

Design for Dignity Retail Guidelines



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AUSTRALIAN
NETWORK
ON DISABILITY



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1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the Design for Dignity guide is to provide **retail business owners, service providers, shopping centre owners and managers, designers, builders and certifiers** with an understanding of how to make the shopping experience for people with disability more independent, pleasurable and dignified.

This publication is a high level summary of the guide.

The full guide is available online in an accessible HTML format on the Australian Network on Disability (AND) website (www.and.org.au) and the Design for Dignity website (www.designfordignity.com.au).

The guide is made possible by Lendlease and Commonwealth Bank of Australia as well as specialist organisations that have reviewed the guidelines and provided input:

- Deaf Society of NSW
- National Relay Service
- Scope Australia
- Vision Australia
- Phillip Chun

2 SHOPPING

Shopping is an integral part of life and is more than just buying goods and services.

Whether it is shopping for groceries, going to the bank, visiting a café or the Post Office or discovering the latest fashion trends online or in stores, we all gain a level of social engagement and interaction from these activities.

It is broadly accepted that organisations with a good understanding of the impact of disability on their customers will reach a wider market.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY DISABILITY

In Australia in 2015 the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) estimated there were 4.1 million people living in households, or 17.6% of the population in Australia, who experience disability. This is around 13% of everyone under 65 and about half of everyone over the age of 65.

“A typical misguided viewpoint is that someone is either disabled or fully able, yet a wide spectrum of capabilities is clearly apparent within any population. An understanding of quantitative population statistics can also inform design decisions.”²

Some people with disability use aids that assist in their daily lives. ABS data shows that 18% of people with disability use mobility aids and 27% of people with disability use some form of communication aid.

These could be very familiar devices like a mobility scooter, wheelchair or walking frame or they might be less apparent like a hearing aid, a smart phone to assist communication by typing messages, or a sonar cane that helps someone know when there are barriers in close proximity.

A UK survey found that 83% of people with disability had avoided a business, having been unable or unwilling to make a purchase.

In addition, 76% of people who did not have a complaint successfully resolved indicated they would be prepared to leave for a more accessible provider.¹

The challenge is how we develop a more inclusive view of how people with disability access and engage with retail venues, online environments and call centres, and importantly, how this can be done seamlessly with equity and dignity.

These factors have significant implications for how we design and build future shopping centres and retail outlets as well as the connecting transport and service infrastructure.

Integrating accessibility and inclusion principles at the early stages of design should therefore be an essential step, shifting away from solely compliance-driven approaches and the often, more expensive retro-fitting solutions implemented as an afterthought, during later stages of development.

“Regardless of the nature of the disability, retail design features have the power to support individuals’ desire to feel independent and competent, or to disable them, making them feel disempowered and incapable. Further, inclusive design sends positive messages to people with disabilities, messages that tell them ‘you are important,’ ‘we want you here,’ and ‘welcome.’”³

Having more ‘universal’ or ‘inclusive’ design also makes good business sense to attract as many people as possible to accessible developments. Thriving people places reinforce stronger rental income streams and asset values, and an overall competitive advantage for the developer and asset owner.

¹According to an Australian Network on Disability (AND) survey of over 200 people with disability in April 2016.

²Inclusive Design Toolkit www.inclusedesigntoolkit.com

³Yu, H., Tullio-Pow, S., Akhtar, A., 2015, Retail design and the visually impaired: A needs assessment, Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services p 122



3 WHAT MATTERS TO CUSTOMERS WITH DISABILITY?

The Design for Dignity guide is built on research with people with lived experience of disability and those who support, assist or care for people with disability.

The Australian research referenced in the guide comes from AND studies and includes the voice of people with disability in quotes and reflections about their retail experiences.

The guidelines detail the research findings which show the following things are important to customers with disability.

3.1 GOOD CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

It makes sense that the more a customer enjoys the shopping experience, the more goods and services they will buy. The better the store design and customer service the more likely they are to recommend a place to friends and family.

