



# NEWSLETTER

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## Welcome to 2022

BY RAFA ZAIM

A new year spells a renewed commitment to creating liveable, inclusive business communities for all. Just six months into the launch of Zero Barriers, and we are pleased to announce that we have registered 100 businesses to the project. Of particular note, Coles and Woolworths supermarkets are now supporting Zero Barriers. We welcome them aboard and we hope that they will inspire other businesses to follow suit.

Zero Barriers is striving to improve access and inclusion for everyone, not just people with a physical disability. These including parents with prams, people with temporary mobility concerns, older people and people with invisible disabilities. We may all be touched by the issue of inclusion at some points in our lives, and we all know someone who is. By putting inclusion on the agenda for businesses and services, Zero Barriers is doing its best to ensure that this issue is addressed proactively, with knowledge, understanding and the resources required for positive and impactful change. We look forward to seeing what this year will bring.

*If you own or manage a business that would like to join Zero Barriers, or to nominate an inclusive business in your community, please contact us at [hello@zerobarriers.net.au](mailto:hello@zerobarriers.net.au)*

## What's Inside?

- Welcome to 2022
- Moebius Syndrome Awareness Day
- Community Voices: Featuring Mohammed Samrah
- Zero Barriers Business Spotlight: Community First Credit Union
- 10 reasons why employing people with disability can be beneficial to business



66

**"I don't need  
easy. I just need  
possible."**

**-Bethany Hamilton**

**Shark attack survivor and  
professional surfer**

## **Moebius Syndrome Awareness Day**

Moebius Syndrome Awareness Day is an annual event celebrated each year on January 24th – the birth date of Professor Paul Julius Moebius, the doctor who first diagnosed the condition in 1888.

The day is globally celebrated, by sharing information about Moebius syndrome to raise awareness and increase community understanding.

Moebius Syndrome is a neurological disorder that presents with congenital facial weakness and an inability to move the eye away from the nose.

To show your support, you can wear purple and host an event in your community. For useful resources or to find out more, please visit [www.moebiussyndrome.org](http://www.moebiussyndrome.org).

## **Community Voice**

**MOHAMMED SAMARAH , STUDENT  
LIVING WITH CEREBAL PALSEY**



### **What is your experience of using businesses and services in your local community?**

It's mostly positive. Businesses are very supportive, inclusive and remove any barriers without hesitation if possible. However, I have had negative instances, where businesses did not want to accommodate my needs, and this has stopped me from contributing to their business. It made me feel less valued as a consumer.

### **2.What are some of the obstacles you have faced when using businesses?**

There's often steps to get into businesses, the corridors are small, and merchandise stands often block walkways which make it inaccessible for people with disabilities.

### **3.What do you think that business need to improve to be more inclusive of people with a disability?**

I believe that a better understanding of the persons' needs, and efforts to accommodate those needs can be achieved through communication, moving objects out of the way, or simply asking if the person requires any assistance to make it a more pleasant experience.



# Zero Barriers Business Spotlight:

## COMMUNITY FIRST CREDIT UNION

Community First Credit Union Bankstown Store Manager Michele McLearn says they joined Zero Barriers to boost their understanding of accessibility issues and be part of the new culture.

"We want to provide the same support and access to every member of the community," she said.

"Being located at Bankstown RSL, we were already wheelchair friendly and can always provide customers with extra space if needed.

"It's another opportunity to remove discrimination and increase diversity and that is exactly what makes Bankstown the great place it is."



## 10 reasons why employing people with disability can be beneficial to business

BY LAURA ZARCZYNSKI AND SRUJANI REDDY

1. You can attract candidates from a wider talent pool, making sure you get the best person for the job
2. You can incorporate technology and innovation into your business that is largely used in the disability population
3. You can strengthen workplace morale by demonstrating that your business supports all people, including people with disability
4. You can customise products and services to increase inclusivity and target a niche market
5. You're able to attract a broader customer base and can consequently increase profitability
6. You reduce the risk of claims of unlawful discrimination against your business
7. You positively contribute to the mental health of individuals with disability
8. You can build a positive image for the business
9. You actively demonstrate that your business cares about its community
10. The government often offers wage subsidies that businesses can utilise when employing people with disability