Accessible and inclusive community events toolkit

Inclusive SA: State Disability Inclusion Plan 2019–2023

Priority 1.

Involvement in the community

Action 1.

Develop an event toolkit to promote accessible and inclusive practices for State authorities in community events.

Welcome

This toolkit provides practical information to assist South Australian government agencies and local councils in planning accessible and inclusive community events, enabling people with disability to participate more fully in the community.
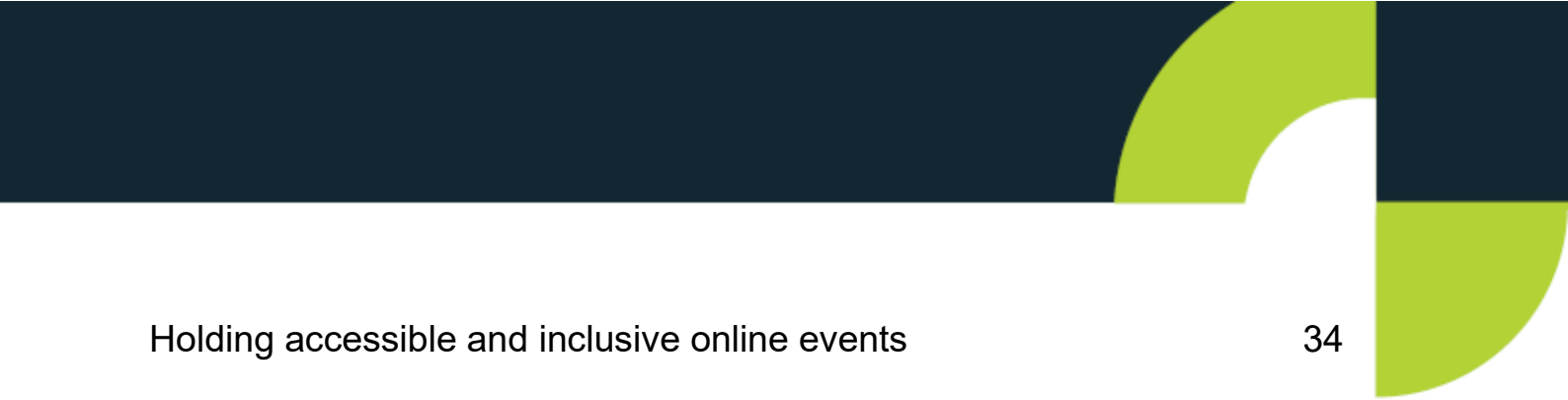
Acknowledgment of Country

The Government of South Australia acknowledges and respects Aboriginal peoples as the state's first peoples and nations and recognises them as traditional owners and occupants of land and waters in South Australia.

Further, we acknowledge that the spiritual, social, cultural and economic practices of Aboriginal peoples come from their traditional lands and waters, that they maintain their cultural and heritage beliefs, languages and laws which are of ongoing importance, and that they have made and continue to make a unique and irreplaceable contribution to the state.

We acknowledge that Aboriginal peoples have endured past injustice and dispossession of their traditional lands and waters.

Contents

Introduction

This toolkit has been prepared by the Department of Human Services (DHS), drawing on information provided by State and local government agencies, people with lived experience of disability, the wider disability sector and community, and open-source disability information.

The toolkit has been developed to provide practical information to assist South Australian government agencies and local councils in planning accessible and inclusive community events, enabling people with disability to participate more fully in the community. The purpose of the toolkit is to raise awareness, provide resources and generate new ideas for greater inclusion.

The South Australian Government acknowledges the extensive resources already in place across the disability sector and in other government jurisdictions. This toolkit therefore also serves as a 'hub', providing links to additional resources.

Disclaimer

This toolkit is for reference only, is not a complete guide and may be added to or added to or expanded over time. References to third parties are provided for your information only and not as an endorsement by the South Australian Government.

The intended purpose of this toolkit is to improve access and inclusion at community events for people with disability. You should always consider your own requirements and circumstances and seek professional advice where relevant.

Acknowledgments

There are four Inclusive SA toolkits that have been developed in collaboration with, and contributions from a wide range of stakeholders.

JFA Purple Orange was engaged to co-design stage one of the toolkits. Over 100 State government agencies and local councils were invited to contribute to the content. We engaged Vision Australia and Funktion as industry experts to provide an expert review.

The draft Accessible and Inclusive toolkits were released for public consultation. We received feedback from people with lived experience of disability, service providers and community groups, with a number of ideas and resources incorporated into the final toolkits.

