Guidelines 2013
- › Accessible Communication User Fact Sheets and checklists 2013
- › The Victorian State Disability Plan 2013-16
- › The Department of Human Services Office for Disability
- › National Relay Service.

This fact sheet has more information on specific organisations and resources.

GLOSSARY

ACCESSIBLE FORMAT

Accessible format is the term used to describe alternative communication formats for people who have difficulties accessing information. Sometimes the term 'alternative formats' is used.

ACCESSIBILITY TAGS

An accessibility tag provides standard and consistent wording to inform those with a disability that accessible formats, support and aids are available upon request.

ATTENDANT CARER

A person employed to assist people with disabilities with daily tasks, for example at mealtimes and for personal care.

AUSLAN

Australian Sign Language (Auslan) is the sign language of the Australian Deaf community.

AUSLAN TRANSLATION

English is not the first language of the Deaf, Auslan is. Auslan translation assists in making information more accessible for people who are deaf. Videos can be produced in a variety of formats.

View an example of web content that has been translated into Auslan.

BRAILLE

Braille is a system of tactile writing used by people who are blind or visually impaired. When preparing information to be brailled, keep the document layout as simple as possible as this aids transcription.

CAPTIONS

Captioning is the text version of speech and other sound that can be provided on video, DVDs, the internet, and at cinemas and theatres.

Captioning is usually displayed on the bottom of a screen or on a separate screen and in some cases is positioned to show which character is speaking or where the sound is coming from. Colouring may also be used to distinguish between sounds or voices.

View an example of video content with captions.

DEAFBLIND

Deafblindness, sometimes called dual sensory impairment, is the combination of both hearing and vision impairment. There are many forms of deafblindness.

People who are deafblind may communicate using tactile interpreters, or use other communication supports such as note takers.

DISABILITY ACTION PLAN

A disability action plan is a document that organisations prepare and use in order to reduce and remove the barriers experienced by people with a disability. Government departments are required by law to have a disability action plan. For more information on Victoria's state disability plan, go to:

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/for-business-and-community/community-involvement/people-with-a-disability-in-the-community/disability-action-plans

EASY ENGLISH

Easy English is a simplified form of plain English that is used for written information, often using pictures and short sentences. It is helpful for people with a cognitive or an intellectual disability or low English language literacy levels.

Clear and simple words and short sentences are used. Pictures and photographs are also often used to illustrate sentences. Developing Easy English documents is a specialised skill and it is advisable to contact an expert to produce documents. For an example of Easy English go to:

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/plans,-programs-and-projects/plans-and-strategies/disability-services/victorian-state-disability-plan-2013-2016

Follow this link to Scope's Easy English Style Guide for more guidance:

www.scopevic.org.au/index.php/site/resources/easyenglishstyleguide

HEARING INDUCTION LOOP

Hearing induction loops enable sound, such as speech, to be transmitted to a listener by means of a magnetic field. Many large conference venues have 'loops' installed in rooms. Alternatively portable 'loops' can be hired for events.

LIVE CAPTIONING

Live captioning of speeches, conferences, school lessons or other events is also known as CART (Communication Access Real-time Translation). It is often performed remotely with the captioner connected via phone or the internet.

MICROSOFT OFFICE READABILITY TOOL

Use the readability test to assess the Fleisch Reading Ease and the grade level of your document.

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-au/word-help/test-your-document-s-readability-HP010148506.aspx>

NATIONAL RELAY SERVICE

The National Relay Service is an Australia-wide phone service for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. It can also support people with speech that is hard to understand.

relayservice.gov.au/

PLAIN ENGLISH

Plain English (or plain language) is a term which describes writing that is clear and simple. It avoids jargon, bureaucratic terms and acronyms. It is characterised by everyday words and simple language.

For more information on Plain English: go to:

www.plainenglishfoundation.com/

POSITIVE DUTY

The Equal Opportunity Act 2012 (Vic) introduces a positive duty requiring all organisations covered by the law (including government business, employers and service providers) to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate discrimination, sexual harassment and victimisation.

For more information about positive duty, go to:

www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au/index.php/employer-responsibilities/positive-duty

TACTILE INTERPRETER

Tactile interpreting is a common means of communication used by people who are deafblind. It is based on Auslan and requires two interpreters.

