Communicating with the Community
Centro Box Hill

What’s it all about?
Shopping can be particularly challenging when you have communication difficulties and for many people with little or no speech this is an everyday reality. The Communication Resource Centre in partnership with Centro Box Hill management, evaluated the everyday communication challenges faced by retailers and customers with communication difficulties. This revealed that 88% of staff and shopkeepers experienced problems understanding their customers.

The Communication Resource Centre assisted retailers and services to develop and use communication strategies that would support positive and successful interaction with customers with communication difficulties. A series of service specific communication boards were developed in partnership with 13 retailers and service providers, including the train station, pharmacies and cafés. Many of these were then translated into languages other than English. A general conversational communication aid was also supplied to 110 retail outlets in English and translated into simplified Chinese. Finally, a guide about communication strategies, tips and ideas that can be used by all retail staff was developed and distributed.

Who was involved?
This project involved a wide range of partners. These included the Communication Resource Centre; Centro Box Hill; Chinese Community Social Services Centre; VITS Language Link/ONCALL (translating services); a local therapist; Adult Disability Day Services and people with communication difficulties. The City of Whitehorse Small Community Grants provided partial funding for this project.

What has it changed?
- People with communication difficulties are now more confident about shopping at Box Hill Centro
- People with communication difficulties feel more valued and part of their local community
- Shop assistants are more aware of how to communicate more effectively with their customers

“...I never used to like shopping in Box Hill and now it is one of my most frequent shopping places. Shop assistants are more communicative with me, and have more patience to wait...” Person with communication difficulties.

Good Communication really is Good Business.

For more information about this project please contact:
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“We believe in making communities more accessible.” Communication Access Network