

ACCESSIBLE EVENTS GUIDE



Introduction

Designing accessible and inclusive events requires a thoughtful, ongoing commitment to learning, problem-solving, and continuous improvement. Accessibility is not a one-time checklist but an evolving process that responds to community needs, best practices, and diverse lived experiences.

People with disabilities can be invaluable co-designers, offering lived experience that theory alone cannot provide. Involving them throughout planning, design, delivery, and evaluation ensures accessibility is built in from the start. This can include consultation, planning roles, user testing and feedback opportunities that support genuine collaboration.

Inclusive event design considers diverse needs, including physical access, clear communication, sensory accommodations and digital accessibility. Features such as step-free access, captioning, quiet spaces, and accessible online platforms help ensure everyone can participate fully.

An inclusive culture is as important as accessible design. Staff and volunteers should be trained to respond respectfully to diverse needs, supported by clear policies and inclusive practices. When inclusion is prioritised from the start, events become more welcoming, equitable and impactful, enabling all participants to feel valued and contribute meaningfully.

This guide is to be used in conjunction with the [Government of South Australia Accessible and Inclusive Community Events Tool Kit](#) and summarises the key considerations required to deliver an accessible event.

This guide is not exhaustive and should be adapted to the unique needs of each event. It is designed to support event delivery and complement insights gained through research, co-design, focus groups and user testing during planning.

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Planning and Co-design		
Action	Considerations	Notes
Gather learnings from colleagues, partners, peak bodies and key stakeholders about their experiences of running events.	Review prior event reports and seek feedback from colleagues.	
	Consider issues addressed and the outcome, apply learnings to the event.	
	Confirm the advice about accessibility and inclusivity is current and relevant.	
	Fill in any information gaps; what is needed? This may require discussions or focus groups including people with disability.	
Invest in the involvement and awareness of the disability community.	Involve people who live with disability from the outset.	
	Provide staff with disability awareness training.	

	Consider disability inclusive procurement.	
	Consider engaging a disability access consultant or group to guide the planning of the event to ensure it is accessible.	
Venue and Location Considerations		
Action	Considerations	Notes
Choose a venue that is accessible and investigate how the venue meets the access needs of attendees with disability.	Consider access when selecting a venue: e.g. Proximity to public transport, mobility aid access ensuring access meets the Australian Standards.	
	Access points must be unobstructed to enable room for the mobility aid user to approach the doorway, negotiate any turns, unlock and unlatch the door and pass through the doorway.	
	Ensure stage has a ramp and handrails or lift. Ramp must be provided, no steeper than 1-in-14 incline as per Australian Standard 1428.1. If there is no permanent ramp, a temporary ramp must be installed.	
	Request the venue's accessibility guide to understand the necessary adjustments required e.g. Is Braille	

	signage available or required, hearing loops installed/required, accessible stage, ramps and handrails on stairs.	
	Availability of outdoor spaces for toileting guide dogs or assistance animals.	
	Different road surfaces, tactile ground indicators installed, location of ramps and the gradient of pathways.	
	Accessible bathrooms that are left or right-hand indicative (displaying signage) and preferably on the same level as the event.	
	Baby change facilities.	
	Capacity for quiet spaces for people who experience fatigue or sensory overload.	
	Is an accessible area required close to stage and facilities?	
	Restrictions on the type and size of bags that attendees can bring in with them.	

	Venue capacity based on a table distance of two (2) metres to allow ease of mobility aid access.	
	Free or low-cost accessible parking near the venue with accessible, lit pathways from the carpark to the venue.	
	Develop the plan for addressing common accessibility issues that you may identify in the venue.	
	Share this plan with all relevant parties including staff, vendors, security, emergency services, volunteers and attendees.	
	Ensure reasonable adjustments and accommodations are made for people with specific needs.	
	Ensure people who have a hearing impairment are seated close to interpreters and that hearing loops are in use.	
	Ensure the catering is accessible including from a range of high and low tables or create an alternative process for people with disability to order food from onsite vendors and have it delivered to them.	

