

Media Release

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Creating Accessible and Inclusive Communities

Celebrating International Day of People with a Disability on December 3, Federation Council is pleased to announce Ability Links - Intereach and the Federation Council Disability Access Committee are partnering to deliver 'Access at a Glance', an accessible sticker program aimed at promoting inclusive and accessible businesses in our communities.

Fitting with the *International Day of People with Disability* theme for 2018, empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality, Access at a Glance is a national program that works towards supporting the community to be accessible and inclusive for people with a disability, their family and carers

The program will involve a local 'linker' or a Disability Access Committee member teaming up with business owners and operators to identify and respond to barriers which currently prevent customers from using their services and purchasing their goods that can be easily altered or avoided. The audit looks at accessibility features such as accessible toilets, lighting, seating, written information, entrances and parking. It takes about half an hour and is free!

The Access at a Glance program offers businesses free stickers to put in their shop window that highlights their accessibility and inclusiveness to people within the community. The stickers include identifying businesses that support people with a disability, the elderly and parents/carers of young children. Businesses can also receive information on how to improve their accessibility.

The program will begin with Council buildings in early 2019 and then local businesses throughout the Federation Council region will be invited to participate.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics over four million Australians experience disability, which equates to 1 in 5 people. In the Federation Council area 665 people or 5.4% of the population reported needing help in their day-to-day lives due to disability. Together with carers, family and friends, the number of people impacted by a disability is bigger again.

Federation Council Mayor Pat Bourke said shopping is a day-to-day part of life for everyone, but for many it is more than just buying goods and services, it's about getting out and about, interacting with others and connecting with their communities.

"Many mental and physical health, and social benefits can be found from shopping whether it is grabbing some groceries, having a coffee with a friend at a café, or buying a new outfit to wear," he said.

"Unfortunately, for many people, they feel forced or limited to shop online owing to a lack of physical access in and around their town or by the lack of understanding and acceptance they experience when visiting businesses. Shops that make their premises, service offering and processes welcoming of people with disability open the door to this customer group and benefit from increased business and as such Council is proud to support this initiative."

Individuals wishing to assist to conduct the audits or businesses wishing to join in or find out more about the Access at a Glance program can contact Ability Links – Intereach on (02) 6051 7800 or email programabilitylinks@intereach.com.au.

Ends.

Media Enquiries

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