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript is an alternative text version of audio material. For an example of a transcript go to:

www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-01/who-pays-for-the-ndis-shortfall/4662132

TTY

A telephone typewriter (TTY) is a telecommunication device that enables people who are deaf, hard of hearing or speech impaired to use a telephone. For more information on TTY, go to:

relayservice.gov.au/faqs/tty-faqs/

FACT SHEET: PLANNING YOUR COMMUNICATION

The following is a guide on things to consider when planning your communication, and preparing word documents and PDF files.

The basics are outlined below and there are some useful links to references providing step-by-step guides, if you need them.

Things to consider when preparing publications, such as guidelines and policy statements include:

- › Include an accessibility tag where appropriate.
- › Use a minimum type size of 12 font.
- › Use plain fonts, such as Arial. These are often described as 'sans serif' (without small curls or decorative features).
- › Avoid using blocks of text written in capital letters – information is easier to read for people with a vision impairment or limited literacy if it is written using a mix of upper and lower case.
- › Use lots of white space and a simple layout.
- › Use bold text for emphasis rather than underlining or italics.
- › Justify margins on the left hand side and leave the right hand margin unjustified.
- › Use contrasting colours to increase readability – for example, black text on a white background is preferable.
- › Do not place text over pictures, photos or other images, as this makes the text hard to read.
- › When providing a link to a PDF document, also provide an alternative accessible format such as Word or HTML. Or make the PDF accessible (LINK).

- › Limit the use of tables and try to use bullet points where possible, for better visibility and for people with low literacy. Where tables are used, design the content so that it is suitable for screen reading software – for example, by repeating the name of the column in each cell.

HOW TO PRODUCE ACCESSIBLE WORD DOCUMENTS

Make sure that your Word document is also compliant with your departmental style templates. You can speak with your Communication Branch if you are unfamiliar with your department's style templates.

The following link has a step-by-step guide to creating your accessible Word document (including the best way to use tables and images) if you need more information.

office.microsoft.com/en-au/word-help/creating-accessible-word-documents-HA101999993.aspx

HOW TO PRODUCE ACCESSIBLE PDF DOCUMENTS

Make sure that you have the appropriate software – either Adobe Acrobat Professional X or Adobe Reader X- installed to successfully convert your MS Word file to PDF.

The following link has a step-by-step guide to producing and preparing these documents:

office.microsoft.com/en-au/word-help/create-accessible-pdfs-HA102478227.aspx

FACT SHEET: CLEAR AND APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE

The language you use in your communication should be positive and inclusive when referring to people with a disability.

DO USE...	INSTEAD OF...
Person with a disability For example: Person with autism Person with epilepsy	Disabled/the disabled/victim of/suffers from/handicapped/ special/stricken with/unfortunate Autistic person Epileptic person
Person with a physical disability For example: Person with cerebral palsy	Physically challenged
Person with a sensory disability For example: Person with a vision/hearing impairment Person who is deaf or hard of hearing Person who is blind	The deaf The blind, blind people
Person with an intellectual disability For example: Person with Down syndrome	Mentally disabled/intellectually challenged Downs' kids
Person with a mental illness For example: Person with schizophrenia or a person with bipolar disorder	Insane/mentally challenged Schizophrenic person
Accessible toilet/accessible parking space/accessible entry	Disabled toilet/disabled parking space
Person who uses a wheelchair	Confined to a wheelchair/wheelchair bound
Person with little or no speech	Dumb
Person who is comatose/unconscious/in a coma	Vegetable/vegetative
Person without a disability	Normal/non-disabled

PLAIN ENGLISH CHECKLIST

Plain English refers to written communication that is easy to understand, free of jargon and well structured.

Follow this link to the Plain English foundation for more information:

www.plainenglishfoundation.com/free-writing-tools

Plain English should not be confused with Easy English. Easy English refers to written communications that use further simplified language and layout, in combination with images or symbols.

Follow this link to Scope’s Easy English Style Guide for more guidance

www.scopevic.org.au/index.php/site/resources/easyenglishstyleguide

The following checklist has been prepared as a guide to writing in Plain English:

IN WRITTEN COMMUNICATION	YES	NO
Have you considered your audience and who your message is aimed at?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the things you want to communicate to your audience easy to identify?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the structure of your document present the information in a logical order?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your sentences concise? Does each sentence contain just one idea?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your language clear and considered? (Does your document avoid jargon and acronyms?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your paragraphs concise and focused on a single idea?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your wording clear or can your sentences be interpreted in a number of ways? (Tip: use the Microsoft Word readability statistics tool)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

FACT SHEET: WEBSITES AND SOCIAL MEDIA CHECKLISTS

PRODUCING WEBSITES

The following checklist has been prepared as a guide to designing and updating web pages:

This checklist is not exhaustive and you should work with your web team to ensure web accessibility requirements are met.

