



# **MEETINGS EVENTS AND FESTIVALS DISABILITY ACCESS GUIDE**



## Disclaimer

The information contained in this publication is intended as a guide only. This publication should not be substituted for professional advice on laws and regulations in individual cases. If readers still have doubts, they should consult the appropriate legislation or seek professional advice. In addition to the information contained in this document, event organisers must exercise skill, care and sound judgement in event planning.

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## Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	5
GLOSSARY OF TERMS .....	6
Audio Descriptions:.....	6
Braille: .....	6
Captioning: .....	6
AUSLAN or Australian Sign Language: .....	6
Hearing Loop System and Infrared System: .....	6
Telephone Typewriter (TTY):.....	6
Communication Board: .....	6
Podcast: .....	7
GLOSSARY OF DISABILITY ACCESS SYMBOLS.....	8
WHY WE SHOULD THINK ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY .....	10
What does the law say? .....	10
Funding and support.....	11
CHOOSING A VENUE .....	12
Accessible Venues Checklist:.....	12
ACCESSIBILITY EQUIPMENT .....	13
Accessible Toilets.....	13
Access Ramps .....	14
Access Matting .....	14
Wheelchairs.....	15
Hearing Loop.....	15
Communication Board .....	15
SOUND, LIGHTING AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY:.....	17
Flash lighting, strobes and other special effects .....	17
Dimming Lights.....	17
Public address systems .....	17
TRANSPORT.....	18
Public Transport .....	18
Community Bus .....	18
Drop Off Points.....	18
Accessible parking.....	18
Mobility Buggy .....	19
CATERING .....	20
Top Tips for Catering.....	20
ACCESSIBLE FEATURES.....	21
Rest and Recharge Area .....	21
Information Area.....	21

First Aid and Public Health .....	21
Shelter.....	22
Reserved Seating.....	22
Water Necessities.....	22
Information Announcements.....	22
Accessible Signage .....	23
Accessibility Maps and Programs .....	23
MARKETING.....	24
Design.....	24
Promotion on Website .....	25
Podcasting .....	25
Language .....	26
Useful Words and Phrases.....	26
Words and Phrases to Avoid .....	26
Deaf or hard of hearing.....	27
INCLUSIVE EVENTS.....	28
Performers .....	28
Food Vendors.....	28
Market and Information Stalls .....	29
Staff and Volunteers .....	29
DISABILITY AWARE STAFFING .....	30
Access Coordinator .....	30
Carers .....	30
AUSLAN Interpreters.....	30
Staff Briefing.....	31
EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:.....	32
APPENDIX 1: - Access requirements by disability types .....	33
Vision Impairment and Blindness:.....	33
Hearing Impairment and Deafness: .....	33
Intellectual and Learning Disabilities:.....	33
Epilepsy:.....	33
Mental Health Issues:.....	34
Physical and Mobility Impairments:.....	34
Chronic Illness:.....	34
Temporary Ailments and Impairments: .....	34
APPENDIX 2 - Access checklist.....	35
FURTHER INFORMATION .....	38
CONTACT .....	38

# INTRODUCTION

This guide has been put together to help event managers and committees plan and manage successful events, which are inclusive of people with disability, and to guide them through the steps they need to take. In compiling this document, an attempt has been made to create a balance of information, without technical details for every type of event.

The term 'event(s)' in this guide covers a broad range of functions including festivals, conferences, public meetings, fundraisers, award ceremonies, concerts, exhibitions, community fairs, etc. .

The most effective way of ensuring access for everyone is to think about access at the very earliest planning stages of your event. This means thinking about the access requirements of attendees, staff, performers, stallholders who may have a disability.

There are many aspects of planning for an accessible event which do not incur huge costs but require strategic thinking in the early stages. The degree of accessibility required for each event will depend on the size and location of the event and the number of people expected to attend.

One of the most important aspects of planning an accessible event is enlisting support from within your organisation and further afield in terms of practical and in kind help, use of equipment, training for staff, knowledge of accessibility issues etc.

A good way of ensuring the best possible access is to invite people with disability to assist with the planning of your event. If you have a steering group or committee ensure that you invite people with disability to join.

An event organiser needs to be aware of any current and applicable statutes, regulations, by-laws, approved and associated codes of practice relating to the event or its individual elements, and to take appropriate action. Event organisers are reminded of the need to make their own enquiries and to seek competent advice as appropriate, basing decisions they make relative to the health and safety of participants and visitors to the event.

The City of Yarra has a range of services and information for people with a disability and groups organising events and activities. For further information please visit [www.yarracity.vic.gov.au](http://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au) or call (03) 9205 5555.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### Audio Descriptions:

Audio description is the auditory narration of visual representations such as television programs, films and live performances. During gaps in dialogue, it describes visual elements such as scenes, settings, actions and costumes.

### Braille:

Braille is a tactile system of reading and writing used throughout the world by people who are blind or vision impaired. It is based on a 6-dot "cell", and by using various combinations of these 6 dots, it is possible to represent the alphabet, as well as the specialised symbols used in subjects such as Mathematics and Science.

### Captioning:

Captioning is the text version of a speech or dialog provided on screen during an event or a meeting. Captioning is the software feature embedded into some film. It appears at the bottom of the screen on film to provide a context that deaf or hearing impaired people may otherwise miss.

### AUSLAN or Australian Sign Language:

AUSLAN is a language that uses visual gestures and space using the hands, body, face and head and has its own principles of grammar. AUSLAN interpreters translate English to AUSLAN for Deaf people and AUSLAN into English for hearing people.

### Hearing Loop System and Infrared System:

Hearing Loop system assists people using hearing aids to hear more clearly by cutting out background noise. A loop system can be set up with a microphone and a transmitter to send signals via a loop system to be picked up by hearing aids that are switched to 'T' setting. In larger event situations, infra-red systems that allow for stereo sound may be more practical.