Researchers looking at drivers of customer satisfaction for customers with disability find that both store accessibility and customer service factors are important for customers with disability.

3.2 BEING TREATED FAIRLY

People basically just want a fair go when it comes to going about their business.

The ABS reported that 8.6% of people with disability⁴ felt that they had been discriminated against in the 12 months before the 2015 census.

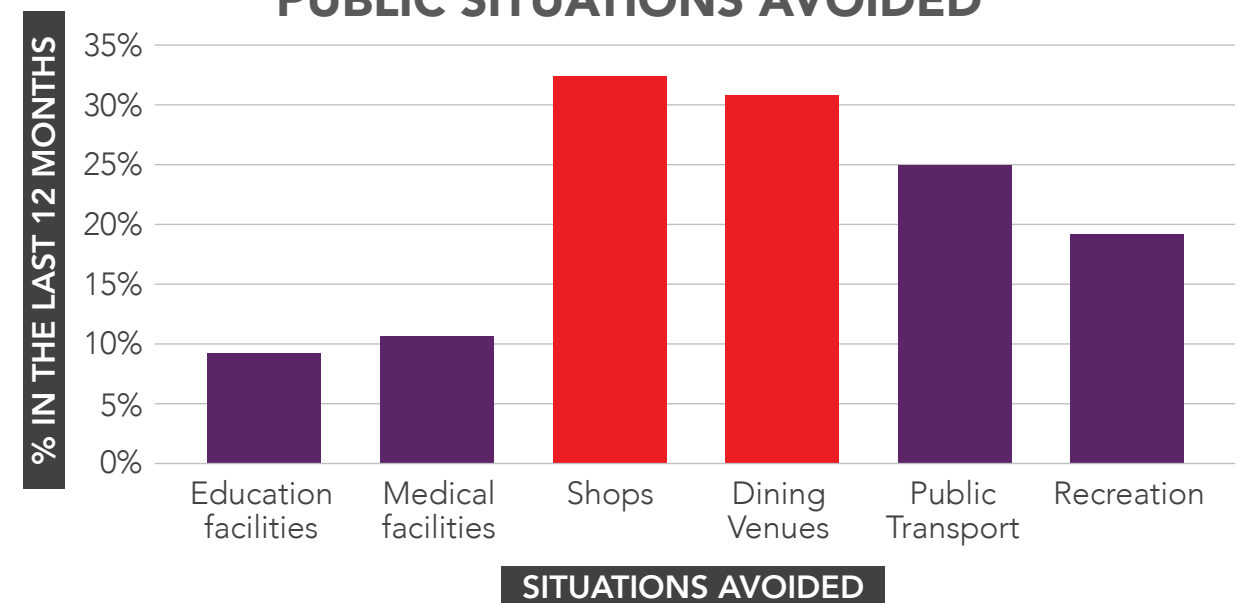
People with different types of disability experienced very different outcomes. More than 20% of people who experience intellectual disability or a disability related to social interaction felt that they had been discriminated against, while less than 10% of people with sensory disability or mobility restrictions reported discrimination.

ABS data also tells us where the experience of unfair treatment is likely to happen by asking people with disability about the situations they avoid because of discrimination.

In public settings, people with disability avoid shops, restaurants, cafés and bars most frequently.

There is a significant opportunity for accessible retail shopping centres, outlets and dining venues to ensure that they give everyone an equitable and dignified experience.

PUBLIC SITUATIONS AVOIDED



Baker (2006)⁵ studied the value of shopping to customers with vision impairment.

The research found that while an accessible retail environment can attract new customers, it is the service that they receive in-store that creates the environment that retains customer loyalty.

3.3 TRAVELLING TO THE STORE

For a customer with disability, the journey to the store is just as important as the design of the store itself. Being able to get to the store by public transport or find an accessible parking space, navigate the shopping centre and easily locate and use accessible toilets are an important part of the shopping experience.

⁴Persons aged 15 years and over with disability, living in households, types of situations avoided due to disability in the last 12 months–2015, proportion of persons.

