

Inclusive consultation and communication with people with a disability

A guide for Victorian Government Departments and Agencies

Disability Services Division
Department of Human Services
December 2004

Inclusive consultation and communication with people with a disability

A guide for Victorian Government Departments and Agencies

Disability Services Division

Department of Human Services

December 2004

ii Inclusive Consultation and Better Communication

Inclusive Consultation and Communication

Published by the Community and Individual Support Branch, Disability Services Division, Victorian Government Department of Human Services, Melbourne.

December 2004.

Two brochures are also available in this series:

Consulting with people with a disability

Communicating with people with a disability

© State of Victoria, Department of Human Services, 2004.

This publication is copyright.

No part may be reproduced by any process except in accordance with the provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

Authorised by the State Government of Victoria, 555 Collins St, Melbourne.

Acknowledgments

This document has been produced with assistance from the Communication Aid Users Society Inc (CAUS) and Westernport Speaking Out Inc. Reference has also been made to the following documents:

- Ageing and Disability Department, NSW Health and NSW Government, 1998, *Communication handbook for NSW government agencies*, Ageing and Disability Department, Sydney.
- Department of Human Services, 2000, Guidelines for mental health services: *Working with people who are deaf or hard of hearing*, Department of Human Services, Melbourne.
- Office of Disability Policy, 2000, *Better information and communication practices*, Office of Disability Policy, Canberra.
- Office of Disability Policy, 2000, *Inclusive consultation: A practical guide to involving people with disabilities*, Office of Disability Policy, Canberra.
- Vic Health, VicDeaf, and the Foundation for Young Australians, 2000, *Step by step: Improving access to mental health services for young deaf Australians*, Deaf Australia, Melbourne.

If you require further copies of this Guide or have any queries, please contact:

Disability Services Division
Department of Human Services
Level 19A, 555 Collins Street
Melbourne Vic 3000

Ph: 1300 366 731 (for the cost of a local call)

Fax: 03 9616 7272

TTY: 1300 131 525 (for the cost of a local call),
for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing

Email: statedisabilityplan@dhs.vic.gov.au

Information on communicating and consulting with people with a disability is also available on the Department of Human Services website at:

www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability/communicate

PCS symbols used with permission of Mayer-Johnson, Inc.
(www.mayer-johnson.com). All rights reserved worldwide.

Contents

Introduction	vii
Communicating with people with a disability—general points to remember	1
Face-to-face communication	3
General points to remember	3
Additional information	4
Consultations	7
General points to remember	7
Providing an accessible venue	9
Presentation design	12
Written communication	15
General points to remember	15
What is Easy English?	16
Visual design	16
Other communication tools	17
Koori people who have a disability	21
Written communication	21
Face-to-face communication and consultations	21
People from a culturally and linguistically diverse background who have a disability	23
Written communication	23
Face-to-face communication and consultations	24
Resources	25
Organisations	25
Other resources	37
Further information	39
Appendix 1: Accessible written communication checklist	41
Appendix 2: Accessible consultations checklist	43
Appendix 3: An example of Easy English	47
Appendix 4: Sample invitation	49
Appendix 5: Sample overhead or PowerPoint slides	51
Appendix 6: Contributors to developing this guide	53

Introduction

Communication is one of the most basic needs and rights of all people. And it's something that many of us take for granted. The Victorian Government is committed to developing a stronger and more inclusive community— a community where all people have the same opportunities to participate and to fulfil their aspirations.

However, inequalities still exist for people with a disability in Victoria, in a range of areas, including communication and information provision.¹

These inequalities exist despite a range of laws that are designed to protect and promote equal rights and opportunities for people with a disability.²

How much people enjoy quality of life depends on their ability to participate in the community in which they live. This, in turn, depends partly on their ability to gain access to information and to communicate with others.

The Department of Human Services has developed these guidelines to help government and non-government organisations make their communication practices more accessible to, and inclusive of, people with a disability. The guidelines aim to help you:

- Make your written information more accessible to people with a disability.
- Effectively communicate and consult with people with a disability by actively involving them in the planning, development, delivery, monitoring and review of services.

Making your communication and consultation practices more accessible may not mean extra work or extra costs. However, it DOES mean that you need to think about HOW you communicate and engage with people with a disability. These guidelines will help you to do this.

1 This information was obtained during an extensive consultation process undertaken with people with a disability, their parents, families and carers, service providers, and other members of the broader community in order to inform the development of the State Disability Plan. Inequalities were also highlighted in information obtained from the Department of Human Services, Aspirations of people with a disability within an inclusive Victorian community Research Project (2000). Further information on these initiatives can be obtained from: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/disability

2 Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwlth) and Intellectually Disabled Persons' Services Act 1986 (Vic)

What is a disability?

People with a disability are the largest minority group in our community.

There are many different types of disabilities. A disability can be caused by an accident, illness or a genetic disorder. The main types of disabilities are:

- **Intellectual disability**

(For example, a person who has significantly below average intelligence (based on an IQ test), or who may have difficulty with everyday life skills.)

- **Physical disability**

(For example, a person who uses a wheelchair or has difficulties with communication.)

- **Sensory disability**

(For example, a person who is Deaf, blind or has a vision or hearing impairment.)

- **Psychiatric disability**

(For example, a person who has a mental illness.)

- **Acquired brain injury**

(For example, a person who was not born with a disability, but acquired their disability; perhaps through a car accident or drug abuse.)

- **Neurological impairment**

(For example, a person who has a degenerative condition such as multiple sclerosis, Huntington's Disease or motor neurone disease.)

Some people may have more than one type of disability. For example, a person who has a vision impairment may also have an intellectual disability.

Remember, too, that people with a disability are representative of the diversity of the Victorian population and may belong to a number of communities. For example, they could come from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander or culturally and linguistically diverse background.

Each person's experience of disability is different. These experiences are influenced by the person's own experiences of their individual disability, the attitudes of others towards their disability, how much the community values the differences between people, and how easy it is for a person to get access to information, services and the physical environment.

If you would like to know more about specific types of disability go to:

www.disability.vic.gov.au/dsonline/dsarticles.nsf/pages/su_disability?OpenDocument

Communicating with, and about, people with a disability

Making communication more accessible means that you need to think about HOW you communicate and engage with people with a disability.

Communication is based on respect. You are communicating with people—not with whatever disability they may have. So the way that you use language is important.

To ensure that your communication with and about people with a disability is positive and inclusive:

- Put the **person** first, not their disability.

For example, use the term ‘a person with a disability’, rather than ‘a disabled person’; or ‘a person who is blind’, rather than ‘a blind person’.

- Avoid stereotypes or labels, such as ‘the handicapped’, ‘the blind’ or ‘the disabled’.

While many people may have the same or similar disabilities, they are all unique individuals who deserve to be treated with respect and dignity.

- Avoid using words and phrases that can be demeaning to people with a disability.

For example, use ‘people who use a wheelchair’, rather than words such as ‘crippled’, ‘wheelchair-bound’, ‘incapacitated’ and ‘suffering from’. Talk about ‘people without disabilities’, rather than ‘able-bodied’ or ‘normal’ people.

- Avoid the phrase ‘disabled toilet’.

This phrase implies that the toilet is disabled, rather than being accessible to people with a disability. Use the phrase ‘accessible toilet’ instead.

2 Inclusive Consultation and Better Communication

Face-to-face communication

General points to remember

The following points will help you communicate more effectively with people with a disability.

- If a person with a disability is accompanied by another person, address your questions directly to the person with a disability, rather than to the person with them.
- Don't make assumptions or have preconceptions about people's ability to understand. Speak to a person with a disability as you would speak to anyone else.
- Clarify that the person has understood what you have said. You might do this by asking open-ended questions, rather than questions requiring a 'yes' or 'no' answer.
- Be prepared to rephrase information, using different words, if the person does not understand you.
- Keep your questions simple and make your answers easy to understand.
- Use short sentences.

However, make sure that you don't lose the meaning of your information by using too few words.

- Use the active voice, rather than the passive voice.

For example, use 'We will send your information pack this week,' rather than: 'Your information pack will be sent this week'.