IN WEB PAGES	YES	NO
Text is in simple, everyday language	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Images have alternative (alt) text (unless they are purely for decoration)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Images are not used for text, unless the image is part of a logo or brand name	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audio and video can be paused or stopped by users	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transcripts are available for video and audio files	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is strong colour contrast between text and background	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Colour is not used as a prompt or to convey information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Text can be increased and decreased in size by the user	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Links describe where the link is going, not the URL address (rather than 'click here' links)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Links to documents contain the document type and file size	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All documents are available in an accessible version (Word doc content and PDF)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
All parts of the website can be accessed using only the keyboard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is more than one way to find information (search/sitemap/navigation)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Labels are presented next to fields that require the user to enter information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are no time limits imposed on users	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pages do not contain quick flashing (i.e. more than three flashes a second)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you need to use tables, you have checked with your web team about how to make these accessible	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You have tested your website using screen reader software with your web/online team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you need an Auslan version on the website?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SOCIAL MEDIA

Increasingly, social media is being used in government communication. As a general rule, usual web accessibility principles apply. This means you must:

- › provide transcripts for videos (for example on YouTube)
- › link to accessible web content
- › keep the language simple
- › caption video and consider live captioning
- › describe the content of photographs
- › give alternative text descriptions of the key data in maps, charts or graphs.

TRANSCRIPT

A transcript is an alternative text version of audio material. For an example of a transcript go to:

www.abc.net.au/news/2013-05-01/who-pays-for-the-ndis-shortfall/4662132

Victorian Government Accessibility Toolkit (version 3.1.1) can provide you with more detail on how to make your digital content accessible:

www.egov.vic.gov.au/victorian-government-resources/manuals-and-toolkits-victoria/accessibility-toolkit/accessibility-toolkit-version-3-2009.html

CHECKLIST: EVENTS AND VENUES

This checklist can help you quickly and easily assess whether or not your venue, event, content and format, are accessible and appropriate for people with a range of different needs.

PLANNING YOUR EVENT

Have you included an offer to provide accessibility aids and/or support (accessibility tag) on the invitation?

YES

NO

Do you have a RSVP system for people who are deaf or hard of hearing, including TTY, National Relay Service or text messaging facilities?

Have you checked that staff at the venue are aware of disability access issues and will help you to ensure equal access for people with a disability?

Have you advertised your event in accessible formats?

Have presentation and other materials been made available before hand?

AT THE VENUE

YES

NO

Is the venue close to public transport?

Are there accessible parking bays and pick-up/drop-off areas?

Is the entry free from steps or is there an alternative, such as a ramp?

Have you been to the venue and checked the suitability of the alternative entrance?

Is there a hand-rail on any steps?

Are the edges of steps marked clearly?

Are doorways wide enough for people who use a wheelchair?

Is there adequate space for people who use a wheelchair?

Are tables and tea and coffee facilities accessible for people who use a wheelchair?

Are accessible toilets conveniently located to your event?

YOUR EVENT	YES	NO		YES	NO
Have you instructed your host to briefly outline the venue features and facilities such as directions to bathrooms, exits and refreshments?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there any other features which address accessibility (e.g. Braille and tactile ground floor indicators etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you made copies of your presentation/ materials to be handed out at the event?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If you are using a PowerPoint presentation, is it clear and easy to read?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you made name tags with the font size as large as possible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	In your PowerPoint presentation, is the font sans serif no smaller than 24 point in size?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is seating available at the front of the venue for people who have vision or hearing impairment, so they can lip read or see the Auslan interpreter clearly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If you are screening a video, does it have captions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the room have an inbuilt FM transmitter system or hearing loop?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If your venue has televisions, do they have teletext facilities? Have you considered live captioning?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you located where the Auslan interpreter will be positioned?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there easy access to the stage (a ramp with handrails, does the ramp have the correct gradient?)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

FACT SHEET: ACCESSIBILITY TAGS

ACCESSIBILITY TAGS

A 'tag' provides standard and consistent wording to inform the people with a disability that accessible formats, support and aids are available upon request.