If you have further resources that you think could be included in any of the Accessible and Inclusive toolkits please let us know by contacting DHSDisabilityInclusion@sa.gov.au .

The toolkits include

- Accessible and inclusive community events
- Engagement and consultation with people living with disability
- Accessible communication
- Accessible wayfinding and signage

Inclusive SA

The State's first Disability Inclusion Plan, Inclusive SA, was released in late 2019 and is a whole-of-government approach based on fairness and respect to improve access and inclusion for people with disability. Inclusive SA includes 12 priorities with associated actions and aims to increase the involvement of people with disability in the community.

A key element of Inclusive SA is social inclusion, a priority for people living with disability as it affects all aspects of their lives. It is our aim that the contributions and rights of people living with disability are valued and understood by all South Australians and that their rights are promoted, upheld and protected.

It is important for social wellbeing that all South Australians can make independent decisions on how to engage with and contribute to the community. The whole community benefits when all South Australians can access accessible and inclusive community events.

This toolkit provides practical information to assist South Australian government agencies and local councils to plan accessible and inclusive community events to ensure people living with disability can participate fully in the community.

This toolkit is developed in response to Action 1 of Inclusive SA (the State Disability Inclusion Plan).

Diversity in Australia

Australia has a diverse population. In acknowledging Aboriginal peoples as the first peoples of this country, we also acknowledge the many people who identify with more than 270 ancestries and who now call Australia home[1]. We also acknowledge the wider diversity of our community, including the many people in Australia who live with disability.

- In 2018 there were 4.4 million Australians living with disability, 17.7% of the population[2], (1 in 5 people)

- 4.4% of people with a disability in Australia use a wheelchair[3].

- 17.1% of people with disability use mobility aids)

- The likelihood of living with disability increases with age, one quarter (26.9%) of people aged 60-64 years are living with disability. Over eight in ten people aged 90 and over (84.6%) have a disability[4]

- Disability discrimination accounts for the highest volume of complaints across the board to the Australian Human Rights Commission[5].

- 3 million Australians live with depression or anxiety[6].

350,000

Vision Australia estimates there are now over 350,000 people who are blind or have low vision.

About 17%

of Australians are affected by hearing loss. There are approximately 30,000 deaf Auslan users with total hearing loss.

The right to participate

The South Australian Government recognises that people living with disability face many barriers within society including ongoing exclusion and discrimination. People living with disability have the right to full participation in society and we must do all we can to remove those barriers, including raising awareness about disability, challenging and changing attitudes and behaviours, being actively inclusive and rejecting all forms of discrimination.

Direct discrimination

Direct discrimination happens when a person, or a group of people, is treated less favourably than another because of their background or certain personal characteristics.

- Example: Refusing a person access to an event because they are accompanied by an assistance dog.
- Example: Failing to provide suitable physical access to an event for a person with disability and holding an event in inaccessible venues that cannot be modified.

Indirect discrimination

Indirect discrimination occurs when access is available to everyone but has the effect of disadvantaging some people because of a personal characteristic they share.

- Example: Failing to provide a suitable place for a person using a wheelchair to watch a show.
- Example: Failing to provide adequate toilet facilities for people with physical disability.

Creating accessible and inclusive community events will help remove barriers to participation and reduce opportunity for direct and indirect discrimination.

Be careful of stereotypes

Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about other groups of people that individuals form yet are not consciously aware of. We all have biases but by becoming aware of unconscious biases, challenging them and actively working to reduce them, we can enable better engagement and communication.

Review your ideas and consider if your proposal reflects an unconscious bias. Use inclusive language and ensure you are being truly inclusive and when planning an event consider whether your biases are impacting your thinking or decision-making.

Everybody wins from accessibility

Everyone in the community benefits from participating in accessible and inclusive community events. The diverse range of needs in our community must be considered when planning, designing and implementing community events.

When planning an event, think about who will want to use the space or participate in the event and take into consideration all needs; people with vision, hearing, mobility, cognitive and psychosocial disabilities as well as carers, parents with prams and pushers, and people for whom English is a second language.

Legislation and frameworks

This toolkit is informed by the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)* (DDA) and the Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA) (PDF, 724KB) which promote equality of opportunity and the prevention of discrimination based on sex, race, disability and age. The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of disability when providing goods, services, facilities, or access to public premises. This includes venues in which events are held, and the activities, performances and services available at events

The toolkit is also informed by the principles set out in the *Disability Inclusion Act 2018 (SA) PDF, (434KB),* which reflect the principles in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the National Disability Strategy 2010-2020.

Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 are also relevant to ensure that dignified, equitable, cost-effective and reasonably achievable access to buildings, and facilities and services within buildings, is provided for people with disability.

The toolkit is informed by Inclusive Design (also known as Universal Design) principles, which ensure that all aspects of an event support human-centred design. These principles consider the full range of human diversity, including disability, language, culture, gender and age, and should be reflected in the event planning process.

They also include identifying barriers that may exist in the built environment, facilities, services and communication, and promote solutions to allow everyone in the community to fully participate.

Diverse experiences

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identity

Have you ensured your event speakers will deliver an Acknowledgement of Country? Will your event feature images, videos or voice recordings of people who have died?

Gender

Is your event safe for women or gender-diverse (for example, non-binary) people? What actions are taken to demonstrate inclusion of all genders?

Sexual Orientation

Is your event welcoming of people of all sexualities? Are partners welcome, have you specified a gender for those partners? Is your language use for the event heteronormative or exclusionary?

Gender identity or expression

Can the attendee register for the event using their correct pronouns? Do you include all genders on your forms, or only the male and female genders?

Transgender or gender transition status

Is your event inclusive of transgender people? Are organisers and speakers aware of the correct names and pronouns to use when referencing to a transgender or non-binary person?

Intersex identity

Does your event ask the gender of participants? Is this necessary? If so, is intersex included as a gender on event forms?

Cost

What is the cost of your event? Is cost a barrier to your target audience? Are you providing waged and unwaged ticketing? Will event sponsors contribute to sponsored tickets for those who cannot afford the event?

Cultural and linguistical diversity

Does your even need interpreters present? Will you be delivering Plain English advertising? Does your event feature diverse speakers? Does the event have a Code of Conduct in place to ensure everyone feels safe from discrimination?

Criminal record

Will any vulnerable communities be present at your event? Can people with a criminal record attend your event? How will you mitigate judgement or bias against people with a criminal record? Have you specified if there are barriers to attendance for those with a criminal record?

Disability

Will the event have an Auslan interpreter? Is there room for wheelchair users to sit at the front or sides of the room? Has space been saved for wheelchair users and are those areas marked?

Religion or religiosity

Is the event accessible for religious communities? If the event is targeted to a specific religious community, have you checked to see if the event is scheduled during a common prayer time?

Mental health status

Will you provide trigger or content warnings ahead of discussions that may trigger trauma in your audience? Will you provide mental health resources and provider information if discussing confronting issues?

The social model of disability

The social model of disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by people living with disability. The model says that people are disabled by barriers in society, such as buildings not having a ramp or accessible toilets, or people's attitudes such as assuming people with disability can't do certain things.

The medical model of disability says people are disabled by their impairments or differences and looks at what is 'wrong' with the person not what the person needs. We believe that medical model of disability creates low expectations and leads to people losing independence, choice, and control in their lives.

The social model helps us recognise barriers that make life harder for people with disability. Removing these barriers creates equality and offers people with disability more independence, choice, and control[7].

What is an accessible and inclusive community event?

The term **community event** embraces a diverse range of public events. Everyone has a right to equal access to events. When events are accessible and inclusive, everyone benefits. For the purposes of this toolkit the focus is on public events and may include:

- State government and local government consultation and engagement forums
- cultural celebrations such as NAIDOC Week and cultural events associated with special days or times such as Lunar New Year, Holi, Easter, Baisakhi, Vesak and Eid
- International Women's Day, Harmony Day, IDAHOBIT, Pride March, carer and volunteer recognition events and other established calendar events
- public celebrations (such as New Year's and Christmas pageants), fetes and carnivals
- outdoor theatre, cinema, music and visual art exhibitions
- agricultural and horticultural shows, and similar events support by councils
- festivals and sporting events presented, promoted or supported by the South Australian Government or local councils.

Planning an accessible event improves the experience for everyone, including people with accessibility needs, families, carers, older visitors, parents with prams and the event performers and organisers who may be moving equipment.

Barriers include:

- exclusion from participating in the event, activities and interests
- reduced independence and dignity
- physical access barriers – getting to the event, venue accessibility
- attitudinal barriers - staff awareness, assistance, language
- socioeconomic barriers – event costs & companion costs
- communication barriers – event promotion, access to materials and information
- cultural barriers.