- Use positive, rather than negative sentences, to make your intention clearer.

For example, use 'People willing to continue will be contacted', rather than: 'People unwilling to continue will not be contacted'.

- Give clear explanations of new or complex concepts.

If you must use specialised words or concepts, make sure you explain them. You may wish to produce a summary version of your information, or an Easy English version.

- Use concrete examples to illustrate your point/s.

For example, each of the points in this list is illustrated in a way that clarifies its meaning or gives you a specific example of what each point may mean in practice.

- Be specific and direct. Avoid acronyms, metaphors, puns and colloquialisms.

For example, use 'trains, trams and buses' rather than 'transport services'. Consider using photos or drawings to support and clarify your communication.

4 Inclusive Consultation and Better Communication

- Remember that your body language is important, because people with an intellectual disability often rely heavily on visual cues. For example, a frown or a sigh might be interpreted as displeasure, and might influence the answers that people give you.
- Be prepared to use visual information, or to receive visual information from people with an intellectual disability. For example, people with an intellectual disability may use gestures or pointing to make their ideas clear.
- Some people with a disability may find it difficult to have their say and be understood at a public forum. You may need to organise smaller group meetings, (such as focus groups of no more than 5 to 10 people), to help communicate your message and receive input from participants.
- Have discussion items written in Easy English and use pictures or photos to aid understanding.
- Ensure that everyone at the focus group has an opportunity to have their say.
- Be prepared to wait a while for a reply.
- When someone is giving you a message using a communication aid, it is useful to write the message down as they are 'speaking'.
- Many people use the national telephone relay service if their speech is difficult to understand or if they have a voice output communication aid.
- Consider holding separate focus groups for people who have complex communication needs.
- Remember that it's okay to offer assistance to people with a disability, but it's important to ask before you 'jump in' to help. Ask 'Do you need a hand?' or 'Would you like assistance?'

Additional information

People who are blind or have a vision impairment

- When you meet people who are blind or who have a vision impairment, always address them by name and introduce yourself by name.
- Make sure you are facing the person or people to whom you are speaking.
- When you enter or leave a room, say something that indicates your presence or that you are leaving. This will ensure that the person who is blind or who has a vision impairment will not be embarrassed by speaking to an empty space.
- Speak clearly and in a normal voice. Most people who are blind or who have a vision impairment can hear clearly. There is no need to raise your voice.

- Make sure you verbalise your thoughts and feelings. People who are blind or who have a vision impairment cannot rely on the same visual cues as people who do not have a vision impairment.
- Use words such as 'look' and 'see'—people with a vision impairment use these words too.

People who are deaf or have a hearing impairment

The following tips on communicating with people who are deaf or hard of hearing are adapted from *Step by step: Improving access to mental health services for young Deaf Australians* produced by Vic Health, VicDeaf, and the Foundation for Young Australians (2000); and *Guidelines for mental health services: Working with people who are deaf or hard of hearing* published by the Department of Human Services (2000):

- Gain the person's attention before speaking—perhaps by a gentle tap on the shoulder, a wave or some other visual signal to gain attention.
- Face the person directly and maintain eye contact, positioning yourself opposite them and at the same level if possible. Look directly at the person while speaking. Even a slight turn of the head can obscure the Deaf person's vision.
- Make sure your mouth is visible. Speak evenly—not too fast or slow. Don't exaggerate your mouth movements, as this will make it more difficult to lipread.
- Do not shout—keep your volume up but natural.
- Use short sentences.
- Use gestures, visual cues and facial expressions to support what you say.
- If the Deaf person does not reply or seems to be having difficulty understanding, try to rephrase your message instead of repeating it exactly.
- If necessary, write down key words, or write down the message in simple language. It is better to communicate in writing than have messages misunderstood.

Auslan & oral communication/lipreading

- Australian Sign Language (Auslan) is a community language used by Deaf people in Australia. It is a visual and living language with its own signs, syntax, grammar and idioms. It cannot be written in English word order, but skilled sign language interpreters can translate it into English.
- Finger spelling is a part of Auslan and represents letters of the alphabet. It is usually used for names of people and places.
- People who are deafblind (deaf and blind) often use Auslan to communicate through 'tactile signing', 'touch signing' or 'hand over hand signing'.

6 Inclusive Consultation and Better Communication

- Not all Deaf or hearing impaired people use Auslan to communicate. Some people have residual hearing, which means that they have some hearing and can hear with the assistance of hearing aids or other devices.

Working With Auslan Interpreters

Auslan interpreters should be available for any events where people who are Deaf or hard of hearing will be in attendance.

The role of the interpreter is to be a communication and cultural bridge between the Deaf and hearing people present. The interpreter is not an advocate, counsellor or information resource.

When working with interpreters the hearing person should:

- Speak directly to, and maintain eye contact with, the deaf person. Seat yourself next to the interpreter if possible.
- Position the sign interpreter next to the presenter so that people can watch both the interpreter and the presenter without having to turn their heads.
- Ensure lighting and seating arrangements are appropriate for clear communication to take place. Check the lighting and seating with the deaf person and the interpreter.
- An interpreter should be given a 10 minute break every 30 minutes. It may be necessary to book two interpreters to work in tandem. Discuss this with the staff of the interpreter service.
- Brief the interpreter before to the session if possible. This brief may take the form of:
 - a summary of relevant written material
 - an overview of the meeting/presentation/focus group session
 - relevant vocabulary (for example any special words or signs the interpreter should know).
- Provide written copies of any prewritten speeches, presentations and proceedings to the sign interpreters before the event, if possible.
- Sign interpreters are in high demand, so you need to book at least two weeks in advance. You can book sign interpreters through the following agencies: SensWide; Victorian Deaf Society (VicDeaf) and VITS LanguageLink (see Resources for contact details).
- Consider providing a notetaker for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. Notetakers mean that people who are Deaf or hard of hearing can lipread or access your spoken information by Auslan, and then will have notes available after the meeting ends.

Consultations

General points to remember

People with a disability should have as much input into the planning and development of services and activities as other members of the community. If you are organising community consultations, then remember these general points:

Planning

- **Above all, be creative and flexible.**
- **Think about the people you want to consult and how you can best involve them.** Consider seeking help to plan your consultation so it will be inclusive and effective.
- **Ensure all community consultations are inclusive so that people with disabilities can participate in the same ways as other community members.** However, in some cases you may want to run a forum or focus group to seek the views of a particular group of people with a disability.
- **Remember that some people with a disability may find it difficult to have their say and be understood in a public forum.** You may need to organise smaller group meetings (such as focus groups of no more than 5 to 10 people) to help communicate your message and receive input from the participants.
- **Remember that the needs of each person with a disability are unique.** Just because two people have the same type of disability does not mean that their needs are the same.
- **If you are organising consultation forums, conferences, meetings, workshops or other events, make sure the venue is accessible—both inside and out.** The best way to do this is to visit the venue yourself. There are a number of issues that should be considered, including closeness to trams, trains and buses, accessible toilets, clear signage, wheelchair access, door width and type, lighting, etc. See ‘Appendix 2: Accessible consultation checklist’.
- **Try to consult in a range of ways.** Consider using face-to face and telephone interviews, small groups, and written surveys—not just forums— as some people may not feel comfortable talking in front of others.
- **Use a skilled facilitator.** Ensure that the person facilitating the consultation understands the needs of people with a disability, and members of your targeted audience. Check the needs of participant(s) with a disability if you are not clear.
Make sure that the person facilitating the consultation understands the issues being discussed. Brief them beforehand, if necessary.
- **Ensure your budget is adequate.** For example, your budget may need to cover attendant care and interpreter costs, or the cost of producing written material in a range of formats.

8 Inclusive Consultation and Better Communication

People with disabilities often have limited incomes. Consider whether you can pay people for their time, or cover travel and other participation costs.

Promoting

- **Give people time to arrange attendance, or offer them a range of times.**

Advertise the dates and times for the consultation well in advance. The times should allow for people's routines, such as attending work, school and other activities.