### Telephone Typewriter (TTY):

TTY is a machine that has a keyboard and a screen. It may be built into a telephone or be connected to one. A Deaf person, or a person with a speech impediment, can use the machine to communicate with another person who also has a TTY by typing the message and reading the reply. TTY users can call people who do not have a TTY by using the National Relay Service provided by the Australian Communication Exchange (ACE). This allows the Deaf person to send or receive messages from ordinary 'voice' telephones.

### Communication Board:

A Communication Board is a tool used to visually communicate with people with speech difficulties with learning difficulties and with people who speak a language other than English. It is a series of pictures, symbols, words and letters that people can point to and show what they need.

## Podcast:

A podcast contains audio information in the MP3 file format and can be played with the basic set-up of most recent computer operating systems. Popular software titles such as Windows Media Player, iTunes and RealPlayer are examples of free and widely used MP3 players used to play podcasts. Podcasts are especially helpful as a way of communicating with blind and vision impaired customers.

## GLOSSARY OF DISABILITY ACCESS SYMBOLS



Disability Access Assistive Hearing Device Symbol



Disability Access Low Vision Symbol



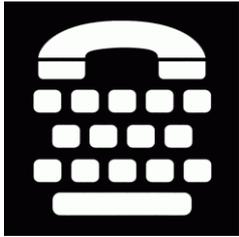
Disability Access Sign Language Symbol



Disability Access Symbol



Changing Places Facility



Disability Access TTY Symbol



Disability Access Information Symbol

## WHY WE SHOULD THINK ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY

There are around four million people with disability in Australia representing a considerable proportion of your potential audience and there are some considerable benefits to having an accessible festival. The main benefit being that an accessible event is one that is welcoming and inclusive for people with a range of abilities.

An accessible event not only improves the experience of an event for people with disability, but also for a wide range of other participants including families, older adults, parents with prams, performers and staff carrying equipment. Good accessibility helps the event to run safely and smoothly and attracts a wide range of people.

It is also a legal obligation. The Disability Discrimination Act is a federal law to protect the rights of people with disability. The Act makes it illegal to treat people with disability inequitably and applies in all settings of community living.

Examples of discrimination include:

- Refused entry to a concert because of difficulty controlling movement due to cerebral palsy;
- Providing a self-service buffet at a conference which makes it impossible for people with mobility impairment or vision loss to get some food.
- Conducting a ceremony on a stage where an award recipient who uses a wheelchair cannot access due to the lack of a ramp. .
- Documents available in printed copies only at meetings make it impossible for a participant who is blind to participate in a debate.
- A conference sponsor who uses a wheelchair cannot access an accessible toilet as it has been used for storage.

### What does the law say?

The DDA aims to ensure that people with disability are not treated less favourably than people who do not have a disability.

The DDA covers areas such as employment, access to goods, services and facilities, education, access to premises and transport. The DDA defines disability very broadly and includes:

- people who are blind or vision impaired
- people who are Deaf or hard of hearing
- people with an intellectual or learning disability
- people with mobility and manual dexterity difficulties
- people with a psychiatric disability
- people who have a brain injury
- people who have epilepsy
- people who have a disease-causing organism

Service providers, such as event organisers have a legal responsibility under the Federal laws to avoid discrimination and to remove any barriers to participation.

## Funding and support

Access for people with disability is not something that should be thought of as an added cost. It needs to be factored into the running costs of each event.

There are various avenues to explore when seeking funding to make your venue or event accessible to people with disability. A number of funding options is available to community organisations from local, state and federal governments and philanthropic trusts, each with different guidelines and details.

It is important to emphasise accessibility for the whole community in all grant and funding applications. The following is a list of just some of the bodies to contact regarding grant applications.

- Australia Council for the Arts: [www.australiacouncil.gov.au/grants](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/grants)
- Arts Victoria: [www.arts.vic.gov.au/index.htm](http://www.arts.vic.gov.au/index.htm)
- Vic Health [www.vichealth.vic.gov.au](http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au)
- Tourism Victoria [www.tourismvictoria.com.au](http://www.tourismvictoria.com.au)

Arts Access Victoria is a disability arts organisation providing access, participation, engagement and professional development in the arts and cultural life across Victoria for people with disability. Arts Access Victoria may be able to assist with contemporary arts projects,. For more information on Arts Access Victoria please visit [www.artsaccess.com.au](http://www.artsaccess.com.au).

Further contacts and resources are provided at the end of this document.

## CHOOSING A VENUE

When planning an event, choosing a venue is likely to be one of the first things you do and one of the most important. You might already have criteria to use in your search for a venue, such as location, the number of people it can hold, the cost etc. At this stage you should also include a criterion for a venue that is accessible. Some venue operators are not clear about the concept of accessibility. They may view their premises as fully accessible, despite an entrance step or lack of an accessible toilet. Many use accessible toilets as their storage room. It is important to check the venue for accessibility in person before confirming booking.

### Accessible Venues Checklist:

- Close proximity to public transport
- Entry points to venue well signed and well lit (if event is occurring at night)
- Drop off points for cars, taxis and community buses
- Wide paths and doorways with good surface conditions
- Paths without obstructions (bollards, steps, rocks etc)
- Clear paths leading to all features such as toilets, shelter, picnic facilities, parking
- Even surfaces with non-slip floor covering.
- Automatic doors or use of non-heavy doors
- Gradients which are accessible for wheelchairs or people with limited mobility
- Disability parking close by
- Equipped with working accessible toilet facilities in the same location as male and female toilets. Ensure access toilets are working and not used as storage facilities.
- Venue utilising door handles (as opposed to door knobs) and at appropriate height for people using wheelchairs
- Handrails for all ramps
- Lift with button at appropriate height for people using wheelchairs
- Height accessible counters for a person in a wheelchair
- Accessible stages and raised platforms, large enough to allow people with a disability to freely move
- Good air circulation throughout the venue
- Good acoustics and/or hearing augmentation system (hearing loop)
- Evacuation procedures in place taking into account people with a disability
- Facilities for assistance animals
- Grass areas that can be covered with access matting or have adequate pathways

# ACCESSIBILITY EQUIPMENT

If the venue you choose is already accessible then your job is made easier. If not remember improvements can be made through the use of accessible equipment.

