
Toolkit for accessible and inclusive events

June 2023



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‘As a wheelchair user, this is one venue that I never hesitate to book tickets at. That’s because I know I’m always able to sit with my friends to enjoy the game, rather than by myself.’

‘As a person with low vision, the increased lighting and audio announcements about where to catch buses and taxis were a great help as I was leaving the event to get home. These little things can help to make an event so much more enjoyable and stress free.’

‘As an event organiser for a popular local community event, we have tried to incorporate accessibility considerations into our planning over the last few years. We have noticed a significant increase in attendance by people with disability and their families and friends, as well as parents with prams and older members of the community. Our event now better reflects our community.’



Introduction

When planning an event, it is a legal requirement to consider the access needs of people with a disability. With more than 20% of the NSW population living with disability, making your event accessible is also an important commercial decision. Promoting an event's focus on accessibility may also be an attractive prospect for supporting partners or sponsors.

Accessibility customers might be:

- a person who is d/Deaf or hard of hearing
- a person who is blind or has low vision
- a person with sensory sensitivities or who is neurodivergent
- a person who is a wheelchair user
- a person who has a non-visible disability
- a person with chronic illness
- a person with intellectual disability
- an older person
- a parent pushing a stroller.

Accessibility customers are either born with disability or they may acquire a disability, temporarily or permanently, at some point in their lifetime. It is also worth noting that as we all age, our accessibility needs increase.

This toolkit aims to assist event organisers in creating an event that is accessible to all members of the community.

For further information about organising events in New South Wales, refer to the [NSW Government's Event Starter Guide](#).



Getting started checklist

As you go through this checklist, think about where other accessibility solutions could be applied to your event. This is just a starting point, so challenge yourself to think creatively.

During the event, put yourself into the position of an accessibility guest and make notes where you can see other changes that can be implemented next time.

Budget

Have you factored in the additional budget to address accessibility requirements?

Venue

Do you have the option to choose a fully accessible venue? It is good practice to check the venue in person before confirming.

If not, are both yourself and the venue prepared to implement accessibility provisions where required?

Are there accessible public transport services near the venue?

Are there drop-off points for vehicles close to the entrance of the venue?

Are there clearly identified accessible car parking spaces available near the entrance?

Is there a clear, continuous accessible path of travel (CAPT) from any public transport, parking or drop-off points to the venue entrance? A CAPT is defined as a delineated pathway (minimum 1 metre wide) with no steps or barriers.

Is there a clear, continuous accessible path of travel from the entrance to all the areas being used as part of the event?

Are all doors wide enough (minimum 1000mm) for a wheelchair user to get through?

Is the information/registration desk at a height that is accessible for a wheelchair user?

Are there accessible unisex toilets?

Is there a hearing loop? If not, can you install a temporary one?

Will audio description be provided for blind and low-vision attendees?

If the venue has fixed seating, are there removable seats for wheelchair users?

Is there provision for a breakout space or quiet room?

Is there a changing places amenity available for people with high-support needs?

Is there provision to provide a tactile touch tour for the blind and low-vision community?

Infrastructure and seating

Have you planned for alternative arrangements where any of the pre-existing infrastructure has been identified as inaccessible?

Are any stages and risers accessible for performers and speakers, if required?

Are there easily accessible powerpoints available to charge motorised scooters and wheelchairs?

Have you designated an accessible seating area at the front of audience areas with an unimpeded view of the stage, speaker and/or Auslan interpreter? For a medium-sized event, aim to provide seating for 20 people as a minimum (roughly 1.5m² per person).

Transport

Are any additional accessible parking or drop-off points required?

Have you provided the closest transport hubs to your event with estimated walking times and gradients?

Have you provided information about transport services affected by road closures?

Signage

Do you have clear signage to direct people to all event areas as well as amenities such as info booths, toilets and first aid?

Have you ensured signage is printed with clear contrast colours (white on blue) using the International Symbol of Access icon and is installed at a height visible to wheelchair users?

Are accessible pathways clearly identified?

Is there an accessibility map which highlights all the accessibility elements available?

Outdoor events

Are there any structures obstructing any kerb ramps?

Are accessible portaloos and accessible water stations provided?

Do any street closures or fencing maintain the accessibility of kerb ramps or accessible paths of travel?

Will you be providing a break-out space or quiet space in a shaded area?

Do any grassy areas need to be covered with flooring materials to make mobility easier?

Are all cable trays wheelchair accessible?

