

# Age-friendly Business Checklist<sup>1</sup>

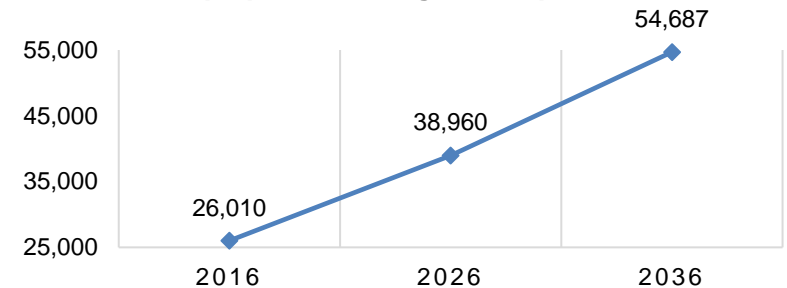
This checklist provides information to assist your business in engaging with a senior customer base, including many no-cost and low-cost ways to make your business more age-friendly. There is also a template for an Age-Friendly Action Plan. Creating an Action Plan will help you decide what to do now and what to work towards in the future. Get started with a few new actions now and build on these over time to make your business an “age-friendly business”.

**Being “age-friendly” makes good business sense** as seniors are a significant and growing part of your market.

Some statistics about the City of Wanneroo’s ageing population to keep in mind:

	2016 census	2026 forecast	2036 forecast
Retirees (60 - 69)	13,903	19,545	26,392
Seniors (70 - 84)	10,215	15,959	23,279
Elderly (85+)	1,892	3,456	5,016

**Growth of population aged 60 plus**



Currently senior Australians represent a large part of your consumer market, with 16% of the Australian population aged 65 years or over. The ABS estimates that on average for every \$100 a 65-74 year old spends, every single other age category has less than this e.g. ages 25-34 = \$23.91; ages 35-44 = \$48.57; ages 45-54 = \$87.40; ages 55 – 64 = \$98.41.

Ageing can influence a range of things – such as mental and physical health, mobility and cognition that affect how people want or need to access goods and services. Ensuring you can meet these needs will help encourage and support a diverse range of customers.

This checklist also includes some guidance on catering for people living with dementia. The City of Wanneroo is forecast to have the highest numbers of people living with dementia of any local government area in WA by 2050<sup>2</sup>. There are approximately 3,200 people living with dementia in the City of Wanneroo which is predicted to increase by 310% to 10,325 by 2050.

For a quick way to think about age-friendly business practices, just remember: “Age-friendly business **MADE** easy”

**M**arketing  
**A**mbience  
**D**esign  
**E**xperience

<sup>1</sup> Development based on an Age-friendly Business Checklist provided by the City of Joondalup with thanks and acknowledgement.

<sup>2</sup> Alzheimer’s Australia - Access Economics 2010: Projections of dementia prevalence and incidence in WA

## Marketing

*Ensure your marketing and promotions are inclusive and accessible to older people to maximise your reach to these potential customers.*

Age-friendly practice	Yes	No	N/A	Will consider by doing... (add ideas here)
<p>Marketing materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include senior people in images promoting products or services (in non-stereotyping ways).</li><li>• Use simple language to ensure your message is clear to a broad audience.</li><li>• Make designs simple and easy-to-read with plenty of space, vivid colours and high contrast between text and background. Ensure key information is prominent and easy to find. Provide easy to read signage and pricing.</li><li>• Use 12 point font or higher in sans serif type fonts like Helvetica and Calibri, which don't have small features at the end of their strokes. Serif fonts like Times New Roman have decorative end strokes and can be harder to read.</li></ul>				
<p>Marketing methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use a range of mediums for marketing including newspapers, newsletters, online (website and social media), radio etc.</li><li>• Consider offering materials in multiple languages – think about what languages are spoken in your neighborhood.</li></ul>				
<p>Website</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make key information, especially your business name, address, hours and contact information prominent and easy to find. Repeat on every page.</li><li>• Place prominent navigation bars on the top or side of pages. Avoid complicated menus or drop/downs. Provide zoom controls or text resize buttons.</li></ul>				
<p>Appealing to older customers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer seniors discounts including honouring the WA Seniors Card.</li><li>• Ask for feedback and talk to senior people about what they want and need:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What do they like about your business?</li><li>Do they experience any issues or barriers with staff, products or environment?</li></ul></li><li>• Promote your business as age-friendly.</li></ul>				

## Ambience

As people age, many will experience a reduction in hearing and/or changes in vision and sensitivity to glare. Considering this in terms of noise and lighting at your store or business can help you improve the experience of all customers.