## Accessible Toilets

The installation of portable accessible toilets is essential if numbers attending the event are expected to exceed the capacity of any permanent facilities. Accessible toilets are designed to accommodate wheelchair users, people with limited mobility and those accompanied by attendant carers or assistance animals. Accessible toilets may also be useful for parents attending with young children.

Five percent of the total toilets required for your event, should be accessible to people with disability. At least one accessible toilet should be available wherever a group of standard toilets has been located at a festival or event. If your venue is large it is also important to consider that people with disability may not be able to travel long distances if in need of a toilet. Accessible toilet facilities should be labelled as multi use (not gender specific) because they need to cater for carers of either gender assisting individuals with disability.

- Accessible toilets need to be large enough to support a wheelchair and up to two carers if required
- Accessible toilets need to accommodate assistance animals if required
- Accessible toilets should be located on ground level, with no steps leading up to them and should be positioned alongside clear pathways
- Accessible toilets must have sink and hand cleaning facilities with taps that are easily turned on and off by people with disability, at an appropriate height for people who use wheelchairs
- All toilets **MUST** be cleaned regularly and always in a sanitary condition
- Toilets **MUST NOT** be used as a storage facility
- Accessible toilets must have door handles with locks (as opposed to door knobs) at appropriate height for people who use wheelchairs.
- Lighting **MUST** be provided inside and outside accessible toilets
- Handrails **MUST** be provided inside
- Before booking accessible toilets, check to make sure your supplier meets these standards. Not all accessible toilets **ARE** accessible.

## Changing Places

Changing Places toilets are different to standard accessible toilets. They include extra features and more space to meet the needs of people with severe disability.

Each Changing Places toilet provides:

- a height adjustable adult-sized changing bench
- a tracking hoist system, or mobile hoist if this is not possible.
- enough space
- safe and clean environment

Changing places toilets are progressively included in the key public venues such as community hubs, leisure centres, shopping centres (i.e. Eastland.).

## Marvelloo

Marvelloo is a fully equipped accessible mobile restroom catering for the needs of people with a severe disability and their carers.

Marvelloo enables people with severe disability to attend and participate in festivals, concerts and community events with the confidence that their needs will be catered for with dignity and respect.

The key features of Marvelloo are a height adjustable adult change table; a tracking hoist system that provides flexibility, enabling use of either the toilet or change table; a ramp with rails for easy access; reverse cycle heating and cooling; external sun shade; as well as sufficient space and privacy options to cater for one person or a group of people with one carer.

Marvelloo is available for hire from Maroondah City Council.

## Access Ramps

Access ramps should be provided everywhere that steps are located at front entrances. Ramps should not be located at the back of venues or stages. Portable access ramps can be used to provide temporary access where steps would otherwise prevent access for wheelchair users or people with limited mobility. Portable access ramps should not be relied upon but are great for emergencies.

- Remember there are technical standards applicable for access ramps and they should adhere to gradients of 1:20. If the ramp is too steep, then it will not be useable.
- Access ramps should be well lit (if event is occurring at night)
- Access ramps MUST have a slip resistant tread
- Portable Access Ramps can be hired from most suppliers and are great for outdoor events.

## Access Matting

Accessible matting is temporary plastic flooring (commonly called Pro Floor) that when placed together can be used to create pathways or assembly areas on unstable surfaces. It provides safe access for people who use wheelchairs, scooters, walking frames, pushers, prams and for people with limited mobility including the elderly. Accessible matting is especially useful to create pathways over grassed or muddy areas and can be used on any flat surface.

Access matting has a slip resistant tread that allows in air, water and light. It is made from plastic with each rectangle approximately 30cm by 10cm in size. Rectangles are then clipped together to create an even surface.

- Access matting is usually stored in rolls approximately 1.5m wide (rolls are then used to create 1.5m pathways)
- Access matting can be purchased or hired through various hire companies
- A separation tool or screwdriver will be required to put it together and pull it apart

- When stored in rolls access matting can be extremely heavy. You need two adults to lift and move the matting
- It is a good idea to ensure you have adequate staff to install and remove access matting
- Access matting sits 1.5cm above the surface it is resting on. Therefore to ensure wheelchairs can utilise the matting, adjustments must be made to ensure smooth transitions between entering and exiting from the access matting
- This can be done by purchasing or hiring matting edges. This can also be done by securing cardboard where the matting edge meets another surface

## Wheelchairs

At any event regardless of the size of venue it is useful to have wheelchairs for loan for people with temporary illnesses, mobility issues, for people who may tire or become unwell at the event.

- Wheelchairs should be available for loan from more than one location
- Information Areas as well as Rest and Recharge Areas are good locations for having wheelchairs available
- Ensure you have a way of identifying your wheelchairs
- Collecting drivers licences is a good way of ensuring wheelchairs are returned
- Wheelchairs can be hired from pharmacies and some councils

## Hearing Loop

Many hard of hearing people, although they may be using hearing aids, have difficulty understanding what is being said on stage. General background noise including nearby conversations, the effects of reverberation and distance from the speakers can impact how much people who are hard of hearing can hear. People with adequate hearing are usually less affected by these conditions because they can focus to a greater extent on the sounds they want to hear. The installation and use of Hearing Loops at events can significantly improve the situation for many people.

- A hearing loop can be hired for any event The system is connected to the Sound Desk and picks up all audio travelling through the desk.
- People with hearing aids can then collect a small receiver which attaches to their hearing aid 'T' switch. For people without hearing aids, wireless headphones can also be given out with receivers
- Ensure hearing loops are promoted prior to the event and ensure you have directional signage to the hearing loops at the event.

## Communication Board

A Communication Board is a tool used to communicate with people with speech difficulties. It can also be great for communicating with people with learning difficulties and with people who speak a language other than English.

A communication board is made up of a series of pictures, letters and words that people can point to. Pictures of toilets, wheelchairs, and all activities occurring at the

event are extremely useful. A board with the English alphabet is usually included and can also be useful.