Will a wheelchair charging station for power-wheelchairs and scooters be provided?

Is there a priority queue with a wider lane for accessibility guests provided at all security entry points?

Assistance animals

Are there facilities for assistance animals (e.g. bathroom, water, shade)?

Have staff been briefed on the rules and regulations pertaining to assistance animals? (Refer to [NSW State Legislation](#))

Tickets and registration

Do you have a registration form for accessibility guests? If not, can they note their specific requirements at the time of booking?

Are registration forms and booking systems in an accessible format with different submission options such as web, telephone and email?

Content and information

Is any written information, such as programs, available in an accessible format for people who are blind or with low vision?

Is there an opportunity to provide audio description or other accessible formats for any visual information such as a presentation or video?

Do you need captions or an Auslan interpreter for any speakers or video?

Staff

Have your staff (including venue-supplied staff) and volunteers had disability awareness training and been briefed on any accessibility measures or requirements including emergency evacuation procedures?

Sound and lighting

Have audiences been informed if there will be any flash lighting, strobes, smoke, loud noises or other special effects?

If the lights are dimmed for presentations, are any sign language interpreters still adequately lit?

Are portable microphones available for members of the audience who are invited to ask questions from the floor?

Catering

Are the catering tables or food vendors (including food trucks) at a suitable height for wheelchair users?

Are accessible seating and tables available?

Marketing and communications

Does your website follow web accessibility standards? (Refer to [WCAG 2.1 at a Glance](#) and [How to Meet WCAG: A customisable quick reference](#))

Are there multiple methods of contact available such as a phone number, email address or telephone typewriter (TTY) number?

Does your written material use a large and clear font style, with good contrast between text and background?

Are your communications using appropriate inclusive language (e.g. 'accessible toilets' rather than 'disabled toilets') and plain English (refer to [How to write in plain English](#))?

Does your website have specific accessibility page?

Add your own below:

Universal accessibility symbols

Internationally recognised accessibility symbols make it easy for those with accessibility requirements to identify facilities that accommodate their requirements. Use them in all signage, including maps, marketing materials, websites and programs in order to publicise to attendees that your event is accessible.

The accompanying zip file contains 12 universal accessibility symbols in EPS, TIFF and JPEG formats.

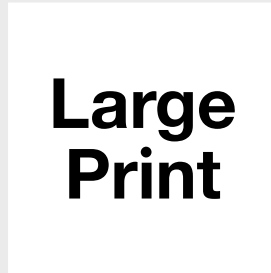
With thanks to the Graphic Artists Guild for producing these icon files.

Wheelchair accessible



Indicates access for individuals with limited mobility, including wheelchair users.

Accessible print (18 pt or Larger)



Must be used at 18pt or larger. Identifies large print versions of books, programs, forms and any other printed material.

Access (other than print or braille) for individuals who are blind or have low vision



Indicated access for people who are blind or have low vision, best used in places such as a guided tour, a path to a nature trail or sensory garden in a park, a tactile tour or an exhibition that may have tactile elements.

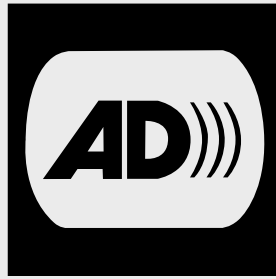
Assistive listening systems



Indicates the presence of a system such as a hearing loop that transmits amplified sound via hearing aids, headsets or other devices.

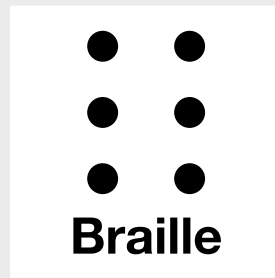
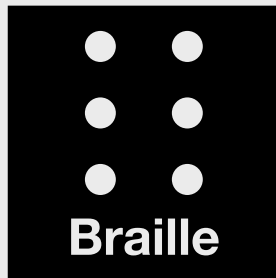
Universal accessibility symbols

Audio description



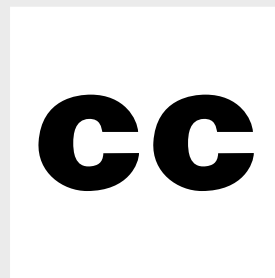
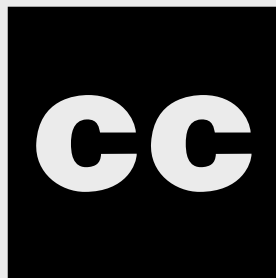
Indicates a live commentary or narration of visual elements provided by a trained Audio Describer.