You may need to hold more consultation forums to target different groups of people. For example, forums for parents of children who have a disability will need to be scheduled to enable parents to drop off and pick up children from school.

- **Choose a suitable time or times.** Avoid starting meetings early in the morning, as people using attendant carers or those reliant on wheelchair accessible taxis may find it difficult to attend.

Wheelchair accessible taxis can also be delayed, so be prepared to stay and wait with participants until transport arrives.

- **Use the appropriate networks.** Use organisations or community groups that support people with a disability to help you conduct your consultation forum, distribute invitations, or publish information in their newsletters or website. Talk to the agencies listed in this guide for assistance. You may also like to consider using the following websites to promote your consultation: Better Health Channel, which includes an event calendar; Disability Online, which includes an Events Calendar and Latest News section; Inforxchange Australia which includes Disability News and a listing of events (see Resources for contact details).
- **Consider using radio.** Some people with a physical or sensory disability use the Radio for the Print Handicapped (3RPH) to access information (see Resources for contact details).

Invitations

- **Be inclusive.** Invite people with different abilities and backgrounds, and make sure you include people who don't always get asked to have their say.
- **Ask people if they have any particular requirements.** Most people will be happy to tell you if they need support, such as an attendant carer or sign interpreter or special equipment like a hearing loop or hoist. (See Appendix 5: Sample Invitation for more information.)

- **Give clear directions and offer support.** Include a map reference, and train or other transport information with the invitation if possible. Also provide the name and mobile number of someone who can be contacted on the day in case anyone needs help to find the venue.
- **Use a range of invitation and RSVP formats.** Language should be clear and simple, use picture based symbols to support the written information. Ensure all information and correspondence can be replied to in a number of ways, such as fax, Telephone Typewriter (TTY) and email. If asking for a written response, provide a 'Reply paid' address.

Providing an accessible venue

Getting into the venue

- There should be easy access into the venue. This includes:
 - Appropriate signage.
 - Access for people who use wheelchairs (via the front entrance and not via a side alley or back door, if possible).
- Ensuring the entrance is free from steps.
- Ensuring that doorways are wide enough to fit a wheelchair (850mm).
- Ensuring the entrance has sliding doors, or doors that are easy to open.
- Making sure people with a physical disability are able to access the venue independently—that is, without assistance from security or other personnel.
- If the venue has steps, there should also be a hand-rail to enable people with a physical disability (who do not use a wheelchair) to gain access to the building.
- Consider how close the venue is to public transport. For example, is it near a railway station? If not, are there designated accessible parking bays and safe pick-up/drop-off areas? Provide information about this on invitations.
- Ensure that parking bays are within a reasonable distance of the venue. If possible, provide seating nearby so people can wait for their family or friends to collect them.
- More information on physical access rules and standards for people with a disability can be obtained from the Disability Discrimination Legal Service and Standards Association of Australia (see Resources for contact details).

Inside the venue

- Ensure people can move around the venue easily. Make sure there is adequate circulation space for wheelchairs, and that hallways and other areas are wide enough for two people using wheelchairs to pass each other.
- Make sure doorways can be kept open to enable easy access to and from the room/s.
- Ensure that tables are high enough to enable people who use a wheelchair to sit at them.
- Ensure that tea and coffee and other refreshment facilities are accessible to people in a wheelchair. Provide flexible straws and serviettes. Polystyrene cups can be awkward for people to handle. It is a good idea to have some other cups with large handles.
- Allow extra time in breaks, so people can eat without rushing and also attend to personal needs.
- If required, ensure that the stage is accessible—that is, does the stage have a ramp with handrails and does the ramp have the correct gradient?
- If accommodation facilities are required, are there accessible bedrooms with accessible bathrooms? If yes, how many bedrooms are accessible?
- If people are staying at the venue, is there access to common areas within the facility?
- Remember to provide a verbal description of the layout of the venue (for example, the location of the toilets, entrances and exits, telephones and the catering arrangements) for people who are blind or have a vision impairment. People may also need assistance to find refreshments.
- Are there any other features which address accessibility, such as Braille and tactile signage, a hearing augmentation system, tactile ground surface indicators, etc.?
- Name Tags should have the font size as large as possible (for example, 36 points), with one line for each of the person's names.
- Provide places for people who use a wheelchair throughout the seating arrangements, not just in the back row. If you are using a theatrette, there should be seating space for wheelchairs.
- For people with a physical disability who do not use a wheelchair, have a range of seating available. Stable chairs with backs and armrests suit some people, while people of small stature may appreciate chairs of adjustable height.
- Ensure the flooring has a non-slip surface, or that carpeting is less than 6 mm deep.

- Ensure that all electrical cords are secured to avoid accidents. Use contrasting tape, so people can easily identify uneven surfaces.
- Ensure that there are accessible toilets for people with a physical disability. These toilets should:
 - Have entry doors that are easy to open (for example, sliding doors).
 - Be unisex for people who have a carer of the opposite sex.
 - Have space at one side of the toilet to enable people to transfer easily to the toilet.
 - Have grab-rails beside and at the rear of the toilet.
 - Have hand-basins, mirrors, toilet paper, flushing controls and hand dryers that are at a height suitable for people who use a wheelchair.
- You may also need a hoist for people who need assistance with toileting.

Hoists can be obtained through the ILC Equipment Library. Advice about equipment can be obtained from therapists at the Independent Living Centre, using the same contact numbers as the Equipment Library (see Resources for contact details).

- Some people with a physical disability need assistance from specialist services to attend consultation forums, conferences, meetings or other events. These include attendant carers, who provide a range of personal care services to people with a disability in areas such as toileting and eating. If someone says they need attendant care to attend a forum, ask them if they have a preferred attendant care provider.
- There are a number of agencies that provide attendant care in different parts of Victoria. These agencies can be found at the Disability Online internet site (www.disability.vic.gov.au). Click on Service Directory and type in 'Attendant Care'.

People with guide dogs

- There is no need to speak through someone else, including the dog. Communicate in the usual manner and address the person directly.
- If the person is accompanied by a guide dog, do not pat it, feed it or otherwise distract it while it is in harness. A dog in harness is working.

12 Inclusive Consultation and Better Communication

Hearing augmentation systems

- To make your forums, conferences, meetings or other events more inclusive of people who are Deaf or hard of hearing also:
- Use an amplified system such as a PA system where possible.
- Provide a TTY facility, so people who are Deaf or hard of hearing can have access to information, and communicate with you about your event.
- Provide a portable hearing augmentation system such as a portable FM transmitter system or a hearing induction loop in the meeting room. People who wear a hearing aid with a T switch can tune into the FM transmitter system/hearing loop, giving them better access to oral information.
- Portable hearing loops can be accessed free of charge or by donation (a \$50 deposit may apply) from Better Hearing Australia (see Resources for details). Other hearing augmentation systems can be hired from Word of Mouth Technology Pty Ltd (see Resources for contact details).

Presentation design

Designing presentations for people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment

- Ensure that any videos screened have captions (subtitles) that are positioned in the participant's line of sight.
- If you are using overheads or a PowerPoint presentation and talking at the same time, leave enough light on your face and on the sign interpreter to make sure people can understand what you are saying.
- Try to eliminate as much background noise as possible.
- Provide written material to the audience to support any oral presentations.
- Useful contacts when consulting or communicating with people who are deaf or hard of hearing include: Australian caption Centre; Better hearing Australis; SensWide Communication; Victorian Council of Deaf People Incorporated (VCOD); and Victorian Deaf Society (VicDeaf) (see Resources for contact details).

Designing presentations for people who have a vision impairment

- If you are using overheads or a PowerPoint presentation, remember to:
 - Use light coloured letters (white or yellow) on a dark background (black or dark blue).
 - Ensure that your font size is no smaller than 24 point, so people can read your material.
 - Ensure that each slide does not have too much information. No more than 4–5 points per slide is recommended. (See ‘Appendix 6: Sample Overhead or PowerPoint Slide’).
 - Hand out copies of your presentation before the actual presentation.
 - Explain the content of your slides, especially if you are using graphs and diagrams.
 - Turn off the lights during your presentation, and turn them back on when you are finished.
- Make sure you have space towards the front of your venue for people who have a vision impairment. They may not be able to see you, or your presentation, from the side or back of the room.
- If you are using videos during your presentation, explain the context of the video to make listening to the video easier.