- Communication boards should be available at both the Rest and Recharge Area and Information Area.
- Boards should be clearly visible to all people who walk in.
- They should be clear and large enough for everyone to use.

## SOUND, LIGHTING AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY:

Many events use technology and special effects to add to impact or to overcome issues such as the large size of the venue. This section shows how you can consider the impact for people with disability of any technology you use.

### Flash lighting, strobes and other special effects

Some special effects can have a detrimental effect for people with disability such as those with epilepsy or tinnitus. If your event involves flash lighting, strobes and other special effects, you will need to consider how you let people know about this. Communicate the use of special effects on advertising and invitations so they can make a decision about whether they wish to participate in that part of the entertainment.

### Dimming Lights

Lighting can affect access for a person with disability. For example, a Hard of hearing person will be prevented from lip-reading if there is insufficient light on the speaker. If dimming lights is absolutely necessary to allow guests to see the projected images then you will have to ensure that speakers and any sign language interpreters are suitably spotlighted and there is good light for reading. It is also a good idea to give a copy of the projected images to people with avision impairment before they come to the event in their chosen format such as large print or Braille.

### Public address systems

Public Address (PA) systems play an important role at many events, helping to ensure that people can hear what is being said in large venues. At conferences and seminars, where members of the audience are invited to ask questions from the floor, it will be important to have staff equipped with portable microphones for the audience to use.

You should also ensure the PA system is supplemented by a hearing augmentation system to assist people with hearing impairments.

# TRANSPORT

Transport issues have been identified as a major reason for non-attendance of people with disability at festivals and events. So in the early stages of planning it is important to take this into consideration. Getting people to and from the venue, safely and efficiently, is very important. If you plan to give out information about how to reach the venue and about public transport options, you must consider how people with disability will attend.

## Public Transport

- Research and include public transport details in promotional materials
- Once you have established nearby public transport options, check out accessibility of the bus/train/tram stops, stations and vehicles used on that route
- Ensure accessible pathways to and from transport stops

## Community Bus

- Use a community bus to pick people up and take them home
- Provide details in promotional materials
- A community bus is also useful to move people around a very large venue or an event with multiple venues
- Make the bus a pre-booked option for transport to allow greater control
- A great idea to encourage elderly participation

## Drop Off Points

- Ensure adequate room for cars, taxis and coaches to set down passengers
- Provide details in promotional materials
- Remember that schools, community services or aged care services will be more likely to attend if they are aware of drop off points
- Ensure drop off points are close to entrances and are accessible (kerb ramps, etc.)
- Drop off points are also great for performers and staff
- NEVER have a drop off point at a back entrance or gate

## Accessible parking

- Identify the number of disability accessible parking bays within the immediate surrounds.
- Organise temporary disability accessible parking if large numbers expected
- Remember there are technical standards that apply for disability accessible parking bays.

## Mobility Buggy

- If the site of the festival is large a mobility buggy can assist in transporting people unable to walk long distances around the site
- Provide details in promotional materials as this will encourage people with mobility difficulties to attend
- People can be taken on tours of the festival as well as from point to point
- Ensure the drivers are briefed prior to the event with regards to expectations; safe driving practices etc., and ensure they are in radio contact with all staff
- Ensure buggy is clearly signed

# CATERING

It is useful to provide different catering choices where practicable and to ensure that catering staff are briefed on helping people with disability with their selection and service.

## Top Tips for Catering

- If self-service is the only option available, ensure that staff are available to assist people with disability, including those with mobility and vision impairments with their food choice and their being able to carry their food to the eating area.
- Make sure that there are seats and tables available. Some people with disability need to sit down. Seating also helps those who are talking to a person using a wheelchair so that they do not have to constantly look up to engage in conversation.
- Make menus more accessible by printing them in large sans serif fonts using contrasting paper and print. Ensure staff are prepared to talk through the menu.
- Provide a choice of cutlery and crockery. A mug may be easier for some people with disability to use than cups and saucers or plastic cups that do not have handles. Offer drinking straws as a standard as some people with disability may not be able to hold a cup, glass or mug.
- Don't overlook the small things. Sachets of condiments, or milk in very small containers, can be difficult to open. You could consider ensuring help is on hand for people experiencing difficulty.
- Make sure there is room for everybody to manoeuvre safely between tables. When you conduct a site visit to the venue think about what it will be like when lots of people are moving around and sitting at tables.
- Consider having a number of food and beverage service areas spread around the venue. This is helpful for people with disability as there is likely to be a service point closer to where they are.
- Everyone will benefit from the shorter queues if you only have a short period for a break before continuing the event program.
- Consider dietary needs such as gluten-free food and the needs of diabetics and ensure buffet food is clearly marked as being gluten-free or vegan for example. Registration forms may need to include a question on dietary needs.

# ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

## Rest and Recharge Area

A Rest and Recharge Area allows people to take a break from the crowd and address any physical needs in relative privacy (e.g. diabetic injections). It provides you with an opportunity to communicate with festival attendees about accessible facilities and activities on offer and also provides a location for people using motorised wheelchairs to recharge.

People with psychiatric, physical disabilities or chronic illness will find this particularly helpful. Older people and nursing mothers may also find a rest area useful.

- Ensure there is an accessible pathway leading to the area
- Ensure that the area is situated on a flat and even surface and if located on grass that access matting has been used to cover the whole area
- The Rest and Recharge Area should be located away from noisy stages and close to an accessible toilet
- The Rest and Recharge Area needs to have access to a 10amp general power outlet for the recharging of electric wheelchairs
- Water should be provided free of charge from within the area
- Ensure there is adequate shade and room for both sitting and for wheelchairs
- Ensure wheelchairs are available for loan from the Rest and Recharge Area
- A communication board should be available from within the area
- The Rest and Recharge Area should be staffed at all times and staff should be aware of all event access facilities including toilets, interpreters, programming etc.
- Staff at the area also need to be in communication with the Access Coordinator, Interpreters, Carers and Festival Coordinator

## Information Area

Most festivals and events have an information desk or area. It is important to ensure that your information desk is equipped with the same knowledge and facilities as the Rest and Recharge Area.