Braille



Indicates that printed material is available in Braille.

Closed captioning (CC)



Indicates that closed captioning is available. Open captions are always in view and cannot be turned off, whereas the visibility of closed captions is controlled by the viewer.

Open captioning (OC)



Indicates that open captioning is available. Open captions are always in view and cannot be turned off, whereas the visibility of closed captions is controlled by the viewer.

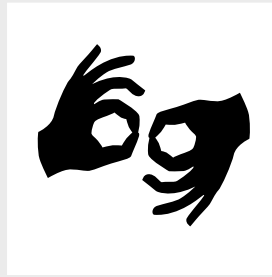
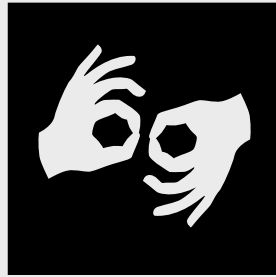
Universal accessibility symbols

Information



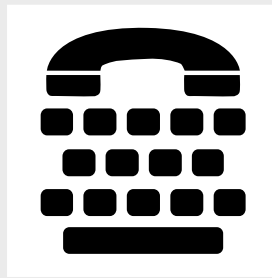
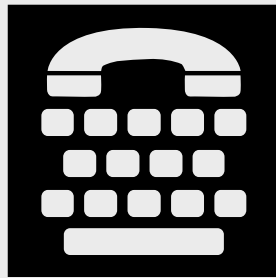
Indicates the location for information about the event and accessibility.

Sign language interpretation



Indicates that an Auslan sign language interpretation is provided.

Telephone typewriter (TTY)



Indicates the presence of a device used with the phone for communication with and between members of the deaf and non-deaf community.

Volume control telephone



Indicates the presence of telephones that have handsets with amplified sound and/or adjustable volume controls.

Inclusive language guidelines

Acceptable terminology in relation to disability is constantly changing – phrases such as ‘handicapped’ and ‘disabled’ which were once standard language can now be considered offensive.

These are some general guidelines for inclusive language best practice:

Person first as opposed to ‘the Disabled’. For example:

- person with disability – not disabled person
- person who is deaf or a person who is hard of hearing – not hearing impaired
- person who is blind or a person with low vision – not vision impaired
- person without disability – not able-bodied or non-disabled
- wheelchair user – not wheelchair bound or confined.

Recognise the person’s individuality:

- focus on the person rather than the disability. Don’t be afraid to ask!

Focus on accessibility rather than disability:

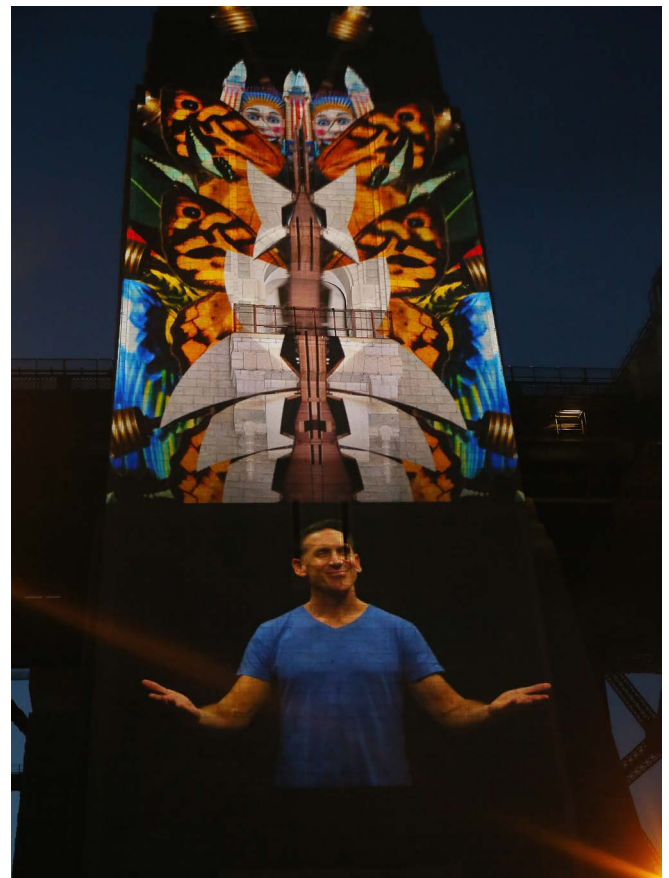
- accessibility also includes others with access requirements such as older people, children and carers.

