

Communication Access

Stories from our community



A workplace where being a creative florist and valued employee does not depend on how well you hear!

Marjorie's story about a job she loves.

Marjorie is a florist in Ballarat. She has been working at Stems Flower Market and The Flower Connection for several years now. She enjoys her work preparing the work spaces, supporting colleagues, preparing bouquets and arrangements and helping customers.

When Marjorie speaks with customers, she explains she is deaf. Then she uses simple words, as her speech is difficult to understand if people don't know her well.

She also uses natural gesture, showing or pointing to the flowers in the shop. She always carries pen and paper in her apron, in case a difficulty arises with communication. The pen and paper also works really well when talking to colleagues.

The owners of The Flower Connection provide an inclusive workplace, where Marjorie is part of the team and feels her contribution is valued and respected.

The managers achieve this through supporting staff to understand the best ways to communicate with Marjorie, such as repeating an instruction and positioning yourself so Marjorie can lip read. If they notice that Marjorie is not responding to a customer when they speak to her, they will easily just tell the customers that Marjorie is deaf and they should stand where Marjorie can see them.

Marjorie is skilled at communicating in many different ways. She lip reads extremely well, and uses Auslan signing. Marjorie was raised in Ballarat, where there was a strong focus on teaching Deaf children to use speech. However these days she has many friends from the Deaf community and so she has learnt Auslan as an adult.



People made this place communication accessible by:

- treating Marjorie with dignity and respect
- understanding there are different ways to communicate
- speaking directly to Marjorie (making sure there is no glare behind the person talking to Marjorie)
- knowing and using Marjorie's communication method
- making an effort when they can't understand Marjorie
- sharing information about how Marjorie communicates.

**To find out more about Communication Access, please contact
Scope's Communication and Inclusion Resource Centre:**

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