14 Inclusive Consultation and Better Communication

Written communication

General points to remember

- Provide information in a range of formats, such as video, audio tape and Easy English (see below and ‘Appendix 3: An example of Easy English’) and picture versions.
- Some people with a disability find it easier to understand information better if it is presented visually. You can draw your own line drawings or cartoons. Or you can buy line drawing systems such as ©COMPIC³ and ©PCS Boardmaker.⁴ Some line drawings can be complex and difficult to understand. It is important to keep your information and pictures concrete and meaningful. Not all people with complex communication needs can interpret line drawings—clear, uncluttered photographs may be easier to interpret and so be a better option.
- Where it is not possible to produce information in Easy English (for example, for legal reasons), consider producing a summary version of your information.
- Use pictures or drawings throughout your document to make it more interesting and easier to understand.
- Use a larger font size and a sans serif font, as it is easier to read (for example, Tahoma, Arial, Courier or Helvetica in 14 or 16 point).
- Be specific and direct. Avoid jargon and acronyms wherever possible.
- Consider using posters that combine graphic images and verbal information if you need to convey a message over a longer period of time.
- In written information, the word ‘deaf’ has a small d (deaf) when it refers to all people who are deaf or hard of hearing. A capital D (Deaf) should be used when referring to the culture and language of the Deaf community or to people who identify themselves as part of the Deaf community.
- Written information is generally accessible to people who are Deaf or hard of hearing. However, you should use plain English, as some people may have had limited educational opportunities.

3 Copyright ©COMPIC 1998

4 Copyright ©PCS Boardmaker 1997 – 2001 Mayer-Johnson, Inc

What is Easy English?

Easy English is a form of plain English that is used for writing information. Here are some key points to remember when preparing information in Easy English:

- Use short sentences, but don't lose the meaning of your information by using too few words.
- Use the active voice, rather than the passive voice. For example, use 'We will send your information pack this week,' rather than: 'Your information pack will be sent this week'.
- Give clear explanations of new or complex concepts. If you must use specialised words or concepts, make sure you explain them.
- Use concrete examples to illustrate your point/s.
- Use positive, rather than negative sentences (for example, use 'Are you going home?', rather than 'You're not going home now are you?').
- Be specific. For example, use 'trains' rather than 'transport services'.
- Avoid acronyms, metaphors, puns, and colloquialisms.
- If you are providing instructions, be specific and direct.

In Appendix 3, we provide an example to show how information can be summarised and transformed into an Easy English version with pictures.

There are a number of organisations that can help you transform your written material into Easy English and/or a picture version. These include: Communication Aids & Resources Material Service (CARM); ComTEC; LOTE Marketing; and Vision Australia Foundation (see Resources for contact details).

Visual design

Fonts

- Use a font size of at least 12 point. Or produce a large print document using a 16 or 18 point font. Page numbers should be the same size as the text. Organisations who can help you with large print and other formats are listed at the end of this section.
- Avoid complicated or decorative fonts (such as Algerian or Blackadder) as well as italics and other decorative effects, as some people find these difficult to read. Instead, use sans serif fonts such as Arial or Tahoma.

Paragraph space and margins

- AVOID USING BLOCKS OF TEXT WRITTEN IN CAPITAL LETTERS. Information is more readable if it is written using a mix of upper and lower case letters, as in this document.
- Separate paragraphs with blank lines, or indent paragraphs to make it easier to find the start of the next paragraph.
- Make sure your margins are the same width on both sides of the page. Your margins should be justified on the left hand side, and unjustified on the right hand side.

Colour

- Printed information is most readable in black and white (black text on a white background). Do not use red, and do not put pictures behind the writing.

Paper

- Use paper with a matt finish, as glossy paper can be more difficult to read. Also make sure your paper is thick enough to ensure that print does not show through from the other side.

Other communication tools

Audio

- Audiotape information that will be widely distributed should be professionally produced. Organisations who can help with this are listed at the end of this section.
- Audio is most useful if the information can be read from beginning to end without needing to refer to other parts of the document. Certain types of information (such as directories or questionnaires) do not work well on cassette.
- Consider advertising your material using the Radio for the Print Handicapped (3RPH).

Braille

- Braille is a system of writing used by people who are blind. In Braille, characters are represented by patterns of raised dots. Anything can be translated into Braille, including text, music, mathematics and foreign languages.
- When preparing information to be brailled, keep the document layout as simple as possible, as this aids transcription. Some organisations that can help you produce Braille text are listed at the end of this section.

Electronic

- Consider providing information electronically, such as on disk or via email or the Internet. Many people with a vision impairment have access to technology which transforms information into a form that they can use, such as large print, computer-generated voice technology or Braille.
- Ensure that your Internet web pages are accessible to people with a range of disabilities, including vision impairment. Some key points to remember are:
 - Provide descriptions of all images (photographs, graphic images and interactive images).
 - Provide text transcripts of any audio clips.
 - Provide descriptions of moving visual information.
 - Avoid columns or tables of text, or provide an alternative format for people with a disability.
 - Make sure you use appropriate colour contrasts (for example, light text on a dark background or dark text on a light background).
 - Try to use sans serif fonts and large print.
 - Test your web-pages to make sure they are compatible with various browsers.
 - Always use a standard HTML format.
 - Use default setting for fonts, as this allows people to adjust font sizes to suit their own needs.
- There are many resources available to help you develop web pages that are accessible to people with a disability. Please refer to the resources section at the end of this guide for a listing under 'Developing accessible web pages'.
- The following organisations can provide advice and assistance in preparing material in large print, audiotape, Braille, or accessible web design: Blind Citizens Australia; Christine Simpson Information Alternatives; Jolley William and Associates P/L; Lote Marketing; Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind; and Vision Australia Foundation (see Resources for contact details).

Telephone Typewriter

If you want feedback on written information, or have people available to provide further information, provide a Telephone Typewriter (TTY) facility to enable people who are deaf to contact you.

A TTY uses the telephone network to transmit text messages between TTYs. The user types a message onto a keyboard or computer that is connected to a telephone handset or modem. A TTY is not difficult to use. It is just like communicating over the telephone—only you type rather than speak. TTYs may be purchased from Word of Mouth Technology Pty Ltd (see Resources for contact details).

If you wish to communicate with someone who is a TTY user and you do not have access to a TTY, you can contact the National Relay Service to assist you (see Resources for contact details). The National Relay Service will relay your spoken message to the TTY user, and then relay their typed message to you via speech.

Koori people who have a disability

The Victorian Koori community is made up of a number of communities, based on language and cultural groups, extended family networks or clans, and Indigenous migration from other states and territories.

People from a Koori background who have a disability may prefer not to be identified as such, because of subcultural meanings attached to 'disability'. An Aboriginal identity rather than a disability identity is usually more important to Koori people.

Information circulated using the usual methods of communication will not necessarily reach the Koori population.

Written communication

Written information is not always the most culturally appropriate way of communicating with Koori people.

Liaise with Koori community groups to engage the Koori community, and ensure that written information is both accessible and culturally appropriate. It may also be useful to:

- Involve Koori people in the development, design and layout of material.
- Use graphics that include people with disabilities from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.
- Use concrete examples to assist people to understand the implications of any proposals.

Face-to-face communication and consultations

The key to engaging the Koori community in events in local communities is to engage the Koori community and the elders from that community in the planning, development and delivery of your event.

Some other tips to consider are:

- Involve Aboriginal people in the presentation of material, for example, as co-facilitators and speakers.
- Consider the 'friendliness' of the venue. Can you hold your event in a venue regularly used by the Koori community?
- The following organisations are a starting point to help you find out how to engage with the Koori community, including advice on written information and community consultations: Aboriginal Affairs Victoria; Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO); and Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd (VACSAL) (see Resources for contact details).

22 Inclusive Consultation and Better Communication

People from a culturally and linguistically diverse background who have a disability

Gaining access to services, supports and activities can be twice as difficult for people who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and who have a disability.