## First Aid and Public Health

There is always an obligation to provide a safe environment for patrons and appropriate care for all personnel working at the event. If you are promoting your event as an accessible event there is even a greater obligation. Therefore it is essential that first aid be organised in advance.

First Aid room(s)/tents must be fitted with:

- Chairs, tables and adequate lighting
- Easily identified signage that is visible at night
- Power and running water

- Ramps or be located on the ground floor with no steps

## Shelter

Shelter and shaded areas should be available wherever patrons or staff and volunteers may be located for an extended period of time. For a successful accessible event it is even more important to ensure adequate shelter has been provided.

## Reserved Seating

Creating reserved shelter and seating areas near stages, performance and ceremony sites within good viewing and hearing distance of the action is a great way to ensure accessibility for everyone. People with mobility issues or chronic illnesses will find this particularly helpful. Older people and nursing mothers may also find reserved seating useful. If performances onstage are being interpreted it is also useful to reserve an area close to an Auslan interpreter for the Deaf community members or hard of hearing spectators.

- Ensure there is an accessible pathway leading to the area
- Ensure that the area is situated on a flat and even surface and if located on grass, that access matting has been used
- Ensure there is adequate shade
- Provide signage within the area to indicate who the seats are available for
- Ensure Stage Managers and Area Coordinators monitor the area to ensure seating is always available
- The reserved seating should be within close proximity to the sound desk for users of hearing loops.

## Water Necessities

The provision of freely available water is an integral part of any successful festival or event. If you are promoting your event as an accessible event, there is an even greater need to have a sufficient supply of freely available portable water, and clear directional signage to water.

- A washbasin does not constitute a drinking fountain or tap
- Ensure that all drinking fountains and facilities are at a height appropriate for people using wheelchairs
- Ensure that additional water is available for extreme weather

## Information Announcements

Clear audio announcements, made regularly from stages, performance and ceremony sites, alerting visitors to the accessible features of the event and giving directions are a great way of ensuring everyone is informed.

- Ensure announcements are clearly spoken

- A good way to ensure the correct language and information is being given out is to write the announcements prior to the event. This can then be given to the MC or host to be read at intervals throughout the event.
- Ensure AUSLAN interpreters convey the information to the participants who are deaf.

## Accessible Signage

Create a signage plan that maps out locations for signs, specifies the size of signs, wording, approximate font sizes, colours, symbols to be used etc. The signage plan will vary in detail depending upon the size of your event but is a great way to ensure that all signage is accessible.

- Ensure you have signage for all features of your event.
- Signage should be clear and appropriately located
- Use large clear fonts in sentence case with maximum colour contrast between lettering and background in a simple and uncluttered layout
- Signs should not have a shiny background
- Signage directing people to the Rest and Recharge Area, Accessible Toilets, Reserved Seating and other event accessibility features should be placed at strategic points at park entrances and at pathway intersections
- Signage should be placed at a suitable height to be read by people using wheelchairs and should include large directional arrows
- Do not forget to include contact mobile phone numbers for disability assistance at the event. This can be the Access Coordinators mobile or a mobile for the Rest and Recharge Area
- Use symbols as appropriate

## Accessibility Maps and Programs

Another great way of ensuring everyone has access to the same information and to encourage people with disability to attend the event is to produce Accessibility Maps and Programs with all the relevant information. These can be produced prior to the festival and can be distributed at the event through the Information Area and Rest and Recharge Area.

- Information and maps should be clear and appropriately located
- Rest and Recharge Area, Accessible Toilets, Reserved Seating and other event accessibility features should be indicated on the maps
- Do not forget to include contact mobile phone numbers for disability assistance at the event. This can be the Access Coordinators mobile or a mobile for the Rest and Recharge Area
- Use large clear fonts with maximum colour contrast between lettering and background in a simple and uncluttered layout
- Symbols should be used as appropriate
- Ensure all programming information including AUSLAN interpreted events have been included.

# MARKETING

Access to information is as important now as it ever was. When marketing your event remember that approximately 13% of people have difficulty reading and/or understanding printed materials due to disability of some kind.

When marketing your event to people with disability you will need to take into consideration the people viewing your marketing materials and the various types of disabilities that they may have.

- People who are colour blind, blind or vision impaired
- People with a learning disability that prevents them from reading or comprehending text properly (dyslexia)
- People who may not be able to read small text, including the aging community
- People who are deaf and hard of hearing
- When marketing your event give high priority to the message that people of all abilities are invited to participate at your event and will be appropriately supported. You may be surprised by the positive response. Make sure all promotional material includes the accessible features of the event and an invitation to contact the event organiser regarding individual needs.

## Design

When designing your marketing materials it is important to consider the following suggestions when designing for people with a disability and remember that designing for people with a disability does not mean it has to be boring.

- Always use a clear font size of 12pt or larger
- Ensure all documents are available in large print versions of at least 18pt
- Ensure all programs are available in an audio format
- A sans serif font (e.g. Arial, Helvetica) should be used for all text (sans = without, serif = semi-structural details on the ends of some fonts, commonly called counterstrokes, wings, feet or tails)
- Creative fonts may be used for headings, but should be clear and easy to read
- Italics and full sentences in capitals should be avoided
- Bold text and underlined text should also be avoided
- Avoid font styles with little or no spacing between letters
- Try to align all text bodies to the left
- Avoid aligning text bodies to the centre of a page or to the right of a page
- Avoid justifying text bodies, as irregular spacing between the words can be difficult
- A good level of contrast between text and background is a MUST.
- Any coloured text must be large, clear and very easy to read
- Paper used should be in a matt (not shiny) finish
- Glossy papers should always be avoided
- Include standard Disability Access Symbols where appropriate
- Pictures, photos, shapes or watermarks should not be used behind text
- Fluorescent colours are particularly difficult for some people with disability
- Spell out all abbreviations or if possible avoid them all together

- Single spacing between lines is ideal
- Avoid using indents at the beginning of new paragraphs

## Promotion on Website

Putting promotional material on a website will increase the range of people who can access your information, but only if they can read the information.