Age-friendly practice	Yes	No	N/A	Will consider by doing... (add ideas here)
<p>Lighting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure your premises are well and evenly lit - especially entrances, exits, hallways and fitting rooms.</li> <li>• Reduce glare through shades on lighting or provide indirect or filtered lighting.</li> <li>• Provide small direct “task” lights e.g. LEDs over areas where reading or other visually demanding tasks are necessary e.g. reading product tags or menus.</li> </ul>				
<p>Noise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a quieter environment as many customers have difficulty sorting out announcements and conversation from background noise.</li> <li>• Reduce outside noise to a minimum with heavy walls, thick windows and sound reducing materials (e.g. carpets, rugs, tapestries, sound board walls, partitions).</li> <li>• Avoid playing loud music or music from only one era / genre. Turn music off or lower the volume. If played, ensure music is from different eras and styles.</li> <li>• Consider having music-free or reduced music hours during those times that seniors are more likely to shop or visit your business.</li> <li>• Reserve certain spaces as quiet areas (e.g. quiet tables or section).</li> <li>• Install audio loops (an assistive listening technology also called hearing loops) to assist those with hearing aids at customer service counters.</li> </ul>				

## Design

The layout and design of your business should consider a range of customers such as older adults, families with small children/ strollers, differently abled individuals, etc. Remember, age-friendly design is customer-friendly design!

Age-friendly practice	Yes	No	N/A	Will consider by doing... (add your ideas here)
<p>Access</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide clear directional signage in and around your business.</li> <li>• Keep external entrances and pathways free of leaves and other debris.</li> <li>• Keep aisles as clear as possible during restocking.</li> <li>• Provide clear signage and visual cues for stairs, drops, inclines e.g. mark any change in</li> </ul>				

<p>floor elevation/material with brightly colored paint or reflective tape.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Place ramps in areas with changes in floor height to minimize steps and ensure sturdy handrails in staircases, elevators and ramps.</li> </ul>				
<p>Parking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide suitable parking options with enough seniors bays &amp; ACROD bays; if frequently full, increase (or advocate for an increase in) the number of these bays.</li> <li>Ensure sidewalks and car parks are clearly lit and physically accessible for people of different abilities including those using wheelchairs, walkers, or scooters.</li> <li>Avoid trees in carparks that drop a great deal of debris, including seeds and nuts, as these can become a trip hazard to those that are a falls risk.</li> </ul>				
<p>Doors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid heavy doors – install electronic, automatic doors where possible.</li> <li>Ensure automatic doors with accessible buttons that are open long enough to allow people with wheelchairs and walkers to safely enter and exit.</li> <li>Ensure doors don't stick (bevel doors to sit without sticking in the door threshold).</li> </ul>				
<p>Floors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure door thresholds are level with the floor or draw attention to any difference in elevation with brightly colored paint or reflective tape.</li> <li>Ensure carpets are low pile and non-carpeted areas are non-slip and non-shiny. Avoid loose, lightweight mats or rugs.</li> <li>Smooth any uneven flooring. Edges of rugs can be secured with glue or tape.</li> <li>Clean up spills immediately to prevent slips - especially in toilet areas.</li> </ul>				
<p>Seating</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide rest areas with seating throughout large shops or spaces and where there are frequent or long queues.</li> <li>Provide seating within or adjacent to fitting rooms so those waiting for shopping companions can take a seat and have a rest.</li> <li>Chairs should be sturdy and stable, not too low or too soft, with arms for individuals who need to push themselves up.</li> </ul>				
<p>Fitting rooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide seating within the fitting room as this can be important for some seniors to assist</li> </ul>				

