

CASE STUDY

Performing Arts Centre Horsham

Open for business is a collaborative regional project by rural and deaf access workers in the Wimmera and Grampians Region to improve access to and within business for people with disabilities, enabling increased participation in their communities and increasing the customer base of participating businesses.

My name is Shana Miatke, I'm the venue manager for Horsham Rural City Council's Horsham Town Hall, a new venue that we've just opened in January 2016. We have five permanent staff and about fifteen casuals and one hundred volunteers in our area.

What have you implemented to help those with a disability?

We have many areas that we like to accommodate those with disabilities. We have online ticketing which then, they can ring us (and book) our specified seating for people with mobility issues, we have a hearing loop which is linked via either our reception area or inside the audio of our theatre, we have disability access straight across 90% of the building so those (in need) of mobility access can get to most parts of the building, we have disabled toilets that are both public and back of house for performers that have disabilities, we have a communication board for those who find it hard to communicate with us can then communicate via the box office and point to things that they are after.

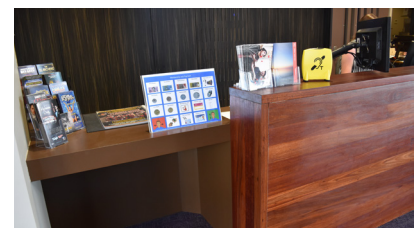
Some of our staff, we actually have trained our volunteers and our front of house staff to help those that may have a disability who are coming to a performance, we ask patrons to notify us prior and then we will have someone who will be assigned (to them) so they have like a personal usher for the night who can assist them at all stages. For those that have companions, we offer the companion card, which is basically anyone who is coming in as a companion is free of charge, they have just got to let us know.

What did you have to consider when planning the venue?

(Shane Podolski) A lot of what we had to look at was how the venue would work with disability, so a lot of the brief was we had to be able to get disabled people into the venue, so with things like our C row, it's all ground level so we can actually accommodate fourteen wheelchairs in the venue and seven of those are at ground level.

Would you recommend other small businesses to implement similar initiatives?

Most definitely, I think it's worth businesses actually approaching certain groups that may be in their community that deal with those with disabilities, from the access of the elderly to mobility issues or communication issues and just get some advice and some basic training to staff can make a huge difference.



OPEN YOUR BUSINESS

to 20% more customers

did you know?



1 in 5

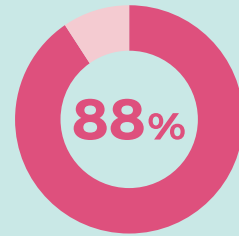
of your potential **customers** have a disability



1 in 3

are close to someone with a **disability**

there are **many types** of disabilities



of disabilities are not **visible**

how is this beneficial to your business?



MULTIPLY
your customer base



GROW
your business



INCREASE
your profits

how can your business be more accessible?

RESPECT
the customer

TALK
to the customer

PROMOTE
accessibility

POSITIVE
attitude

ASK
if you are unsure