Web content can be made more accessible to people with a disability and can be created to maximise the use of assistance technologies such as screen readers and wireless pointing devices. It is important to consider the following important rules for designing website that can be read by people with disability.

- Use text to describe all visual elements
- Provide captioning, transcripts of audio, and descriptions of video
- Use text that makes sense when read out of context. For example avoid links with text that reads "click here"
- Ensure text sizes can be made larger or smaller as required
- Avoid the use of PDF's as they are not easily accessible for people who are vision impaired or people who use screen reading software.
- Many of the previously listed design rules are also appropriate here, for example;
- Always use a font size of 12pt or larger
- A san serif font (e.g. Arial) should be used for all text (san = without, serif = semi structural details on the ends of some fonts, commonly called wings, feet or tails)
- Creative fonts may be used for headings, but should be clear and easy to read
- Italics and writing full sentences in capitals should be avoided
- Bold text and underlined text should also be avoided
- Avoid font styles with little or no spacing between letters
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- Single spacing between lines is ideal

## Podcasting

Podcasting is also an effective way of communicating your message. A podcast contains audio information in the MP3 file format and can be played with the basic set-up of most recent computer operating systems.

- Ensure the podcast is available for download from your website

- Ensure you have copies that can be sent to people who do not have computers
- Do not forget to include contact mobile phone numbers for disability assistance at the event and prior to the event.
- Ensure all programming information including AUSLAN interpreted events have been included.

## Language

Language is a powerful tool. It's not just what we say, but how we say it that can make all the difference. The amount of information you give and the language you choose to use may, inadvertently, give a negative message.

As well as providing clear information, it is important to use terminology that carries with it positive messages about disability. Use easy to understand language and if in doubt check your language with people with disability.

Always try to avoid stereotypical or stigmatising depictions of people with disability and avoid phrases and words that demean individuals with disability. The "people first" concept has been designed to put a person before the disability and portray people with disability in the same multi-dimensional fashion as others. This is an effective and simple way of communicating your message.

## Useful Words and Phrases

- Person with a disability or people with disability
- People with a learning disability
- Deaf, or hard of hearing
- Blind, or vision impairment
- People without a disability (as opposed to able-bodied)
- Person who uses a wheelchair (as opposed to wheelchair bound or a person confined to a wheelchair)
- Person with epilepsy (as opposed to epileptic)
- Person with a psychiatric disability (as opposed to mental patient or insane)
- Person with an intellectual disability (as opposed to mentally retarded or slow)
- Person with cerebral palsy (as opposed to spastic)
- Sign language interpreter or AUSLAN interpreter (signer is inaccurate)
- AUSLAN interpreted performance (a signed performance is one where all onstage will use AUSLAN)
- Accessible toilet or wheelchair accessible toilet (as opposed to disabled toilet)
- Specific needs (as opposed to special needs)
- All of these terms are preferred by people with disability. By using them, you let your intended audience know you are considerate of their needs.

## Words and Phrases to Avoid

Avoid offensive terms such as "cripple", "dwarf" or "midget", "spastic" and inaccuracies such as "invalid" or "patient". Also avoid value judgements such as "suffers from" or "victim", "incapacitated" and "defective".

The terms “special”, “disabled” and “the disabled”, whilst in current use in the United States and the United Kingdom, are currently considered inappropriate in Australia.

## Deaf or hard of hearing

There is a great diversity amongst deaf people ranging from having hearing loss to using sign language to communicate. Here are some common written terms.

A capital D is used to describe deaf people who use Auslan as their primary means of communication. These people generally take pride in their own language and see themselves as a cultural and linguistic minority group

The term “deaf” without capitalisation refers to all deaf people and includes Deaf people as well as people who are deaf but use methods such as speech and lip-reading to communicate.

Hard of hearing people are people who have poor hearing and generally wear hearing aids to understand speech. This group can benefit from the use of technologies such as hearing loops that help cut out background noise so they can hear better.

# INCLUSIVE EVENTS

Being an inclusive event refers to the process beyond understanding and successfully providing a physically accessible event, venue and marketing. An inclusive event goes beyond ramps, access toilets and wheelchairs. Such an event actively encourages participation from the disability community in all activities; as audience members, participants, performers and staff. An inclusive event ensures that all in attendance at the festival are aware of their obligations and are access conscious as well.

People with disability do not want to be only thought of as spectators at community events. True inclusion means that people with disability should be integral to the planning and presentation at any event. Funding should be set aside to be offered to people with disability as performers and staff.

## Performers

Consider the needs of performers who may have disability when setting up staging and performance spaces and programming.

- Communicate with performers in advance to identify any specific requirements
- When programming, take into account any additional turnaround time that may be required when working with performers with disability
- Ensure that you have a stage manager who is aware of access issues
- Ramp and handrails to all stage areas MUST be in place
- Ensure all change areas (Green Rooms) are accessible
- Accessible pathways between the stage, green room and toilet will be required
- Provisions should be made on stage for an attendant carer if required
- An AUSLAN interpreter may be required
- Make a commitment at the beginning of the event to include performers with disability in your program. There is some high quality, amazing performers with disabilities around the country and they will add something special to your event.

## Food Vendors

The provision of a variety of high quality, affordable foods at public events contributes to the comfort of patrons, and is often a necessity. Therefore it is important to choose sub-contractors for events that are aware of their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act to provide accessible food stalls. It is equally important that foods for people with diabetic and/or gluten free needs, as well as vegetarian options are provided. If you are providing eating areas, they should be fully accessible.

Checklist of questions to ask prospective food vendors:

- Are your staff responsive to individual customer needs?
- What foods do you provide for people with specific dietary requirements?

- Does your stall set up allow for people using wheelchairs to view food selection?
- Do you have clear printed menus and prices with large font either on signage or available for people to read?
- If you serve drinks, do you provide bendy straws?

## Market and Information Stalls

Like all activities, it is important that Markets and Information Stalls are accessible. These may be operated by community groups or private businesses but regardless they MUST be aware of their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act to provide good access.

