

# Say Hello!

## Resources for Cafes / Restaurants

**White Cane Day is on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October and every year, VisAbility Tasmania dedicates the month to creating more inclusive and supportive communities for people living with low or no vision.**

Blindness is a spectrum and each person's experience of blindness is unique. A variety of eye diseases, genetic disorders, congenital blindness, as well as aging or suffering an injury, can interfere with healthy vision.

There are many mobility aids available to assist people with low or no vision travel independently, and feel safer navigating their local communities.

### Types of canes

There are various types of canes to assist a person who is blind or has low vision. Three main types of canes are:

- Long cane - A long mobility cane (often called a white cane) enables a person who has low or no vision to detect obstacles, drop offs, changes in surface and gradient within their path of travel.

These cues are detected by the user moving the cane along the ground within their shoulder width. This cane includes a tip, and is available in a range of colours.

- Identification cane / symbol cane - This cane is designed to alert others that the user has low vision. Generally, this type of cane is used to check the depth of steps and kerbs. It can also be a valuable symbol for alerting drivers at road crossings. This cane does not include a tip.
- Support cane - This cane has more in common with a walking stick, and can be used to aid balance and as a means of physical support. The support cane includes white, reflective tape and can assist with identifying to members of the public that the person has low vision.



## How you can help

There are a number of ways you can make your venue accessible and inclusive for people living with low vision or blindness.

### Acknowledge and engage

- When someone with a vision impairment enters, please verbally greet them. This assists with localisation of voice as an orientation cue, and acknowledges your patron.
- Provide information about the layout and seating arrangement.
- If they have company, ask the person with a vision impairment what they would like to order directly – not the person they are with.
- Please provide a menu. Just because someone uses a white cane doesn't automatically mean they are unable to read it. If they tell you otherwise, provide a verbal prompt such as "what are you interested in ordering today? I can tell you what is available."

### Consider obstacles and layout

- Keep footpaths and entrances clear.
- Wide aisles and well-spaced tables not only make the space safer and more accessible for those with low or no vision, but for families with a pram, those using a wheelchair or any form of mobility device.

## Sighted guide

A person who lives with low or no vision may need assistance to move through an environment safely and efficiently, with the assistance of a sighted person – their guide. This is known as sighted guide. Always ask if assistance is needed, and find out what assistance the person requires.

For more information on sighted guide, visit [visabilitytas.com.au](http://visabilitytas.com.au).

If you would like to organise sighted guide training for your staff, please get in touch with us.

### Inclusive menus / signage

Ensuring your signage, website and menus are inclusive means information is available to everyone.

Providing your menus in alternative formats, such as Braille or large print ensures everyone can enjoy the experience of visiting a cafe or restaurant.

For further information on accessibility guidelines, visit [visabilitytas.com.au](http://visabilitytas.com.au).

If you would like support from our team to ensure your communications are inclusive, please get in touch with us.



### **Say hello!**

When you see someone using a long cane, or any mobility device, please say hello, and behave just as you would around anyone else.

We're all different and unique. These differences might mean some additional support is required, but embracing diversity, understanding another's perspective, and caring about the people in our community is something to be celebrated.

Thank you for helping create a supportive and engaging community, and a greater sense of belonging for everyone.