	Consider sensory friendly options.	
	Consider how people with disability, the venue staff and other relevant parties will be briefed on the evacuation procedure for people with disability.	
Selecting a Platform for Online Events		
Action	Considerations	Notes
Decide on a platform for the online event.	Investigate the options each platform offers and any implications for accessibility.	
	Test the platforms in advance and rehearse the functions needed.	
	Share the meeting link to people in advance so they have enough time to prepare.	
Plan for inclusive interaction during the online event.	Consider a variety of meeting formats for example: group discussions, break out groups, chat-only discussions, personal reflection activities.	
	Consider including Auslan interpreting, captioning and audio description and how these are supported by the chosen platform.	
	Explore if a telephone number is required as an alternative for participants with no computer or internet access or those who use the National Relay	

	Service	
	Consider booking a meeting room for those without internet or requiring additional support are able to join.	
	Consider session lengths to allow for breaks and to support participant focus and wellbeing.	
Promotion and Marketing		
Action	Considerations	Notes
Ensure communication materials are accessible.	Publish meaningful alternative text (alt-text) with the images. Describe the picture and convey a meaning.	
	Provide information in a range of formats including website, email, hard copy (via post or for collection) and social media.	
	Be predictable and use consistent design logic, language and branding.	
	Use logical steps in plain formats, not complicated instructions or key concepts.	
	Ensure the most important information is easy to find and ensure a simple and logical flow.	
	Provide information in a variety of formats including words and images for example Easy Read.	

	Give people the details they need to make an informed decision.	
Ensure social media and website is inclusive in content and delivery.	Publish meaningful alternative text (alt-text) with the images. Ensure text describes the image and conveys meaning.	
	Keep the use of emojis to a minimum.	
	Where possible, don't place text that is important within images.	
	Put @ mentions and # hashtags at the end of a post.	
	Make sure the colour contrast is between 4.5:1 to 7:1.	
	Provide closed captions when you publish video, review the text to ensure it's accurate.	

	Provide AUSLAN interpreted videos where possible.	
	Provide clear audio where possible, without background noise and speak clearly (where possible ensure the speaker's lips are visible).	
	Use inclusive language.	
Share important information people will need to plan their attendance.	Ensure event information is provided to all attendees ahead of the event for example date, time, location, cost, registration and event contact details.	
	Detail concessions, including companions/ companion cards.	
	Include the program guide, agenda or overview, noting the duration of the event, break times, loud performances, strobe warnings and information on who is going to perform, play or present.	
	Provide accessible details in the map. Include access paths, shade, food and water, accessible, toilets, quiet spaces and first aid. Include the scale of the map so people can gauge distances.	

	Detail what food options are available and when.	
	Detail available accessibility support and details of how to book these services. For example, alternative entry points, early entry to the venue, captions on screens, accessible facilities types of ground surface for people using mobility equipment, hearing loops, Auslan interpreters, live captioning, audio descriptions of any videos shown, ear plugs or headphones.	
	Advise people about the restrictions that exist and what reasonable adjustments will be made for people with disability	
	Include information about what is not available so potential patrons can plan ahead e.g. accessible amenities.	
Registration and Tickets		
Action	Considerations	Notes
Ensure an accessible registration process that allows self-service.	Determine the platform used for event registration.	
	Ensure the platform used for registration process is simple and easy to use and the technology works for screen readers.	

	Ensure participants can register through a variety of means e.g. phone, email or online	
	Consider the availability of support staff, reliance on technology and complexity around health.	
	Provide information on where people can go if they would like additional event information.	
Include questions about access requirements in the registration/ticket process.	Do you have any specific support requirements? For example: sighted guide, mobility aid access.	
	Is there anything we can do to improve the participation at this event?	
	Would you like to receive information in advance to help you prepare for the event? If so, what is the best way to provide this information.	
	Outline any access needs or disability requirements you have and how it might impact the enjoyment or participation in this event.	
	Send confirmation emails and/or text messages once registration is received.	
	Send pre-event SMS reminders one day before and on the morning of the event.	

Getting to the Event		
Action	Considerations	Notes
Provide information on accessible transport options to the event.	Include distances from local public transport stations to the venue	
Prepare additional supports around transport.	Liaise with local transport operators to ensure services, suitable vehicles and staff are available to support with embarking and disembarkation.	
	Provide appropriate signage from public transport stations and hubs, and at the venue and test these prior to the event.	
	Provide assistance to people with disability at taxi ranks so they can get the type of vehicle they need.	
	Ensure sufficient staffing to assist during entry and exit to sufficient space to move and negotiate any mobility equipment.	
Ensure sufficient accessible parking spaces available within close proximity to venue.	Offer free, or low-cost accessible parking near the venue with accessible, lit pathways from the car park to the venue.	
	Provide information about available parking options to attendees.	