The following tips and recommendations should be considered in the context of the information provided in other sections of this document, and the nature of people's individual needs.

Written communication

Written information is often not accessible to people with a disability who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. When preparing written material, remember to:

- Translate your material into a range of community languages. Wherever possible, use an accredited translation service such as All Graduates Interpreting and Translating Services and VITS LanguageLink (see Resources for contact details).
- Other translation service providers can be found at Disability Online (www.disability.vic.gov.au). Search the Service Directory for 'interpreting and translating services'.
- Make sure the translator understands the nature and purpose of your written material. If possible, have the translated material checked to ensure that it has been translated appropriately and that the cultural context has been considered.
- Seek advice on how to present your material to make sure it informs rather than offends people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Two organisations that can help you are Cultural Partners Australia and Cultural Perspectives (see Resources for contact details).
- Use ethnic media services (ethnic newspapers and radio) to promote your information. Provide copies of your information to the relevant media service, together with details of which language groups you wish to target.
- Provide alternative formats of your material in a range of community languages. This includes providing standard print format, Easy English, audiotape, electronic and Internet copies of your information in a range of languages. LOTE Marketing can help, also Vision Australia Foundation can produce audio format for languages other than English if the print text is provided (see Resources for contact details).

Face-to-face communication and consultations

Interpreters

- Use a relevant language interpreter to make your consultation forum, meeting, workshop or event more accessible to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who have a disability. Language interpreters can be hired through All Graduates Interpreting and Translating Services and VITS LanguageLink (see Resources for contact details).
- Other interpreter service providers can be found at Disability Online (www.disability.vic.gov.au). Search the Service Directory for ‘interpreting and translating services’.

Other tips for face-to-face communication

- Depending on your audience, you may need to hold a number of different forums for people of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
- Where possible, facilitators should have training in working cross-culturally and working with interpreters.
- Advise speakers to pace the delivery of their presentations to give interpreters time to translate.
- Use ethnic media, such as press and radio services, to promote your consultations.
- Engage ethnic organisations to help you to develop and conduct your consultation, and ensure that it is culturally appropriate. One organisation that may be able to help you do this is Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC) (see Resources for contact details).

Additional resources

‘Access to information about government services among culturally and linguistically diverse audiences’ (2001), is another very useful reference for communicating with people from a CALD background.

This publication is the result of qualitative research which was commissioned by the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet. It describes the ways that specific categories of CALD Victorians (across 20 language groups) most like to receive information about government services.

The research is presented in a practical format that provides a checklist guide for developing communication strategies aimed at specific categories of CALD Victorians. Recommended for government and non-government agencies, it is available for \$45.00 from the Information Victoria Bookshop (see Resources for contact details).

Resources

This section contains the contact details for each of the agencies referred to in this guide.

Organisations

Aboriginal Affairs Victoria

Level 9/ 1 Spring Street
Melbourne Vic 3000
Tel: 03 9208 3333
Fax: 03 9208 3292
Website: www.dvc.vic.gov.au/aav.htm

Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC)

ADEC is a community-based organisation which represents the rights and needs of people with a disability who are of non-English speaking background, and their carers. Assistance with development and conduct of consultation to ensure it is culturally appropriate.

175 Plenty Road
Preston Vic 3072
Tel: 03 9480 1666 or
1800 626 078 (toll free)
Fax: 03 9480 3444
Email: info.adec.org.au
Website: www.adec.org.au

All Graduates Interpreting and Translating Services

Accredited translation service.

3 Saint David Street
Fitzroy Vic 3065
Tel: 03 9416 4911
Fax: 03 9416 4922
Email: admin@allgraduates.com.au
Website: www.allgraduates.com.au

ARBIAS Acquired Brain Injury Services

Provides services for people with ABI from any cause, while maintaining a focus on the areas of alcohol and drug related brain injury. May be able to help you make your consultations more accessible to people who have an acquired brain injury (ABI).

183 Gertrude Street

Fitzroy Vic 3065

Tel: 03 9417 7071

Fax: 03 9417 7056

Email: arbias@arbias.com.au

Website: www.arbias.org.au

Australian Caption Centre

Provides information about accessing television subtitles and program availability. Provides support with captioning videos.

Tel: 03 9696 1996

Fax: 03 9696 1994

TTY: 03 9696 1996 (for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing)

Email: accmelb@auscap.com.au

Website: www.auscap.com.au

Bear in Mind

A self-advocacy and community education group for people with acquired brain injury. Support groups and projects are held in community-based venues in metropolitan and country regions. May be able to help you make your consultations more accessible to people who have an acquired brain injury (ABI).

Ross House

4/247-251 Flinders Lane

Melbourne Vic 3000

Tel: 03 9639 7222

Fax: 03 9654 1057

Email: bim_statewide@yahoo.com.au

Website: www.vicnet.net.au/~bim/

Better Hearing Australia

Will hire out hearing augmentation systems.

5 High Street

Prahran Vic 3181

Tel: 03 9510 1577

Fax: 03 9510 6076

TTY: 03 9510 3499 (for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing)

Email: bhavic@betterhearing.org.au

Website: www.betterhearing.org.au

Blind Citizens Australia

A national advocacy organisation for people who are blind and vision impaired, specialising in individual and systemic advocacy and providing consultation to government, community and private organisations. Advice and assistance in preparing materials for people with vision impairment.

13 Barrett Street

Kensington Vic 3031

Tel: 03 9372 6400 or 1800 033 660

Fax: 03 9372 6466

TTY: 03 9376 9275

E-mail: bca@bca.org.au

Website: www.bca.org.au

Brain Foundation Victoria

Primarily provides an information and education service on ABI, including stroke, neurological conditions, children with ABI, and headache and migraine. Support with making consultations more accessible to people who have an acquired brain injury (ABI).

The Nerve Centre

54 Railway Road

Blackburn Vic 3130

Tel: 03 9845 2950

Fax: 03 9845 2882

Email: admin@brainfoundation.org.au

Website: www.brainfoundation.org.au

Kangan Batman TAFE

Provide Auslan classes.

Tel: 03 9425 5777
Fax: 03 9425 5778
Email: lhertan@kangan.edu.au
Website: www.kangan.edu.au

Christine Simpson Information Alternatives

Advice and assistance in preparing materials for people with vision impairment.

18 Prosper Pde
Glen Iris Vic 3146
Tel: 03 9889 0392
Fax: 03 9889 6286
Mob: 0418 331 506
Email: simpsonc@bigpond.net.au

Communication Aids & Resource Material Service (CARM)

2nd Floor
830 Whitehorse Road
Box Hill Vic 3128
Tel: 03 9843 2013
1800 888 824 for callers outside Melbourne
Fax: 03 9843 2033
Email: crc@scopevic.org.au
Website: www.scopevic.org.au

Communication Aid Users Society Inc (CAUS)

Provides specialist services that address the barriers preventing people with communication impairment from accessing their rights. Production of materials in Easy English. Support with setting up consultations for people with an intellectual disability and people with complex communication needs. CAUS offers a range of resources.

269 Centre Road
Bentleigh Vic 3204
Tel: 03 9557 5551
Fax: 03 9557 5590
Website: www.users.bigpond.com/causinc/

Communication Resource Centre (CRC)

Support with setting up consultations for people with complex communication needs.

830 Whitehorse Road

Box Hill Vic 3128

Tel: 03 9843 2000

1800 888 824 for callers outside Melbourne

Fax: 03 9843 2033

Email: crc@scopevic.org.au

Website: www.scopevic.org.au

ComTEC

Has expertise in communication and technology for people with a disability.

Production of materials in Easy English. Support with setting up consultations for people with complex communication needs.

705 Geelong Road

Brooklyn Vic 3025

Tel: 03 9362 6145

Fax: 03 9314 9825

Email: comtec@yooralla.com.au

Website: www.yooralla.com.au

Cultural Partners Australia

Cultural Partners Australia provide specialist communication services using an in-depth understanding of multicultural and Indigenous communities.