<p>their mobility in trying on items.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a surface for people to put shopping bags, handbags and other hand held items so they are easy to retrieve.</li> <li>• Provide multiple hooks at varying heights for the same purpose.</li> <li>• Add supportive devices such as grab rails to assist customers with balance or mobility requirements.</li> </ul>				
<p>Service counters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure at least one counter is accessible for customers using wheelchairs and scooters. Consider both access to the service counter and counter height.</li> <li>• Provide a place on which to hook a walking stick so it doesn't fall.</li> </ul>				
<p>Toilets (easy access to toilets can determine if seniors will visit a business)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure customer toilets are well signposted and easy to navigate including having toilet paper dispensers within easy reach.</li> <li>• Ensure that any adjoining hallways are free from the storage of supplies or cleaning items and equipment. Clean toilets regularly.</li> <li>• Toilets with hand rails are easier for many senior people to use.</li> <li>• Install auto-flush controls or mount manual controls to the side of the toilet no higher than 112cm from floor (rather than the rear).</li> <li>• Provide one sink and hand dryer low enough and one stall wide enough for someone in a wheelchair to use.</li> </ul>				
<p><b>Experience</b></p>				
<p>What experience and level of service are you providing for your customer? This is all about customer service, inclusion and respect.</p>				
<p>Age-friendly practice</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Will consider by doing... (add your ideas here)</p>
<p>Staff training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teach staff to be friendly, respectful and patient with all customers. Remind staff that some customers may have issues with vision, hearing, mobility, cognition or have other types of less visible disability.</li> <li>• Train staff to assist those with vision and hearing challenges (tips include speaking clearly and slowly and lowering voice pitch which is easier to hear). Shouting or speaking too loudly to customers who seem to have difficulty understanding can make them feel singled out and embarrassed.</li> </ul>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Train staff to recognise signs that someone needs physical/ medical assistance and how to handle incidents e.g. falls and accidents in safe and respectful ways.</li> <li>• Teach staff to treat all customers equally and not discriminate based on age or other characteristics.</li> <li>• Consider providing staff with inclusion training (you can find more info online).</li> </ul>				
<p>Staffing practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employ staff that are from a diverse age range and welcome applications from senior people. Remember customers like to see staff they can relate to.</li> <li>• Recognise staff that provide excellent customer service, including high quality age-friendly service for senior customers.</li> <li>• Make staff available to help read product labels, get products down from shelves and offer directions. Provide staff with the authority to provide extra customer service as they see fit.</li> </ul>				
<p>Service considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider offering a delivery service or a personal shopping service for senior customers, even on a case by case basis.</li> <li>• Place essentials, popular items and items geared towards senior people within easy reach and at accessible heights.</li> <li>• Ensure the service desk is clearly visible and signposted so people can ask for help.</li> <li>• Where possible, ensure all communication and bookings are available via telephone or in person and not just online.</li> </ul>				

## Dementia Friendly

Changes to the brain function of people with dementia result in challenges to memory, communication, perception and everyday tasks (like handling money). Two useful websites to read are:

- [www.isitdementia.com.au](http://www.isitdementia.com.au) - information on how to respond and assist people with dementia
- [www.dementia.org.au](http://www.dementia.org.au) - a Dementia Friendly Business Action Plan template

Dementia-friendly practice	Yes	No	N/A	Will consider by doing... (add your ideas here)
<p>Awareness of dementia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff are aware of dementia and Alzheimer's and how it effects people.</li> <li>• Staff are alert for signs of distress or confusion and ask what the person would like them to do or if there is someone they can call</li> </ul>				
<p>Customer service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let the customer take their time, be respectful, offer understanding and reassurance.</li> <li>• Maintain eye contact and personal space, speak clearly and calmly.</li> <li>• Respond to the emotions they are displaying, if they are clearly distressed or having difficulty ask them what they would like you to do or if there is someone you can call.</li> <li>• If someone isn't sure or can't remember how to do something, offer to do it with them rather than doing it for them.</li> <li>• If someone forgets what you've said, repeat it as if you were saying it for the first time.</li> </ul>				
<p>Design</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use high colour contrast in interior design to enable people living with dementia to navigate the business premises.</li> <li>• Be aware that steps, shadows and shiny/reflective/patterned objects or surfaces can cause people with cognitive decline or dementia to mistake what they are seeing and become confused.</li> <li>• If possible, use visual cues for example pictures of product options</li> <li>• Additional assistance if someone seems unable to read signs or written information</li> </ul>				

Template for Age-friendly business action planning (add more actions and rows as required)

Action	Timeframe	How will I achieve this?	Who is responsible?	Cost (if applicable)
