

1. Ensure all paths and public outdoor spaces have disability access and are safe for the whole community.

Paths are vital to connecting people to services, community centres and shopping areas. Safe, accessible and well-maintained paths promote social participation, reduce isolation, enable independence, improve health, encourage people to shop locally, and maximise social capital.

Conduct a Walkability Audit (https://www.cotatas.org.au/programs/liveable_communities/walkability/) in your council area, or invite people in your community to do this and report back to council. This shouldn't just be high and medium traffic areas but also streets and paths that connect homes to parks, shopping areas, businesses, or public transport. Audits can be conducted alone or in groups. It can be handy to walk with people with different abilities or at different life stages to understand their experiences.

Paths should be accessible for people using wheelchairs, walkers, scooters or prams, and people with vision, hearing or cognitive impairment.



Some minimum design standards are as follows (see the Design for Access 2 document in the *Liveable Communities Resources* document):

- Paths should have a firm, smooth surface and be at least 1.8m wide, including when passing obstructions such as trees, poles, or seats.
- Ensure paths are clear of trees or bushes that extend into the path, leaf litter, loose gravel or rocks and obstacles, and are well-maintained.
- Do not install obstacles in the middle of a path, such as a tree or street furniture, unless you provide a permanent and appropriately sized path around it. Obstacles should be recessed from the path if possible.
- Tactile paving should be installed to warn people with vision impairments of upcoming road crossings, and paths and roads should always connect via a ramp.
- Public outdoor spaces should be wheelchair accessible with paths that lead to amenities and provide access through the outdoor space.
- Pedestrian buttons at traffic lights should be reachable from a wheelchair or scooter.
- Lighting is appropriately installed in outdoor spaces and along paths so they can be used safely at night. Ensure that these do not cause glare or cast pools of shadow.

2. Keep pedestrians and drivers safe by installing traffic calming measures.

Narrowing road lanes, installing median islands, speed humps or speed tables not only improves pedestrian and driver safety, but also creates room for parking, bike lanes and wider sidewalks. It can also improve street design and attractiveness as more trees, plants and street furniture can be installed.

Some traffic calming measures include:

- Narrow car lanes, intrinsically causing drivers to reduce their speed.
- Install median islands, which slow traffic speeds and provide pedestrian safety as they cross the road.
- Extend curbs to make intersections more compact. This not only forces cars to slow down more to turn but also makes pedestrians more visible and reduces the distance to cross the road.
- Consider using speed tables rather than speed humps, as these are easier for emergency services to drive over. Speed tables can also double as crosswalks and promote pedestrian safety as they attempt to cross the road.

- Increase the length of time that the 'green man' is displayed at pedestrian crossings at traffic lights so pedestrians do not feel pressured to cross quickly and risk injury.
- Clearly mark pedestrian crossings and speak to your community or ask them to conduct a Walkability Audit (https://www.cotatas.org.au/programs/liveable_communities/walkability/) to ensure that there are enough of appropriately placed pedestrian crossings.

Ensure you include the community when planning traffic calming measures so they are aware of what is happening and why. When done correctly, traffic calming can improve traffic flow and business use (see AARP Liveable Communities in the *Liveable Community Resources* document and its fact sheets about Road Diets and Traffic Calming). Begin with a pilot study before expanding measures to larger areas.

Though traffic calming measures may initially face community opposition, the vast majority of these projects are supported when completed.



3. Adopt universal design policies for new developments and housing.

All new developments in your community should abide by universal design standards to ensure inclusivity of people of all ages and ability. This includes development of public space, buildings and housing. Australian universal design standards for development can be found in the Accessibility Design Guide: Universal Design Principles for Australia's Aid Program in the *Liveable Community Resources* document. Further information specifically about housing can be found in the Livable Housing Design Guidelines, and general design standards are in Design for Access 2 in the *Liveable Community Resources* document.

In general, consider some of the following:

- New developments are located close to public transport and can be accessed by wheelchair or walker.
- New developments are connected to the community with appropriately sized and well-maintained paths and pedestrian crossings.
- Buildings and housing comply with universal design standards to support people of any age and ability to live and access services and businesses in comfort and safety.
- All buildings and outdoor spaces are safe and accessible by wheelchair.
- Sheltered seating, rubbish bins, water fountains, trees or plants, and public toilets are included in all new developments.
- Street signage for parking, public amenities, services and traffic is located throughout the community, and is clear and easy to read and understand.
- Sturdy handrails are provided on stairs and platforms, and they extend from the top of the stairs to ground level (they don't finish on the last step).



4. Work with service providers of home care and support to raise awareness about what is available in your community.

Though disability and dependence in older age is declining, more Australians will require support to continue living in their own home as the population ages. Commonwealth Home Support Programmes (CHSP) and Home Care packages provide a range of services that enable people to live independently for longer, benefitting all of community and government.

Many people in the community are unaware of the service providers available in their community, what services they offer, and how to access these. People are often looking to receive these services at a time of illness or crisis, making these decisions even more difficult. This uncertainty and strain can stop people from accessing home care services and increases their risk of isolation, injury and illness.

COTA Tasmania is part of a national Aged Care System Navigator trial to support people to access aged care at home. You can find out more about this program and how to refer people to it [here](#).

Councils can support people to make informed decisions about home care by working with local service providers to raise awareness of the providers and services available in their community. Council can also distribute information about other community services and programs that could support people to remain connected and independent by providing information to service providers to give to people they support.

- Establish a local group made up of people who are accessing CHSP or Home Care packages, or who have good understanding of the aged care system, to support people looking to access these services.
- Attend existing community groups or hold community events (such as a morning tea) with local services providers to provide information about local providers, the services they offer and how to begin accessing home care.
- Provide service providers with information about council and community services and programs that support older people socially, physically or mentally.

5. Promote and support liveable or age-friendly businesses

As Tasmania's population continues to age, businesses that adopt liveable or age-friendly design and attitudes will attract and keep customers who feel comfortable, respected, safe, and valued (see *Creating an Age-friendly Business in BC* in the *Liveable Community Resource* document). These businesses, by aiming to support older people, support people of all ages and life stages to enjoy shopping or using their service.

COTA Tasmania has developed an Age-friendly Business Toolkit (<https://www.cotatas.org.au/programs/liveable-communities/age-friendly-business/>) to support businesses to understand what age-friendly businesses are, and identify their strengths and areas of improvement.

Liveable businesses make retail experiences better for people of all ages, stages and ability. They provide safe, clear and comfortable environments that people can enjoy, rest and complete their business quickly and efficiently. They employ and train staff who speak clearly and respectfully, can intuitively assist people with varying abilities and know how to respond to difficult customers and errors courteously.

Councils can support businesses to implement liveable principles and enhance customer experiences by:

- Educating local businesses about liveable or age-friendly business principles by including them on the Liveability Committee, providing information about these principles, and encouraging them to implement changes.
- Highlighting businesses that demonstrate liveable principles to support customers of all ages, life stages, and abilities.
- Businesses that adopt and apply liveable principles can become a council supported 'Liveable Business' that can display a Liveable Business sticker to inform consumers of their commitment to customer satisfaction. Councils and business can promote this program through the community to encourage shoppers to use these businesses.