

All Ages: Business for Everyone – Customers

All Ages: Business for Everyone presents a range of strategies to promote respect and support for older customers, but these benefit people of all ages and at all life stages.

The following strategies are just some of those that All Ages Businesses implement, and provide all customers with positive experiences:

- Appropriate and respectful interactions from staff
- A safe, physical environment
- Competent and calm responses to medical incidents
- Online services that are easy to access and clear
- Seating for rest or when waiting for service
- Lighting, music, and temperature that is not over-stimulating
- Space to comfortably move around objects and aisles
- An intuitive layout that makes it easy to find things

All these strategies benefit the following people:



Older people

As people age, physical and cognitive abilities begin to decline. This means that older people may find it more difficult to move about, see or hear, or remember things. This process

happens at different times for different people, so you can't assume that every customer with grey hair will need extra support. But by supporting older people who need it, you are making sure that every other customer who needs support, also gets it.



People with reduced mobility

People of any age can experience reduced mobility, whether this is a long-term condition requiring a wheelchair or walker, or short-term injury with a walker 'moon' boot or crutches. It can be tiring moving about when it's difficult to do so. All Ages Businesses are places where people with reduced mobility can move about and find what they need easily and quickly. Staff offer to help if necessary and communicate with people appropriately, making sure to talk to the person themselves rather than others' with them, if present.

We are for everyone.

ALL AGES: BUSINESS FOR EVERYONE





People with young children

It can be hard enough to move around businesses and find what you need without a pram or young children who are getting bored. Businesses with lots of space allow easy manoeuvring of prams, or a place to store a pram as parents walk around the store. There are places that parents and children can rest or even a few toys to play with. Lighting, music and temperature are not overstimulating, which is particularly important for children with sensory disorders like autism.



Young people

Older people aren't the only customers who can feel judged by their age as they use a business. Younger people are often stereotyped by their appearance and treated suspiciously. Staff in All

Ages Businesses challenge their biases against young people and are friendly and careful not to judge or disrespect them. This results in younger people who feel more respected and comfortable in businesses, and have more positive experiences.



People with reduced hearing

People with reduced hearing may be seen as rude if they don't respond to staff, but this should not be taken personally. It's important that people with reduced hearing are in a safe environment where they are not going to be startled by people. People with reduced hearing are not necessarily deaf and it's important that, rather than talking loudly and slowly, staff look at the person and speak clearly. The person with reduced hearing will let you know whether they need you to talk slower or louder.



People with reduced vision

People with reduced vision often have supports with them that indicate that they have reduced vision, such as a walking stick, guide dog, or support person. All Ages Business environments are physically safe without trip hazards or objects in aisles that people with reduced vision may injure themselves on. Labels and signs are large, contrasted, and use sans serif font so people with reduced vision can read them. Staff respond and communicate appropriately with people with reduced vision and offer help to find what they need.



People from different cultures

Tasmania is a multicultural state, which is part of what makes us a wonderful and exciting place to live. People from different cultures can face racism and difficulty with English. All Ages Businesses make people from different cultures feel safe and respected. Staff communicate respectfully and appropriately, and labels and signs are written using plain English so they can be easily interpreted.



People with low literacy or numeracy

Tasmania has some of the lowest literacy and numeracy skills in Australia. All Ages Businesses recognise this and use plain English in their marketing, information, online, labels and signs so people with low literacy can interpret these. Staff do not judge people who have difficulty reading or counting but are friendly and respectfully help them out.



Not every customer who walks into your business, older or not, will be happy and friendly. Customers can be angry, irritable, dismissive or withdrawn for a range of reasons — maybe it is their personality, they just got some bad news, they've had a fight with a loved one, or they've just had a bad experience at another business, but there is no excuse for customers to behave rudely or disrespectfully to staff. Managers and staff should be trained to communicate with all customers respectfully and it may be appropriate to ask these customers to behave more respectfully or leave the business. Staff's physical and psychological safety is a business' priority.

Why the focus on older customers, then?

Tasmania's population is becoming older and we are the oldest state or territory in Australia. In 2016, 19.4% of the population were aged over 65¹ and this is expected to increase to 25.3% by 2030². Tourists to Tasmania are also getting older and from 2016 to 2017, 17.8% of State visitors were aged over 65 (225,000 people) and 40.2% were aged over 55 (500,000 people)³.

Long story short — there are a lot of people aged over 65 years in Tasmania and if businesses don't support them, they risk losing a large customer group. More importantly, people deserve to be respected and included as they get older and their needs change. What we do today will benefit all of us who are ageing and who will be lucky enough to be aged over 65 one day.

For more information about All Ages: Business for Everyone

Contact COTA Tasmania at
admin@cotatas.org.au or **6231 3265**.

Visit the website at [www.cotatas.org.au/
programs/liveable_communities/all-
ages-business](http://www.cotatas.org.au/programs/liveable_communities/all-ages-business).

- 1 Australian Bureau of Statistics (2016) Census of Population and Housing
- 2 Department of Treasury and Finance (2014) Population projections for Tasmania and its Local Government Areas — Medium Series
- 3 Tasmanian Visitor Survey (September 2017) Tourism Tasmania

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