Level 15, 10 Queens Road

Melbourne Vic 3004

Tel: 03 9867 2227

Fax: 03 9867 1775

Email: info@culturalpartners.com.au

Website: www.culturalpartners.com.au

Cultural Perspectives

Cultural Perspectives provide consultancy, research, advertising, public relations, accredited translating and media monitoring services related to multiculturalism and cultural diversity.

Como Centre
14/644 Chapel Street
South Yarra Vic 3141
Tel: 03 9289 9577
Fax: 03 9827 9777
Email: melbourne@culper.com.au
Website: www.culper.com.au

Disability Discrimination Legal Service

Can provide information on physical access rules and standards.

2nd floor/289 Barkley Street
Footscray Vic 3011
Tel: 03 9689 8011
1800 882 872 free call country Victoria
Fax: 03 9689 8022
TTY: 03 9689 8066 (for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing)
Email: info@ddls.org.au
Website: www.ddls.org.au

Headway Victoria

Headway is the key advocacy and information service for people living with ABI. Support with making consultations more accessible to people who have an acquired brain injury (ABI).

86 Herbert Street
Northcote Vic 3070
Tel: 03 9482 2955 or 1800 817 964
Fax: 03 9482 5855
Email: mail@headwayvictoria.org.au
Website: www.headwayvictoria.org.au

ILC Equipment Library

The library hires out specialised equipment to meet short term needs.

705 Geelong Road

Brooklyn Vic 3025

Tel: 03 9362 6111

Fax: 03 93149825

TTY: 03 9314 9001 (for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing)

Website: www.yooralla.com.au

Jolley William and Associates Pty Ltd

Jolley William and Associates Pty Ltd specialise in the production of large print, braille and eText material.

20 Wadham Parade

Mt Waverley Vic 3149

Tel: 03 9807 5137

Email: wjolley@bigpond.com

LOTE Marketing

LOTE Marketing can help you produce material in languages other than English, and material for people with an intellectual disability and/or low literacy skill.

53–55 Oliver Street

Ringwood Vic 3134

Tel: 03 9879 6234

Fax: 03 9879 6215

Email: gmeakin@lotemarketing.com.au

Website: www.lotemarketing.com.au

National Relay Service (NRS)

An Australia-wide telephone access service that relays calls. People with speech impairment can contact anyone through the NRS, using a TTY or a computer with a modem.

Tel: 13 3677 (local and chargeable calls)

1800 555 660 (free calls within Australia)

Fax: 1800 555 690

TTY: 1800 555 630 (for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing)

Website: www.aceinfo.net.au

32 Inclusive Consultation and Better Communication

People First

Self advocacy support for people with an intellectual disability.

Support with setting up consultations for people with an intellectual disability.

C/o Westernport Speaking Out

PO Box 1034

Frankston Vic 3199

Tel: 03 9770 1710

Email: wps@vicnet.net.au

Psychiatric Disability Services of Victoria (VICSERV) Inc

VICSERV is the peak body for community mental health rehabilitation and support services in Victoria. They can help you organise consultations for people who have a psychiatric disability.

370 St Georges Road

North Fitzroy Vic 3068

Tel: 03 9482 7111

Fax: 03 9482 7281

Email: vicserve@vicserve.org.au

Website: www.vicserve.org.au

Radio for the Print Handicapped (3RPH)

454 Glenferrie Road

Kooyong Vic 3144

Tel: 03 9864 9333

Website: www.visionaustralia.org.au

Reinforce

Self advocacy support for people with an intellectual disability.

Support with setting up consultations for people with an intellectual disability.

2nd Floor, Ross House

247–251 Flinders Lane

Melbourne Vic 3000

Tel: 03 9650 7855

Fax: 03 9639 4342

Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (National Information & Library Service)

The Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (RVIB) specialises in the production of large print, audiotape, electronic, and Braille material for people who are blind or vision impaired. RVIB can also produce Braille material in languages other than English.

454 Glenferrie Road

Kooyong Vic 3144

Tel: 03 9521 3400 or
1300 654 656

Fax: 03 9864 9677

Email: library@nils.org.au

Website: www.nil.org.au

SensWide Services

Sign interpreters.

7/250 Queen Street

Melbourne Vic 3000

Tel: 03 9642 8848

Fax: 03 9642 8750

TTY: 03 9642 8754

Email: info@senswide.com.au

Website: www.senswide.com.au

Standards Association of Australia

Can provide information on physical access rules and standards.

Tel: 1300 654 646

Fax: 1300 654 949

Website: www.standards.com.au

VALID (Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability)

Advocacy support for people with an intellectual disability.

Support with setting up consultations for people with an intellectual disability.

235 Napier Street

Fitzroy Vic 3065

Tel: 03 9416 4003

Fax: 03 9416 0850

Email: office@valid.org.au

Website: www.valid.org.au

Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)

VACCHO is a statewide peak body for Aboriginal community-controlled health services.

5-7 Smith Street
Fitzroy Vic 3065
Tel: 03 9419 3350
Fax: 03 9417 3871
Email: cherylf@vaccho.com.au

Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association Ltd (VACSAL)

VACSAL is a statewide organisation with strong links to Aboriginal Cooperatives in Victoria.

171 Smith Street
Fitzroy Vic 3065
Tel: 03 9416 4266 or
03 9416 4146
Fax: 03 9416 4147
Email: vacsai@onthe.net.au

Victorian Council of Deaf People Incorporated (VCOD)

VCOD is a consumer-managed statewide advocacy and information agency which can provide support and information to organisations wanting to further their knowledge about deafness and deaf people.

Cook House
597 St Kilda Rd
Melbourne Vic 3000
Tel: 133 677 and quote the TTY Number of the person you wish to call
TTY: 03 9521 2466 (for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing)
1300 555 812 TTY/Voice Country and Interstate Callers
Fax: 03 9510 4449
Email: info@vcod.com.au
Website: www.vcod.com.au

Victorian Deaf Society (VicDeaf)

Provide Auslan classes. Sign interpreters.

Level 4/340 Albert Street
East Melbourne Vic 3002

For general inquiries:

Tel: 03 9473 1111

Fax: 03 9473 1122

TTY: 03 9473 1199 (for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing)

email: vais@vicdeaf.com.au

For interpreting or notetaker services:

Tel: 03 9473 1111

Fax: 03 9473 1144

Email: ints@vicdeaf.com.au

Website: www.vicdeaf.com.au

The Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC)

VMIAC is a consumer and survivor advocacy organisation for people with mental health problems. They can help you organise consultations for people who have a psychiatric disability.

23 Weston Street

Brunswick Vic 3056

Tel: 03 9387 8317

Fax: 03 9388 1445

Website: www.vmiac.com.au

Vision Australia Foundation

The Vision Australia Foundation can help you produce materials in Easy English, in languages other than English, and in audio format if the print text is provided.

454 Glenferrie Road

Kooyong Vic 3144

Tel: 03 9864 9342

Fax: 03 9864 9650

Email: Tony.Clark@visionaustralia.org.au

Website: www.visionaustralia.org.au

VITS LanguageLink

Sign interpreters. Accredited translation service, language interpreters.

1 /371 Spencer Street

Melbourne Vic 3000

Tel: 03 9280 1955

Fax: 03 9280 1960

TTY: 03 9280 1955 or

03 280 1941 (for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing)

Email: vits@vits.com.au

Website: www.vits.com.au

Westernport Speaking Out

Self advocacy support for people with an intellectual disability.

Support with setting up consultations for people with an intellectual disability.

PO Box 1034

Frankston Vic 3199

Tel: 03 9770 1710

Email: wpso@vicnet.net.au

Word of Mouth Technology Pty Ltd

For purchase of TTY's; hiring of hearing augmentation systems.

23 Macauley Place

Bayswater Vic 3153

Tel: 03 9729 9974

Fax: 03 9729 8863

TTY: 03 9729 9969

Email: Andrew@wom.com.au

Website: www.wom.com.au

Other resources

On-line information sources

Better Health Channel

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Disability Online

www.disability.vic.gov.au

The Disability Online Internet site includes an Events Calendar, Latest News, information on health topics and disability related articles.