- An easy way to ensure this occurs is to brief stall holders regarding accessibility
- Ensure all stalls are positioned along pathways
- Make sure that clear signage is a priority for stalls
- Space for wheelchairs to move around and view merchandise is very important
- Ensure counter levels are accessible

## Staff and Volunteers

Numerous staff and volunteers are required to successfully run an event. If you are going to market your event as being accessible then you need to ensure that you have staff and volunteers around you who are aware of disability related issues.

- Ensure your staff areas are accessible
- Communicate with staff and volunteers in advance to identify any specific requirements and concerns
- Make sure all rosters and sign on sheets are clear and easily visible
- Space for staff who use wheelchairs to move around is very important to consider
- Consider mentoring people with disability with staff for training purposes
- AUSLAN interpreters may also be required
- Ramp and handrails to all stage areas MUST be in place

## DISABILITY AWARE STAFFING

Responsive and disability aware staff is critical to achieving an accessible festival or event. When advertising for event staff, include disability awareness and experience as a preference in the position description.

Listed below are some key staffing roles for ensuring an accessible event:

### Access Coordinator

- Alongside the Event Coordinator, this position is responsible for ensuring the overall accessibility of the festival including programming, staffing, logistics etc
- Ideally this position should be undertaken by someone with a background and/or knowledge of access issues and festival management
- This position will be responsible for implementing the full Disability Access Plan

### Carers

- Locate carers at Rest and Recharge Area to assist people with disability
- For a large event provide roving carers to identify people who may need assistance to participate and enjoy the event
- Ensure carers are present at food areas during all meal times
- Ensure effective communication between Rest and Recharge Area and carers
- Carers should be made available to assist people with disability to participate in activities.

### AUSLAN Interpreters

- Ensure an interpreter can be contacted through the Rest and Recharge Area
- Interpreters can be booked through an agency
- If the event is longer than one hour, more than one interpreter will be required
- All interpreters require regular rest breaks
- If interpreters are working the entire day they will need to be allowed time for lunch
- Before the event, discuss the planned activities with interpreters and be guided by their advice on how best to use their services
- Why not schedule interpreters to attend different activities at different times
- Ensure that interpreters and staff both have mobiles with them so they can contact each other with text messages
- Be aware that if an interpreter is working, he or she will not answer your text message until they have stopped interpreting
- Ensure that clear information is provided to deaf people in advance of the event as to where and when the interpreted events are happening and who to approach if they need to find something out but can't find the interpreter
- Ensure that Auslan interpreters know what to do in the event of an emergency.

## Staff Briefing

All staff working at your event need training to ensure they are aware of all disability requirements. All staff briefings should include coverage of accessibility priorities.

- Emphasis on the creation of a welcoming environment, where people with disability can feel comfortable to participate
- Emphasis on presenting people with disability as customers rather than as 'problems' and address misconceptions and prejudices
- Ensure the coverage of types of disability and what needs to happen to support event participants with various types of disabilities
- Ensure staff are familiar with all accessible features of event and locations
- Provide an explanation of different roles of event staff
- Ensure staff are aware of what they are and are not expected to do
- Emphasise the need for effective communication between event staff and carers and any communications systems that are in place
- Ensure staff are familiar with accessibility aspects of Emergency Procedures
- Ensure staff are familiar with techniques for communicating and providing assistance
- Teach staff how to use all facilities.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:

Despite the best planning and taking of all necessary precautions, emergencies can occur, so plans and procedures need to be developed. It is important to remember that in any major incident, for the purposes of the law, the venue is considered a crime scene and thus under total control of the police.

It is equally important that emergency procedures include how best to assist people with disability in the event of an emergency.

- Ensure all exits and assembly points are accessible
- Make sure you have sufficient staff to provide additional assistance
- Provide information to all carers, AUSLAN interpreters and the Access Coordinator prior to the event with regards to their obligations in case of an emergency
- Provide flashing lights at all activities and stages to alert people who are deaf or hard of hearing of emergency situations.

## APPENDIX 1: - Access requirements by disability types

See below for some of the different types of disability and accessibility features to consider in the early planning stages of your event.

### Vision Impairment and Blindness:

- Clear large print signs
- Clear line of travel
- Hand rails on stairs and ramps
- Slip resistant floors
- Good lighting
- Carers available if required
- Audio Description
- Friendly and understanding staff to assist
- Facilities for assistance animals
- Braille
- Audio announcements

### Hearing Impairment and Deafness:

- Information clearly presented
- Inclusion of visual information such as maps and directional signage
- Placement of information stalls away from noisy stages
- Good lighting
- Captioning
- Friendly and understanding staff to assist
- Facilities for assistance animals
- Flashing light for indicating emergencies
- Hearing loops and AUSLAN interpreters

### Intellectual and Learning Disabilities:

- Information clearly presented
- Large print signs
- Notification of flash photography and strobe lighting
- Friendly and understanding staff to assist
- Carers available if required
- Placement of information stalls away from noisy stages

### Epilepsy:

- Notification of flash photography and strobe lighting
- Quiet spaces and rest areas
- Carers available if required
- First Aid staff available
- Friendly and understanding staff to assist

### Mental Health Issues:

- Quiet spaces and rest areas
- Friendly and understanding staff to assist

### Physical and Mobility Impairments:

- Wide clear pathways around site
- Disability parking
- Drop off points
- Carers available if required
- Signage at appropriate height
- Accessible toilets with sink and lock
- Ramps that comply to Australian standards
- Hand rails on stairs and ramps
- Slip resistant floors
- Friendly and understanding staff to assist
- Seating and rest areas
- Accessible pathways to all amenities
- Automatic doors or use of non-heavy doors

### Chronic Illness:

- Disability parking
- Drop off points
- First Aid staff available
- Carers available if required
- Accessible toilets with sink and lock
- Ramps that comply to Australian standards
- Hand rails on stairs and ramps
- Slip resistant floors
- Friendly and understanding staff to assist
- Seating and rest areas
- Wheelchairs for loan
- Infectious Material Sharps Containers
- Automatic doors or use of non-heavy doors

### Temporary Ailments and Impairments:

- Drop off points
- Carers available if required
- First Aid staff available
- Ramps that comply to Australian standards
- Hand rails on stairs and ramps
- Slip resistant floors
- Friendly and understanding staff to assist
- Seating and rest areas
- Wheelchairs for loan
- Automatic doors or use of non-heavy doors

## APPENDIX 2 - Access checklist:

The checklist below could be used in planning an event and identifying a broad range of access features to be considered. This checklist was developed by the Meetings and Events Industry of Australia in partnership with the Australian Human Rights Commission, and published in the *Accessible Events, A Guide For Meeting and Event Organisers*, (2012, pp. 31 – 37). The checklist should not be relied on as a comprehensive assessment tool for ensuring compliance with anti-discrimination law.