- › Tags should be placed on all publications, event invitations and websites (if not already fully accessible)
- › Avoid naming an individual as a contact point, except for specific events. Instead, try to use websites, email addresses and phone numbers that will remain current for a reasonable period
- › The exact text and format of the tag may be tailored to suit your communication however the tag must be clear and easy to read.

SAMPLE ACCESSIBILITY TAG WHICH MAY BE CUT AND PASTED INTO YOUR FOR PUBLICATION:

Contact us if you need this information in an accessible format. For example, large print or audio. Phone (insert standard departmental telephone) or email (insert departmental email address).

You can also get formats on our website (www.department.vic.gov.au).

SAMPLE ACCESSIBILITY TAG FOR EVENT INVITATIONS:

We can help you with access at this event. For example, a car park, Auslan interpreters and attendant carers.

To make sure we can help you, contact us by (insert response date). Phone (insert standard departmental telephone) or email (insert departmental email address).

FACT SHEET: FACE TO FACE COMMUNICATION

GENERAL TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

- › If a person with a disability is accompanied by another person, such as an attendant carer or interpreter, address your questions directly to the person with a disability.
- › Put the person first, not their disability. For example, use the term “a person with a disability” rather than “a disabled person”.
- › Try to avoid negative phrases such as “suffers from” and “crippled”. Use the phrase “people who use a wheelchair” rather than “wheelchair bound”.

COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

- › Remember that a person’s personal space can include their wheelchair and crutches. Do not touch or push a person’s wheelchair or move their crutches or walking stick without their permission.
- › When speaking with a person who uses a wheelchair, try to find something to sit on in order to be at eye level with them.

COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE WITH A VISION IMPAIRMENT

- › When you meet a person who has a vision impairment, always address them by name and introduce yourself by name.
- › Speak clearly, in a normal voice and volume.
- › When offering seating, provide verbal cues.
- › Remember that people with a vision impairment cannot rely on the same visual cues as people who do not have a vision impairment. Make sure you verbalise any thoughts or feelings.

- › When you enter or leave a room, say something that indicates your presence or that you are leaving. This ensures that the person who has a vision impairment will not be embarrassed by speaking to an empty space.
- › If a person is accompanied by a guide dog, do not pat it, feed it or otherwise distract it while it is in a harness. A dog in a harness is working. The same applies to assistance dogs.
- › If you are guiding the person, walk on the person’s opposite side to the guide dog.
- › According to government legislation, you must allow the guide (or assistance) dog to go anywhere the person using it can go.

COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE WITH A HEARING IMPAIRMENT

- › Gain the person’s attention before speaking. Try a gentle tap on the shoulder, a wave or some other visual signal to gain attention.
- › Face the person directly and maintain eye contact.
- › Make sure your mouth is visible. Remember not to cover your mouth with your hand or any other object as you talk.
- › Look directly at the person while speaking and speak evenly, not too fast or slow.
- › Don’t exaggerate your mouth movements, as this will make it more difficult to lip read.
- › Use short sentences.
- › Keep your volume up and natural. Don’t shout.

COMMUNICATING WITH PEOPLE WITH A SPEECH IMPAIRMENT

- › Give your whole attention when talking to a person with speech impairment.
- › Ask short questions that require short answers.
- › Do not pretend to understand if you do not. Rephrase the question or ask the person to repeat what you do not understand.
- › Use your normal tone of voice.
- › Do not try to complete the sentence or answer. Give the person the time they need to communicate their response.
- › Communicating with people with an intellectual disability
- › Before talking, ensure you have the person's attention. Try using their name or eye contact to make sure you have their attention.
- › Keep your questions simple and your answers easy to understand.
- › Remember that your body language is important, as people with an intellectual disability often rely on visual cues.
- › Be prepared to use, or to receive visual information from people with an intellectual disability.
- › Be specific and direct. Avoid talking using abstracts, acronyms, metaphors or puns.

FACT SHEET: ORGANISATIONS AND RESOURCES

Here are some contact details for organisations that can provide services and information to assist you to provide accessible communications.

ATTENDANT CARE

There are many attendant care agencies that can be easily found on the internet. You should compare a few quotes as prices can vary.