⁵Baker, S. M., 2006, Consumer Normalcy: Understanding the value of shopping through narratives of consumers with visual impairments. Journal of Retailing, 82 (1) pps 37-50.

3.4 INSIDE THE STORE

In surveys across different service industries, AND has found that customers with disability tend to rate attitude, disability confidence and availability of employees very highly.

When physical access or poor process threatens to make a bad experience, employee disability awareness can often rescue the situation until a resolution can be found.

“Educate their staff about keeping aisles clear from obstacles, how to guide someone who is blind or has low vision, how different disabilities affect people’s functional ability and encourage some basic kindness.”

Some of the factors explored in the guide include:

- Attitude and disability awareness of employees.
- Availability of employees for assistance.
- Aisle width and room to move around.
- Price and product information – readability.
- Items placed within reach.
- Employment of people with disability.
- Clear overhead signage.
- Home delivery services.
- Directional and tactile signs.
- Hearing augmentation.

ABS figures⁶ tell us that 40% of all people with reported disability made their last journey somewhere to do shopping. Of that number, 57% drove a car to get there, 29% were a passenger in a motor vehicle, 9% walked and 5% took public transport. For some people who can’t drive or have limited mobility, home delivery becomes a very practical and useful service. For others, assistance in getting goods to a car can be just as helpful.

3.5 CHECKOUT

Getting to the checkout or payment desk and paying for your purchases is a routine that most people take for granted. The considerations for people with disability are more complex and are a critical factor in whether the person can shop independently and can purchase goods in the same way as others.

Some of the factors explored in the guide include:

- Assistance from employees
- Access to payment terminal
- Space at the counter
- Counter height

“Some people look like they need assistance when in fact they don’t so it’s about striking a balance.”

⁶Adapted from Australian Bureau of Statistics, Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (2012) Table 23. Persons with disability aged 15 years and older, living in households, Disability status by mode of transport and reason for last journey

3.6 CUSTOMERS ON THE TELEPHONE

In a 2013 AND survey of telecommunications customers with disability it was found that communication is a key issue.

“I feel quite stupid when trying to work with staff who can’t find a way to cope with alternatives in being unable to access another phone or messages while talking to them - really frustrating.”

Some of the factors explored in the guide include:

- Clarity
- Noise
- Understanding
- Accessible alternatives
- Systems

3.8 EMERGENCY EVACUATION

In Australia there is a gap in our requirements, planning and consideration of people with disability in the event of an emergency evacuation. This is perhaps most pronounced in multi-level office tenancies, but similar issues exist for retailers:

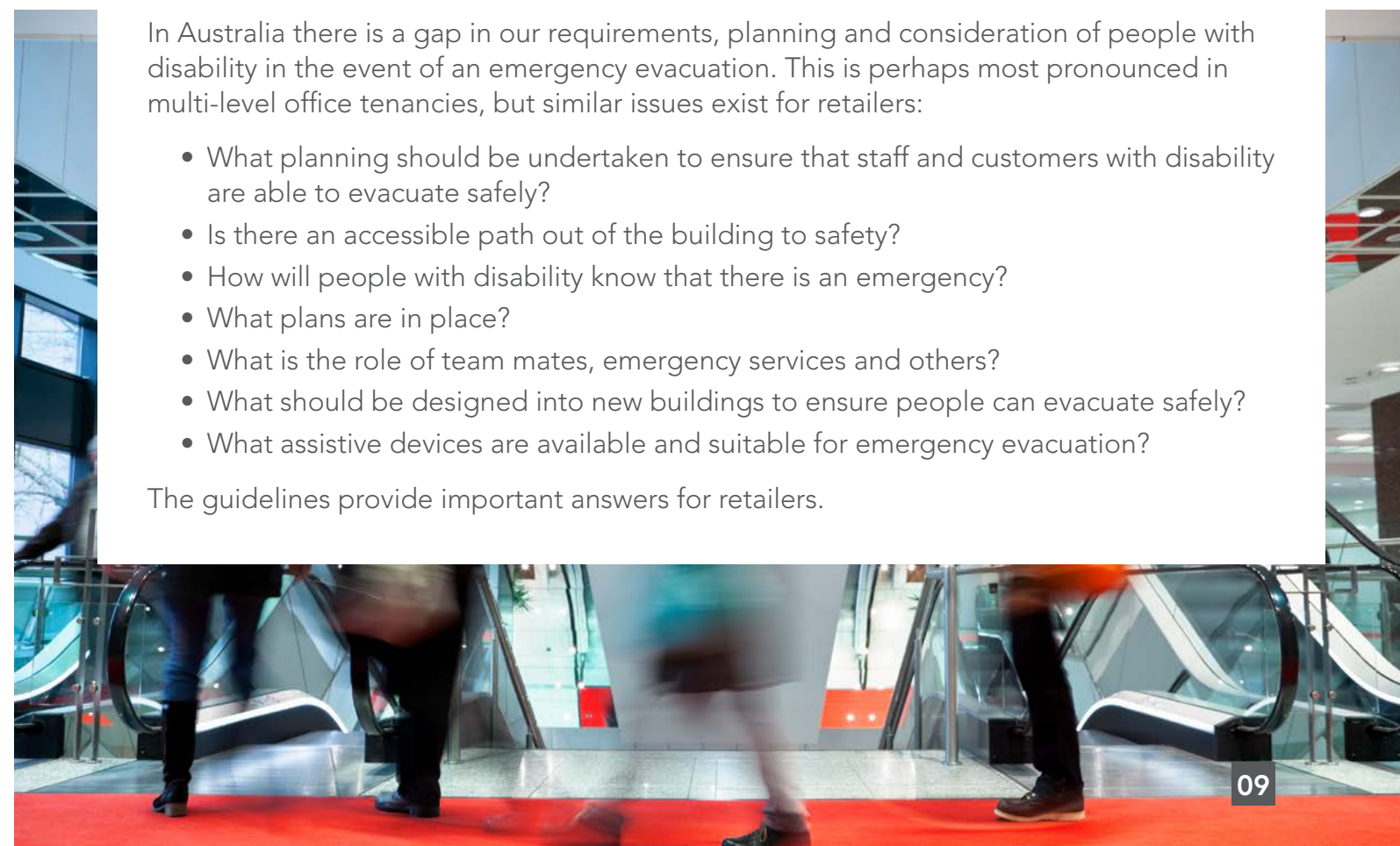
- What planning should be undertaken to ensure that staff and customers with disability are able to evacuate safely?
- Is there an accessible path out of the building to safety?
- How will people with disability know that there is an emergency?
- What plans are in place?
- What is the role of team mates, emergency services and others?
- What should be designed into new buildings to ensure people can evacuate safely?
- What assistive devices are available and suitable for emergency evacuation?

The guidelines provide important answers for retailers.

3.7 PURCHASING ONLINE

The ABS measured the access to computers and internet for people with disability in 2012. It shows that 85.3% of people with disability aged between 15 and 64 living in households had access to a computer, and that 84% had access to the internet at home. In the 12 months before the survey, 75% had accessed the internet at home and 39.6% had accessed the internet away from home.

In the 2012 and 2013 Australian Network on Disability surveys into the accessibility of shopping experiences and telecommunications companies, people with disability provided the following information about website accessibility and features that they found difficult. In essence, simpler was better. Accessibility for screen reading software and assistive technology was essential.



3.9 EVOLVING NEEDS AND HIGHER EXPECTATIONS

The most recent AND survey on banking accessibility in 2016 revealed a higher level of sophistication, expectation and advocacy than had been seen in many previous surveys. People are asserting that their rights as consumers and citizens should be met saying things like: "Treat me like I am a valued customer" and "Organise interpreters when needed".

