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Hidden disability training course for Australian airport sector

The Australian Airports Association (AAA) has launched a Hidden Disability Awareness Training Course to help remove barriers to travel and make airports more inclusive for all.

“This is an important initiative to help ensure people with a hidden disability have the opportunity and confidence to embark on and manage their own airport journey,” AAA Chief Executive James Goodwin said.

“We recognise that as an industry we must drive change in the areas that matter. Hidden disability initiatives are part of the worldwide accessibility and inclusion movement that recognises the barriers in both the physical and social environments of which airports belong.”

Millions of Australians live with a disability and 90 per cent have a hidden (or invisible) disability. Hidden disabilities range from autism, chronic conditions, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, sensory processing disorders and visual impairments.

The Hidden Disability Awareness Training Course, created in partnership with Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect) is the next part of a comprehensive hidden disability guidelines in which Australian airport staff can identify sunflower lanyards that discreetly indicate that people have an invisible disability.

“Airports are always evolving and the needs and expectations of airport customers are constantly changing and airports are committed to working together to deliver inclusive environments to meet the expectations of all customers,” AAA Chief Executive James Goodwin said.

“Airports continue to work together to ensure they are ready and capable of facilitating customers from now into the future. Airports recognise that we have an obligation as community assets to ensure the airport experience is accessible and inclusive.

“Multiple stakeholders, including Australian Government agencies and airlines manage the overall passenger experience, and airport-wide collaboration to reduce barriers to travel supports consistent experiences, making this training valuable for all parts of the aviation and tourism sectors.”

The AAA is delivering this training course in partnership with Aspect, who have tailored the content to best suit the aviation sector.

Aspect is one of Australia's largest service providers for people on the autism spectrum with a dedicated autism-friendly team who work in partnership with organisations such as AAA to create environments which are genuinely inclusive.

"The potential impact of this training program is massive, with hundreds of airport staff and even greater numbers of customers benefitting. We are encouraging all airports and customer-facing aviation staff to take up the training module," Aspect CEO Jacqui Borland said.

"We're proud that this training is co-designed by our Autistic staff and based on the extensive experience of Aspect Autism Friendly working with Australian airports."

The Hidden Disability Awareness Training Course is available online at the AAA's website – <https://airports.asn.au/education>

The AAA is the national voice for airports, representing the interests of more than 340 airports and aerodromes across Australia. It also represents over 150 corporate members supplying products and services to airports and the wide aviation industry.

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