Don’t forget facilities:

- accessible facility (e.g. toilet/car space/phone) – not disabled facility.

The key rule is – don’t assume all disabilities are obvious.

For more information go to [Australian Government Style Manual: Inclusive language](#).



Tips for communication and assistance

We've been taught for years that people with disability are 'special' or 'different', which can make us overly conscious of the risk of offence when interacting with them. But it's important to remember, just like in the language guidelines, that these are people who just happen to have different access needs.

In order to offer the best event experience possible for all attendees, you may wish to include the following tips for communication and assistance in your staff or volunteer training.

Generally:

- understand that each person with disability is an individual with their own likes and dislikes
- always focus on the person, not their disability. Always address the person directly, not the other people who may be with them (such as a sign language interpreter or assistant).
- always ask the person first if they want assistance; do not assume they need it.
- if you are having a conversation that will last more than a few moments with a person using a wheelchair, bend to eye level or pull up a chair.

For a person who may have a learning difficulty, an intellectual disability, dementia or brain injury:

- address the person directly, listen carefully, speak clearly and check for understanding. Always use clear language without being patronising.
- allow the person time to ask questions and try not to rush them. Try not to overload the person with information. Make it clear you are there to help if they forget the information.

For a person with low hearing or who is deaf:

- always face the person so they can read your lips. Try to make sure there are no bright lights behind you that may limit their ability to see your lips.
- use your normal tone of voice and volume. If possible, move out of areas with lots of background noise.
- always address your comments directly to a person who is deaf rather than to their interpreter (if a person who is deaf has a sign language interpreter).
- have a pen and paper on hand to help you communicate with the person if necessary.

For a person with low vision or who is blind:

- always identify yourself by name. If appropriate, ask for their name so you can address them directly and so that they know you are talking to them and not someone else.
- ask which side you should be on if a person who is blind asks for assistance to go somewhere and offer your arm so they can hold it just above your elbow.
- never pat or distract a guide dog or offer it food while it is in harness. It is a working animal under the control of its owner.

Draft wordings

Flyers and written collateral

Here is some simple wording you can include on your website, flyers or other written collateral that makes it clear that your event is accessible and inclusive:

[Organisation] is committed to making [event name] a safe, inclusive and enjoyable event for all.

For more information on accessibility services for [event name], visit [URL of accessibility page on event's website].

For general information about planning for [event name], visit the [organisation/event name]'s official website [URL of official event website].

Accessibility registration forms

Add the below section for an accessibility registration form. A template is also provided on page 13 of this toolkit:

This is an enquiry register for people with disability or additional accessibility requirements wishing to attend [event name]. If you, a friend or a relative have specific accessibility requirements, please complete the form below.

If you need assistance completing this form, contact [staff member] on [email address] or [phone number].

If you have hearing or speech considerations, contact accesshub.gov.au and quote our number [phone number].

If you need to contact us through an interpreter, call the Telephone Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50, and quote our number [phone number].



Sample: Accessibility registration form

A registration form for attendees to your event helps with your planning process to ensure you can tailor solutions to known individual requirements. It also allows you to speak directly with guests before the event so they're able to make their own plans accordingly.

You can distribute this form as a PDF, or in an online web-based format such as [SurveyMonkey](#).

The Accessible Event Company is committed to making the New Year's Eve celebration a safe, inclusive and enjoyable event for all.

This is a booking register for people with disability or those with mobility support requirements wishing to celebrate New Year's Eve. If you, a friend or a relative have specific accessibility requirements, please complete the form below.

If you need assistance completing this form, contact the Access and Inclusion Manager, John Smith at john.smith@accessibleevent.com.au or 02 9123 4567.

If you need to contact us through an interpreter, call the Telephone Interpreting Service (TIS) on 13 14 50, and ask them to contact us on 02 9123 4567.

First Name

Surname

Contact Phone Number

Email Address

Postal Address

What are your accessibility requirements? (e.g. wheelchair user, low vision)

How many guests will be attending in total?

What is your planned mode of travel to the event?

Additional Comments/Questions

Please send your completed form to john.smith@accessibleevent.com.au or 123 Events Rd, Sydney NSW 2000. Once it has been received, we will contact you with confirmation of your booking.

More information

www.nsw.gov.au

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