This increased advocacy was across:

- AUSLAN
- Systems
- Integration
- Marketing
- Disability specialists
- Good process for key moments

4 WHAT IS DESIGN FOR DIGNITY?

Design for Dignity encapsulates this feedback and research into some simple principles to follow. Dignified access for a customer with disability means that a design or process enables:

- More **independent** access to premises, goods and services; it doesn't assume that assistance is required.
- **Equitable** or fair access; it doesn't take longer or make you go further.
- Participation of people experiencing a disability as a **natural and expected** thing.
- A place where people feel **at-ease, safe and connected**.

Design for Dignity means that all aspects of a retail experience come together in a consistent way to deliver a great experience. It is about physical architecture and service architecture working together to deliver a more productive and inclusive retail environment.

The Design for Dignity Retail guide explores the process:

- Identify elements, processes and interactions.
- Influencing the brief.
- Testing your elements, processes and interactions.
- Testing with customers.

5 ISN'T COMPLIANCE GOOD ENOUGH?

5.1 MINIMUM STANDARD CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE?

It is rare in business or design that organisations set out with "minimum standard" customer experience in mind. Designing to minimum accessibility standards is saying that this group of customers doesn't deserve the same degree of thought, innovation and insight that is invested in other customers. Designing for dignified access gives a better customer experience by truly understanding and including more people.

5.2 AREN'T AUSTRALIAN STANDARDS BEST PRACTICE?

Under the main Australian Standard - AS1428.1, Design for Access and Mobility: General requirements for access - new building work is designed to allow general use of buildings and facilities by people with disability. It does however have some limitations:

- Australian Standards are a negotiated outcome between advocacy groups and industry experts. They seek to deliver practical guidance to designers, builders and certifiers, but are designed explicitly as minimum requirements which, if met, are 'deemed-to-satisfy the intent of the BCA goals for 'safe, dignified and equitable access'.
- They are based on data representing people aged between 18 and 60 years. With an ageing and engaged population, designers need to think beyond compliance to capture older people with a greater likelihood of disability.
- The majority of measurements in the most critical areas are based on data from 1983.
- The dimensions of wheelchair and user contemplated by the standard represent 80% of users (90% in critical access areas). While materials in wheelchair design have become lighter, many new electric wheelchairs are larger.
- Motorised scooters are not included in the requirements at all. Motorised scooters require a much larger turning circle than manual scooters and cannot turn within the space allowed within Australian Standards.

5.3 EXPOSURE

While old business premises don't need to be fixed retrospectively (unless being renovated), The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) requires that people with disability have equal access to premises as well as goods and services. This exposes organisations to the risk of breaching the act, but relies on individuals lodging complaints with the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC).

5.4 CASE STUDY: COMMONWEALTH BANK OF AUSTRALIA – BRANCH DESIGN PROCESS

Commonwealth Bank has contributed a case study to the guidelines describing their branch design process.

“As we strive to be the most accessible bank in Australia for our people and our customers, it is important that we continue to strive for an environment that is fully accessible for all. Our next generation branch design project is an exciting part of that evolution.” Bryan Fitzgerald - EGM CEO & Group Strategic Advisor and ENABLE Employee Group Co-Chair

The next generation branch design has four clear accessibility objectives:

- More independent access that does not assume assistance is required.
- Equitable or fair access to our services.
- Participation of people experiencing a disability as a natural and expected thing.
- A place where people feel at ease, safe and connected.

The case study describes the design process which is split into five stages:

- Stage 1** - Understand Existing
- Stage 2** - Concept Design
- Stage 3** - Raw Prototyping
- Stage 4** - Detailed Design & Branch Prototype
- Stage 5** - Standard Design Roll-out

The guidelines describe some of the changes already being built into the design which span signage, technology, physical space, furniture, joinery and project design documentation.

It is clear that the Commonwealth Bank has a very large footprint and are already on a journey to providing better access for people and team members with disabilities within the current design.

“We are incredibly committed to ensuring we design retail branches that respond to the changing needs of the community. Utilising design thinking methodology to identify the diverse range of requirements within our portfolio, while ensuring our focus on inclusion remains the guiding principle.” Teri Esra (Head of Property Design and Delivery)

6 WHAT ARE YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES?

Retail business owners, service providers, shopping centre owners and managers, designers, builders and certifiers have a responsibility to provide access to premises and goods and services that is free from discrimination.