During the Event		
Action	Considerations	Notes
Set a warm and welcoming tone	Encourage staff and volunteers to warmly welcome all attendees and set a tone of togetherness, respect and inclusivity.	
	Ensure everyone is aware of the adjustments and resources available to ensure people with disability are supported.	
	Implement a process for supporting people as they arrive to the venue e.g. signage, parking and drop off spaces, and registration.	
	Ensure that lighting and sound is inclusive of people who experience sensory overload.	
	Ensure staff are easily identified and an information point is present with staff who can help participants during the event.	
	Do not assume that everyone has had access to the information shared as part of the promotions and marketing strategy and have QR codes or links to information available.	
Ensure signage is distinct, consistent, simple and	Install accessible, clear signage with large, clear font at key points including at eye and waist level.	

easily visible.	Set up items at an acceptable height for all heights e.g. people using mobility aids, children, tall people.	
	Consider the imagery – pictures and icons are often best. Painted signs on the floor can also help	
	Consider signage locations – signage should be placed at carparks and transport hubs that direct people to major venue locations.	
	Ensure positive or neutral language is used when providing particular seating areas for those with accessibility requirements e.g. accessible seating or reserved seating.	
Where possible, give everyone, including people using mobility aids, an opportunity to choose where they sit.	Where possible, ensure two (2) metre spacing between tables to allow easy passage for those attendees using mobility aids and wheeled assistance devices.	
	Reserved seating that could be booked first by companion groups, then opened to general public.	
	Seating at the front with clear line of sight to speakers should be provided as preference for people with hearing impairments.	
	Early access to seating for those with additional requirements.	

	Providing staff to personally direct attendees to seats.	
	Some, if not all, seating has back and arm rests.	
	For standing events, ensure there is a variety of table heights, including standing height tables and lower seated level tables.	
	Ensure temporary structures including booths and displays are accessible.	
Staff and Suppliers		
Action	Considerations	Notes
Ensure specific staff members or volunteers are assigned the responsibility of supporting the welfare of attendees who may require assistance.	Provide additional training on how to support people well and what supports are available at the event.	
	Ensure these people are easily identifiable, this could be a badge, lanyard or shirt colour.	
	Assign someone to monitor the use of toilets, quiet spaces and carparks to ensure these are being used by the people who need them.	

Presenters and Performers Attending the Event		
Action	Considerations	Notes
Presenters or performers should be briefed about accessible actions they can take.	Provide a contact number, or email address for any trouble shooting.	
	Ensure the speakers, host, performers, or artists at the event showcase diversity.	
	Advise performers and speakers in advance if an Auslan interpreter will be present and request they provide a copy of their speech notes so the Auslan interpreter can familiarise themselves with the content	
	Range of microphone options including handheld, lapel and microphone on a stand through the AV provider.	
	Provide lots of support, information, rehearsal opportunities.	
	Consult with suppliers throughout the procurement process to ensure that reasonable accessibility adjustments to the process are provided where required.	
	In advance, discuss audio visual requirements for performers and entertainment to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided to meet their needs and cater for the audience.	

	Brief Masters of Ceremonies and panel discussion hosts to repeat or paraphrase any questions which may have been difficult for attendees to hear or understand.	
Using presentation slides.	Use a simple background and clear font that has a high contrast from the background.	
	Do not overcrowd slides with excessive words.	
	Read the text out on each slide and describe what is on the screen.	
	Explain the images you use and their purpose or metaphorical contribution.	
	Explain the meaning behind complex graphs or pictures and avoid jargon and technical language.	
	Include alt-text for images and graphics in any presentation you are sharing.	
	Provide advanced warning and signage regarding loud noises, bright lighting, special effects and pyrotechnics which may be used during the event.	

After the Event		
Actions	Considerations	Notes
Feedback is a great way of learning what was successful and what areas need improvement.	Seek out evaluation of the event to improve accessibility. E g. online survey, email, phone, at the event.	
	Gather feedback from staff, volunteers, vendors and other relevant parties in a similar evaluation process and debrief meeting.	
	Follow up any complaints, concerns or incidents that occurred during the event.	
	Collate feedback and lessons learnt. Make it available to anyone who is planning future events.	

Together, we can create events where everyone feels welcome, included and able to participate. Proactively considering access and inclusion needs can help prevent barriers, however ongoing consultation with attendees is essential to understand and meet specific requirements.

This guide complements existing event planning processes by focusing specifically on accessibility and inclusion.



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