Infoxchange Australia

www.infoxchange.net.au

Provides community information online. This includes Disability News and a listing of events.

Developing accessible web pages

AccessAbility

AccessAbility is a searchable database of local, national and international resources about online access for people with a disability.

Website: www.accessability.noie.gov.au

BOBBY Web Page Accessibility Validator

BOBBY is a service provided by the Center for Applied Technology (CAST) to help find problems in your web page which make it inaccessible to people with a disability.

Website: www.cast.org/bobby/

eGovernment Resource Centre

This website provides reliable, up-to-date and relevant information on accessibility, as well as an Accessibility Toolkit. Produced by Multimedia Victoria, the site aims to ensure that all Victorian State Government departments and agencies comply with accessibility guidelines.

Website: <http://www.egov.vic.gov.au/Victoria/StrategiesPoliciesandReports/Reports/Accessibility-Toolkit/Accessibility-Toolkit.htm>

38 Inclusive Consultation and Better Communication

WC3 Accessibility Developments

This site focuses on standards, developments and issues in web page development as they relate to accessibility for people with a disability.

Website: www.w3.org/WAI/

Packages

‘Communicate With Me’ and ‘Communicate With Us’ packages developed by Communication Aid Users Society Inc (CAUS). These packages are aimed at promoting positive communication experiences between people with complex communication needs and their communication partners—including family, friends, support staff and the broader community.

‘Accessible information for people with speech and communication impairment’ (developed by CAUS in partnership with Deakin University). These guidelines provide direction to key stakeholders on how to provide information that is accessible to people with complex communication needs.

Website: www.users.bigpond.com/causinc/research.htm

All available from CAUS.

Videos

Ideas that Work have produced a video in conjunction with ParaQuad Victoria and MediQuest. Titled “*Just Like You: A guide to etiquette and communication with people with a disability*” it provides an excellent introduction on how to communicate with people with a disability. Copies of the video can be purchased for \$90.00 (plus postage and handling) by contacting:

Ideas that Work
7 Murray St
Pahran 3181

Tel: 03 9525 1407

Fax: 03 9525 1424

Email: ideas@ideasthatwork.com.au

Website: www.ideasthatwork.com.au/just.html

Further information

Two checklists have been included as Appendices at the back of this document to help you make your communication practices more inclusive.

They are:

- Appendix 1: Accessible written communication checklist.
- Appendix 2: Accessible consultations checklist.

If you would like more information or help in developing information or consulting with people with a disability please contact:

Community Building Unit
Disability Services Division
Department of Human Services

19/555 Collins St

Melbourne Vic 3000

Tel: 1300 366 731 (for the cost of a local call)

Tel: 03 9616 6960

Fax: 03 9616 7272

TTY: 1300 131 525 for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing
(for the cost of a local call)

Email: statedisabilityplan@dhs.vic.gov.au

Another useful organisation is:

Disability Advisory Council of Victoria

5/555 Collins Street

Melbourne Vic 3000

Tel: 1300 880 043 (Victoria only)

Fax: 03 9616 7300

TTY: 03 9616 8896 (for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing)

Email: dacv@dhs.vic.gov.au

Website: www.dac.vic.gov.au

Appendix 1: Accessible written communication checklist

Use this checklist to help you quickly and easily assess whether your written information is accessible to people with a range of different disabilities.

This checklist is a guide only, and reflects some of the issues outlined earlier in this document. For more in depth information, see the sections covering written communication throughout this document.

	Yes	No
Have you made alternative formats of your information available, such as:		
• Easy English, picture or photo versions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Summary version?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Large print?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Audiotape?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Braille?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Electronic formats accessible to adaptive technologies (including floppy disk, CD, email or the Internet)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Videotape?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Community languages?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you worked with local ethnic and Koori services to develop your material in a culturally appropriate manner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you used local media (for example, Radio for Print Handicapped, ethnic press, etc.) to promote your information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a TTY facility available so people who are Deaf or hard of hearing can contact you to talk about your information?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your material: use terms such as ‘person with a disability’ rather than ‘disabled person’; avoid stereotypes such as ‘the handicapped’; avoid terms such as ‘suffering from’?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your document written: with short sentences; in an active voice; using positive rather than negative sentences, giving explanations of new or complex concepts; using concrete examples; without acronyms, metaphors, puns and colloquialisms?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

42 Inclusive Consultation and Better Communication

	Yes	No
Have you used a larger font size and a san serif font?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you avoided using BLOCKS OF TEXT WRITTEN IN CAPITAL LETTERS?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you ensured that your margins are the same width on both sides of the page, with the right hand margin unjustified?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the printed information in black text on a light coloured background?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you avoided using pictures behind the text?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you printed your material on paper with a matt finish and not a gloss finish?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you used a paper stock that is not too thin, (avoiding text showing through from the other side)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you separated paragraphs with blank lines?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are your Internet web pages accessible to people with a range of disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 2: Accessible consultations checklist

The checklist below can help you quickly and easily assess whether or not your venue, the type of forum you are holding and its format are inclusive of people with a range of different disabilities. This checklist is only a guide and reflects some of the issues outlined earlier in this document.

In addition to the items outlined in the Checklist, you should always:

- Ask if anyone attending your event has any special requirements.
- Check that staff at the venue are aware of disability access issues and will help you to ensure equal access for people with a disability.

	Yes	No
Before your event:		
Do you need to organise specialist assistance, such as sign interpreters, attendant carers, notetakers, foreign language interpreters, etc?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a FM transmitter system or TTY facility for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you used local media (for example, Radio for Print Handicapped, ethnic press) to promote your consultation forum?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you photocopied copies of your presentation to be handed out at the event?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you made Name Tags with the font size as large as possible (36 point)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting into the venue:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the entry free from steps or is there an alternative, such as a ramp?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a hand-rail on any steps?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the edges of steps marked clearly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are doorways wide enough for people who use a wheelchair?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the venue close to public transport?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there accessible parking bays and pick-up/drop-off areas?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

44 Inclusive Consultation and Better Communication

	Yes	No
Inside the venue:		
Is the flooring non-slip or the carpet less than 6mm deep?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have all electrical cords been secured?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is seating available at the front of the venue for people who have a vision impairment or a hearing impairment, so they can lipread or see the sign interpreter clearly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have a FM transmitter system or hearing loop for people who are hard of hearing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you have televisions at the venue or in your accommodation, do they have teletext facilities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there easy access to the stage—that is, is there a ramp with handrails, and does the ramp have the correct gradient?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have staff at the facility had disability awareness training?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
If there are accommodation facilities, are there accessible bedrooms with accessible bathrooms? If yes, how many bedrooms are accessible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there access to common areas within the facility?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there any other features which address accessibility (for example, Braille and tactile signage, hearing augmentation systems, tactile ground surface indicators, etc)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets:		
Are the toilets accessible to people with a disability?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there unisex toilets for people who have a carer of the opposite sex?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do the toilets have space at one side to enable people to transfer easily to the toilet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are there grab rails beside and at the rear of the toilet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are hand-basins, mirrors, toilet paper, flushing controls and hand dryers at a height suitable for people who use a wheelchair?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Yes	No
Do you have a hoist for people who need assistance with toileting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you arranged for any specialist staff you need (for example, attendant carers and physiotherapists)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Presentations:		
Are you using overheads or PowerPoint presentations?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the presentation use light coloured letters (white or yellow) on a dark background (black or dark blue)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the font sans serif and no smaller than 24 point in size?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you arranged for a sign interpreter and/or notetaker?		
Will the sign interpreter be positioned so that they are visible and is there enough light for people to see both you talking and the sign interpreter?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you screening any videos, and if so, do these have captions (sub-titles)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you scheduled regular breaks?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are written copies of your presentation available?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix 3: An example of Easy English

Background information on this example of Easy English

This example highlights how information can be summarised into an Easy English version sometimes with pictures.