HEARING LOOPS

Better Hearing Australia can provide more information on hearing augmentation systems to support people with a hearing impairment to access meetings and events. It also provides hearing impairment awareness training. www.betterhearing.org.au.

Vicdeaf and the Australia DeafBlind Council can provide you with information about Teletypewriters (TTY) and hearing augmentation systems.

INTERPRETERS AND NOTETAKERS

If using interpreters refer also to the Victorian Government's guidelines on using interpreter services:

www.multicultural.vic.gov.au/projects-and-initiatives/improving-language-services/standards-and-guidelines

The following organisations can provide notetakers, Auslan and tactile interpreters and Auslan translation:

- › Sign Language Communications (not for profit) www.slcommunications.com.au/
- › AuslanServices www.auslanservices.com/booking.html
- › Echo Interpreting www.echointerpreting.com.au/.

LIVE CAPTIONING

Australian access companies that provide live captioning

The following Australian companies provide live captioning services:

- › Red Bee Media
- › Ai-Media
- › Captioning and Subtitling International (CSI)
- › Caption It
- › The Captioning Studio.

SCOPE COMMUNICATION RESOURCE CENTRE

The Scope Communication Resource Centre has an accessible information unit that specialises in Easy English, plain language and other accessible written information. The unit is also experienced in training, consultancy, peer support and partnering with organisations and businesses to provide written information in accessible formats.

www.scopevic.org.au/index.php/site/whatweoffer/communicationresourcecentre

TELEPHONE RELAY SERVICES

National Relay Service is an Australia-wide telephone access service that relays calls. People with speech and hearing impairment can contact anyone through the National Relay Service. They can use a Teletypewriter (TTY) or a computer with internet access.
relayservice.gov.au/

WEB ACCESSIBILITY

Commonly used screen reading software includes:

- › JAWS
- › Windows Eyes
- › NVDA.

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

ABLE AUSTRALIA

Supports people with multiple disabilities, including deafblindness.

TELEPHONE: 1300 225 369

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

AMAZE/AUTISM VICTORIA

supports individuals, families and carers affected by Autism Spectrum Disorders.

TELEPHONE: 1300 308 699 OR 9657 1600

www.amaze.org.au

ATTENTION DEFICIT DISORDER VICTORIA (ADDVIC)

Supports children, adolescents and adults with ADHD and co-existing disorders.

TELEPHONE: 9820 2144 (METRO) OR 1800 233 842 (RURAL)

home.vicnet.net.au/~addvic/

AUSTRALIA DEAFBLIND COUNCIL

Provides support and advocacy services for people with deafblindness.

TELEPHONE: 9882 8596

www.deafblind.org.au/

BLIND CITIZENS AUSTRALIA

Can provide advice and assistance in preparing material for people with a vision impairment.

TELEPHONE: 1800 033 660

www.bca.org.au/

BRAINLINK

Provides resources and services to improve the quality of life for people affected by an acquired brain disorder.

TELEPHONE: 1800 677 579 OR 9845 2950

www.brainlink.org.au

CEREBRAL PALSY SUPPORT NETWORK

Provides support, advice and assistance for parents of children with cerebral palsy.

TELEPHONE: 1300 277 600

www.cpsn.info

COMMUNICATION RIGHTS AUSTRALIA

Can provide support and information for people with communication or speech difficulties.

TELEPHONE: 9555 8552

www.caus.com.au

CYSTIC FIBROSIS VICTORIA

Assists and supports individuals and carers of people with cystic fibrosis.

TELEPHONE: 9686 1811

www.cfv.org.au

DOWN SYNDROME VICTORIA

Provides information, support and advocacy services for people with Down Syndrome.

TELEPHONE: 1300 658 873 OR 9486 9600

www.downsyndromevictoria.org.au

EPILEPSY FOUNDATION OF VICTORIA

Supports people living with epilepsy, and their families, with support, resources and advocacy services.

TELEPHONE: 1300 852 853 OR 9805 9111

www.epinet.org.au

INDEPENDENCE AUSTRALIA

Supports people with a disability or other physical need.

TELEPHONE: 1300 704 456

www.independenceaustralia.com

VICDEAF

Can provide more information on resources and assistance for deaf and hard of hearing people.

TELEPHONE: 9473 1111

www.vicdeaf.com.au

VISION AUSTRALIA

Provides services and resources to people with a vision impairment

TELEPHONE: 1300 84 74 66

www.visionaustralia.org