Early planning	Your notes
Have you considered developing an access policy and strategy to guide your organisation through the planning stage?	
Have you considered seeking advice from an access expert and/or disability organisations about your event?	
Have you considered how your event timetabling might affect the participation of people with disability e.g. time to move between sessions, start time, and break time for interpreters?	
Have you considered the need for a budget to address access requirements e.g. production of accessible material, sign language interpreters and hiring hearing loops?	
Have you considered booking services and supports such as sign language interpreters or hearing loops early on?	
Have you discussed access requirements thoroughly with venues being considered and visited preferred venues before confirming bookings?	
Is there level access with no steps or other barriers from the arrival point at the venue, through the main entrance(s), to all the areas being used by participants? Are there any steps or other barriers to facilities being used by participants such as 'break-out' or workshop rooms, dining areas, outside areas and exhibition areas?	
Are the doors into the venue and any rooms being used wide enough for a person using a wheelchair to get through	

and easy to open?	
Is there at least one accessible unisex toilet at the same location as other toilets or close by?	
Is there clear signage to direct people from the entrance(s) to any information desk and all the facilities being used?	
If participants have to use lifts to get to facilities are they large enough for people using wheelchairs to use? Are the control buttons at a height that can be accessed by people using wheelchairs? Do the control buttons have raised buttons and Braille information? Is there audio information in the lift telling people what floor they are arriving at if the lift travels more than two levels?	
If the venue has an inbuilt PA system is there also a hearing loop or similar system to assist people with hearing impairment? If not do you need to consider hiring a portable system?	
Is there good lighting and acoustics in the room(s) being used and is it possible to 'spotlight' speakers and sign language interpreters if they are to be used?	
If participants are likely to come by public transport is there accessible public transport close-by? If participants are likely to be dropped off outside the venue is there a kerb ramp at the drop off point to allow a person using a wheelchair to get from the road to the entrance?	
If there is car parking at the venue. Is the car park clearly signed and are the accessible car parking bays clearly identified?	
Is there a clear level path of travel from the accessible car parking spaces to the entrance(s) with no steps or other barriers such as bollards placed closely together?	

<p>Do the venue operators understand their responsibility to allow assistance dogs into the venue and is there a designated assistance dog toileting area close-by?</p>	
<p>If the venue has accommodation to be used by participants are there accessible rooms available?</p>	
<p>If the event is outdoors are there:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accessible car parking spaces close to the entrance or inside the site close to main features such as the event ring, stage or stalls</li> <li>• accessible portable toilets</li> <li>• clear signs to identify the location of features such as toilets, first aid points and main event spaces</li> <li>• designated areas reserved for people using wheelchairs close to stages or main event areas and good paths of travel to those areas?</li> </ul>	
<p>If you are concerned about any of these essential access requirements have you discussed them with the venue operators or an access expert?</p>	

## FURTHER INFORMATION

- Association of Consultants in Access Australia has a list of members who can provide access services <http://www.access.asn.au/> .
- Some members of Association of Consultants in Access Australia provide Disability Awareness Training <http://www.access.asn.au>
- Link to national peak disability groups:  
[http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability\\_rights/links/links.html#community](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/links/links.html#community)
- The organisation Accessible Arts plays an important, information, advocacy, training and assistance role in relation to organisations involved in arts events and festivals <http://www.aarts.net.au>
- Many Local Government bodies also have Community or Disability Officers who may be able to provide advice and identify local contacts.
- Australian Human Rights Commission Disability Rights homepage [http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability\\_rights/index](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/index)
- Human Rights Commission Advisory Notes [http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability\\_rights/standards/www\\_3/www\\_3.htm](http://www.humanrights.gov.au/disability_rights/standards/www_3/www_3.htm)
- State and Territory anti-discrimination agencies <http://www.humanrights.gov.au/about/links/index.html#ad>
- The Victorian Government has also produced a useful short checklist at
- [http://bit.ly/eventguidechecklist\\_PDF](http://bit.ly/eventguidechecklist_PDF)
- The Building Code of Australia (BCA) includes access requirements for different types of building. It is developed by the Australian Building Codes Board <http://www.abcb.gov.au>
- The BCA references a number of Australian Standards which provide details of the technical specifications. These standards can be purchased from SAI Global. AS 1428.1 is the primary technical reference. <http://www.saiglobal.com/>
- IWorld Wide Web Consortium Guidelines <http://www.w3.org/standards/webdesign/accessibility>
- Information about TTY - Telstra Aged and Disability Centre (National Disability Line: 1800 068 424). Rental TTYs are available from Telstra on application.
- The National Relay Service (NRS) is an Australia-wide telephone access service which provides access to anyone in the wider telephone network for people who are Deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment. As a business you could ensure people with a speech or hearing impairment are aware that they can contact you through NRS see <http://www.relayservice.com.au/>
- The National Relay Service has produced a fact sheet on TTY <http://www.relayservice.com.au/faqs/tty-faqs>
- Information about how to provide information in Braille and other alternative can be obtained from Vision Australia <http://www.visionaustralia.org.au/info.aspx?page=682>

## CONTACT

The City of Yarra has a range of services and information for people with a disability and groups organising events and activities. For further information on this guide or any other information please visit [www.yarracity.vic.gov.au](http://www.yarracity.vic.gov.au) or call (03) 9205 5555.