The text in the example is taken from the following documents:

- *Victorian State Disability Plan: 2002–2012* (September 2002)
- *Victorian State Disability Plan: A Summary in Easy English with Pictures* (September 2002)

The Department of Human Services undertook an extensive consultation process to develop the State Disability Plan. It involved consultation forums and focus groups, as well as opportunities to comment via phone, email and in writing. The State Disability Plan was produced in large print, audiotape and braille, and also in a summary brochure in English, five community languages, Easy English and braille.

Standard version:

Vision: Victoria in 2012

The Victorian Government's vision for the future is that Victoria will be a State where there are caring, safe communities in which opportunities are fairly shared, and where all Victorians have access to a range of services to support their quality of life.

The vision for the State Disability Plan is a broad vision that offers potential benefits to all members of the Victorian community. This State Disability Plan is particularly concerned with the potential benefits this vision can offer to people with a disability.

The Victorian Government's vision for the future is that:

By 2012, Victoria will be a stronger and more inclusive community—a place where diversity is embraced and celebrated, and where everyone has the same opportunities to participate in the life of the community, and the same responsibilities towards society as all other citizens of Victoria.

This means that if you have a disability, in 2012 you will be as much a part of things as anyone else. As a citizen, you will choose the role you want to play in society alongside other citizens. Your rights and dignity will be respected and upheld by the people around you.

Easy English version:



The government's vision

The government has a vision for the future.

A vision is about imagining what things will be like in the future, when everything happens the way you want it to happen.

The government's vision is:

By the year 2012, Victoria will be a better community—a place where you are valued and where you have the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as everyone else.

	<p>This vision means that by the year 2012:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will feel more included in the community.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will be able to take part in the activities you want to take part in, just like everybody else.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will be able to make choices about your life.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your rights will be respected and protected by the people around you.

PCS symbols used with permission of Mayer-Johnson, Inc. (www.mayer-johnson.com). All rights reserved worldwide.

Appendix 4: Sample invitation

The Hon Jane Smith MP
Minister for Community Services invites:

Mr John Citizen

to celebrate the Launch of a Plan.

The Plan outlines the Government's vision for the future, and strategies for realising that vision. The Plan reaffirms the Government's commitment to ensuring that people with a disability have the same opportunities, rights and responsibilities as all citizens of Victoria.

The Launch of the Plan will be held on:

Date: Tuesday 3 September 2005

Time: Arrival 10:30am for an 11:00am start, concluding at 1:00pm

Location: A Lovely Pavilion
Every Event Centre
Central City Road
City 0000

Light refreshments will be served.

Please RSVP by Thursday 22 August 2005:

- Telephone: **1300 XXX XXX** (for the cost of a local call)
- TTY: **1300 XXX XXX** (for the cost of a local call) for people who are Deaf or hard of hearing

Email: XXXXXXX@[cs.h.vic.gov.au](mailto:XXXXXXX@cs.h.vic.gov.au)

Support:

Sign interpreters and attendant carers will be available on the day. Please advise us at the time of confirming your attendance if you would like these supports, or if you have any other requirements.

Car Parking:

Car parking is available at the Every Event Centre, entry via Side Street. Charges: \$4.00 per hour or part thereof, up to a maximum of \$20.00.

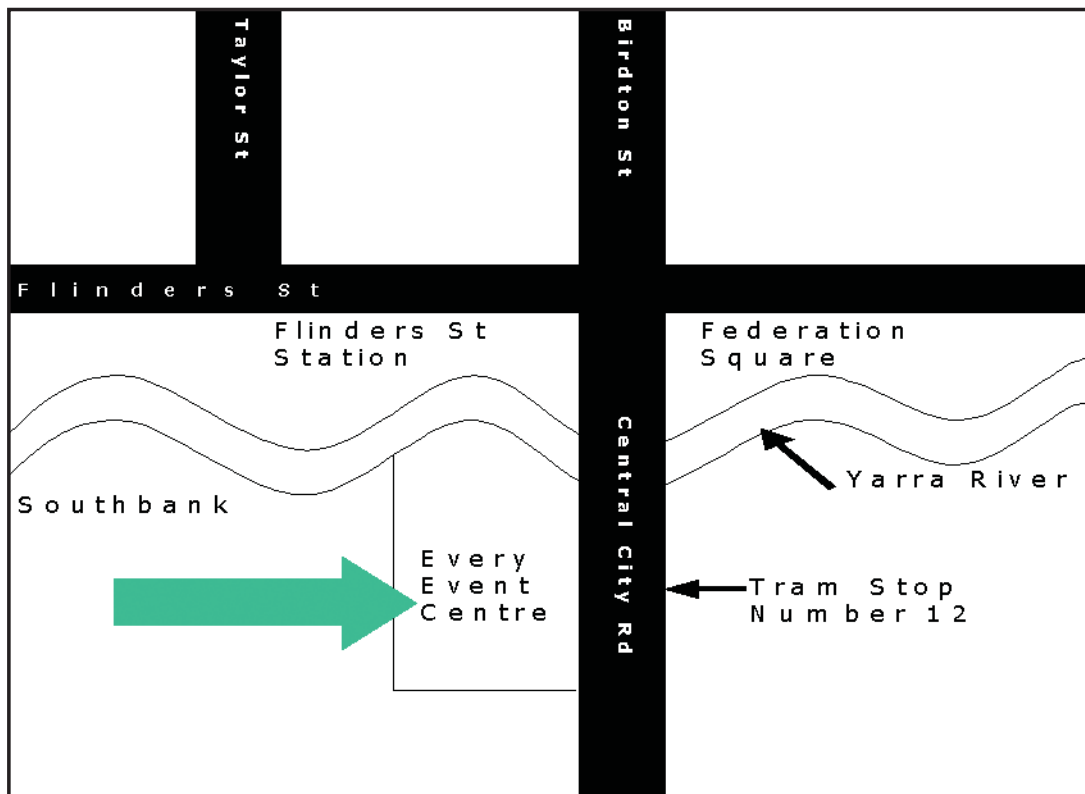
Public Transport:

The Every Event Centre is located in Central City Road, within 100 metres of Central Street Railway Station. The Centre is also easily accessible by tram. See attached map for further details.

Catering:

Please advise us at the time of confirming your attendance if you have any special dietary requirements that should be catered for.

Please ring **XXXX XXX XXX** if you require assistance on the day to find the venue.



Appendix 5: Sample overhead or PowerPoint slides

Accessible Presentations

- If you are using overheads or a PowerPoint presentation, remember to:
 - Use light coloured letters (white or yellow) on a dark background (black or dark blue).
 - Ensure that your font size is no smaller than 24 point, so people can read your material.

Accessible Presentations (cont)

- Ensure that each slide does not have too much information. No more than 4–5 points per slide is recommended.
- Hand out copies of your presentation before the actual presentation.
- Explain the content of your slides, especially if you are using graphs and diagrams.
- Turn off the lights during your presentation, and turn them back on when you are finished.

Appendix 6: Contributors to developing this guide

The following organisations were consulted in the development of this document:

1. Aboriginal Affairs Victoria
2. Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities (ADEC)
3. ARBIAS Acquired Brain Injury Services
4. Australian Physiotherapy Association
5. Bear in Mind
6. Better Hearing Australia (Victoria Branch) Inc.
7. Blind Citizens Australia
8. Brain Foundation Victoria
9. Communication Aids and Resource Material Service (CARM)
10. Communication Aid Users Society Inc. (CAUS)
11. ComTec
12. Department of Human Services Divisions
13. Disability Advisory Council of Victoria
14. Disability Discrimination Legal Service
15. Headway Victoria
16. Jolley William and Associates Pty Ltd
17. LOTE Marketing
18. National Relay Service
19. Occupational Therapy Australia
20. People First
21. Radio for the Print Handicapped
22. Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (RVIB)
23. Standards Association of Australia
24. The Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council (VMIAC)
25. VALID (Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability)
26. Victorian Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisation (VACCHO)

54 Inclusive Consultation and Better Communication

27. Victorian Aboriginal Community Services Association (VACSAL)
28. Victorian Council of Deaf People (VCOD)
29. Victorian Deaf Society (VicDeaf)
30. VITS LanguageLink
31. Vision Australia Foundation
32. Westernport Speaking Out