The guide explores some of the requirements from The Australian Human Rights Commission, Building Code of Australia, Australian Standards, Local Council and Heritage Buildings. It provides practical examples as well as the process for Disability Discrimination claims.

7 GUIDANCE ON PREMISES

This section summarises the key accessibility requirements for retail environments. It also provides some Design for Dignity tips that help create environments that are better able to cope with an ageing population and the needs of customers with disability. Design for Dignity suggestions are just that – they are optional ideas that will make it easier for customers now, and into the future.

Some of the elements covered are:

- Finding your store online
- Wayfinding principles and guidance
- Interactive navigation screens
- Car parking
- Directional and category signage
- Continuous accessible path of travel
- Stairs
- Lifts
- Ramps, landings and walkways
- Tactile Ground Surface Indicators
- Hearing augmentation
- DeafSpace design
- Customer interaction counters, tables and worktops
- Seating
- Product or display walls
- Lighting
- Floor patterns
- Floor materials
- Accessible toilets
- Restaurants
- Employee areas.



8 GUIDANCE ON CONTACT CENTRES

There are no 'rules' for how contact centres should be structured to deliver the best experience for people with disability. The guide provides suggestions based on AND research as well as information about the National Relay Service.

Some key recommendations are:

- Keep call menus short.
- Depth of menus and the path to help.
- Voice recognition.
- Operator clarity.
- Information and formats.
- Identity.
- National Relay Service (NRS) training.

9 GUIDANCE ON ONLINE RETAILING

This section is a guide to influence the design of your website, rather than being a rigorous guide for developers. It covers:

- What is the benchmark for accessibility?
- What is the right level?
- Working with your Information Technology supplier.
- Questions for the IT supplier or team.
- How do I determine if my site is A, AA or AAA?
- How does the Technology team know if we meet the requirements?
- Delivery.

10 GUIDANCE ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

The research provided shows that people who experience disability highly rate the attitude and disability awareness of customer service staff as a very important or critically important attribute of a good retailer. We also know that these customers are prepared to move their business elsewhere when service is not up-to-scratch or the business is not accessible.

How can businesses consistently deliver a dignified experience for customers who experience disability? The Design for Dignity guide provides practical guidance on the basic frameworks and important service architecture elements as well as practical information and guidance on better customer service practice for assisting customers with:

- Mobility
- Vision
- Hearing
- Communication

10.1 ACCESSING THE GUIDE AND PROVIDING FEEDBACK

The Design for Dignity Guidelines are intended to be an 'open source' document. We welcome feedback and suggestions and the Guidelines will evolve over time. Visit Design for Dignity's blog to keep updated:

www.designfordignity.com.au

10.2 DISCLAIMER

This is a non-mandatory guideline designed to assist in making retail environments more accessible and inclusive for people with disability. However, neither Lendlease, Commonwealth Bank of Australia, Australian Network on Disability and Design for Dignity Pty Ltd nor the groups which have reviewed or been involved in the development of the guidelines, accept any responsibility for the use of the information contained in the guidelines and make no guarantee that the information is an exhaustive treatment of the subject. Indeed, the focus is to raise awareness, create discussion and create new solutions for greater inclusion. Users are required to exercise their own skill and care with respect to its use and should and should obtain appropriate professional advice relevant to their particular circumstances. The guidelines do not guarantee compliance with discrimination or other laws, the Building Code of Australia or other regulations or codes.

REVIEWERS AND SUPPORTERS



National Relay
Service



ANDisability



australiannetworkondisabilitysydney



@ANDisability



australian-network-on-disability

www.and.org.au

info@and.org.au

AUSTRALIAN NETWORK ON DISABILITY
SUITE 4.01, LEVEL 4
80 CLARENCE STREET, SYDNEY NSW 2000

1300 363 645

DESIGN FOR DIGNITY
PO BOX 3152,
NORTH WILLOUGHBY, NSW, 2068

0407 553 741