Intersectionality and events

Intersectionality, or an 'intersectional approach' is an inclusive way to reference how different aspects of a person's identity can expose them to overlapping and interconnected forms of discrimination and marginalisation. The Victorian Government currently leads the nation on intersectionality and its place in Government.[8]

An intersectional approach considers barriers to equitable experience in society such as gender inequality, ethnicity, faith, socio-economic status, ability, sexuality, gender identity, education level, criminal history, age, migration or refugee status and considers how these experiences can affect an individual.

Why it is important

Understanding the diverse and often intersecting experiences of South Australian community members is important when organising events. Demonstrating empathy and putting yourself into the shoes of others who have diverse experiences can assist in thinking about how to accommodate needs others may have, which you have not personally experienced a need for.

Community members' personal examples

Andrew lives with disability and uses an electric wheelchair which is both wide and heavy. Andrew struggles to find information on the width of doorways, whether venues have accessible toilets and information on whether venues have stairs or ramps. Not knowing these details often means Andrew feels uncomfortable going to events, as once he arrives, he may realise that he is unable to enter the venue.

Rima is a migrant from Jordan. Rima speaks conversational English but struggles with the broader English language structure. Rima was born female and identifies as a woman and she also identifies as LGBTIQA+. It is likely that Rima experiences oppression at the intersections of race, language ability, culture, gender and sexual orientation. Being aware of Rima's experiences, and anticipating her needs at events is taking an intersectional approach. Rima may require translation support at events or may need to be reassured that the event she attends is a safe space for women and LGBTIQA+ people.

Provide and share information

Increased information sharing can help people who may feel excluded from events.

Run sheets

Providing a guideline on how an event will run can be useful information for many diverse groups. A summary on the length of the event, when it starts and ends, and what times speakers will talk can provide guidance for diverse communities.

Event communications, invitations, and publicity

All written communication material must be accessible for the whole community. Be prepared to offer your event communications in multiple formats, both physical and digital, for diverse groups who may have differing needs.

The [South Australia Department of Premier and Cabinet's Online Accessibility Toolkit](#) is a guide on how to create accessible communication materials.

Social media communications

Many social media platforms have inbuilt utilities to make accessing social media easier for diverse communities. Features like alt-text and translation services can improve the experience of social media for diverse communities. When creating social media posts try to incorporate as many accessible features as possible to your content.

Website accessibility

[Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)](#) makes online content and information accessible for people with permanent, temporary and situational disability and is widely available to government agencies and local councils.

Accessibility descriptions

Providing attendees with information ensures an inclusive event for people with disability. For example, it is important to list whether the venue:

- has stairs and ramps
- has accessible bathrooms, and parent/child changing rooms
- is near public transport
- supports Deaf and hard of hearing communities through T-loops.

Event registration

Event registration needs to be available through multiple methods including phone, email or online. Ensure that participants are asked to provide information on their accessibility communication requirements such as Auslan interpreters or captioning, dietary restrictions, and any other needs so organisers can make arrangements before the event.

Guidelines for holding accessible events

This toolkit provides practical information to assist South Australian government agencies and local councils to plan and hold accessible and inclusive events with a particular focus on people with disability.

The toolkit doesn't attempt to provide an exhaustive list for every type of event.

There are links to additional resources throughout the document. It does however include:

- information such as things to consider when planning an accessible event
- identifying potential barriers for people with accessibility needs to access events
- identifying common things that are often overlooked when running an event
- a summary checklist to prompt action
- further sources of information and assistance
- information that ensures consistent practice and positive experiences across a diverse range of events.

Whatever the size, event organisers have an obligation to ensure the event is accessible, safe and inclusive for all members of the community, including people with disability.

Best practice accessible and inclusive events successfully engage with the community and create accessible and inclusive environments where everyone feels safe and respected and able to fully participate.

Tips to communicating effectively

To enable event participants to have the best experience, organisers need to use inclusive and respectful language in all communications.

Understand everyone is an individual

People have different access needs. Some ways to communicate inclusively include:

- addressing people directly (rather than deferring to a friend or carer)
- listening carefully
- always facing a person who has low hearing or is Deaf so they can read your lips
- always identifying yourself by name to a person with low vision or who is blind
- asking people if they need any help
- using uncomplicated language.

Consider culture and language

People can have multifaceted access needs, which may include culture and language. Consider that additional communication supports may be needed.

Seek advice from people with disability on how best to communicate

Language is constantly changing, and some people use communication devices, so it is important to be informed about how best to communicate respectfully.

In general, use 'person first' language

- 'person with disability', 'person living with disability', 'person with lived experience' are acceptable. Not 'disabled person' or 'differently abled 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 to a wheelchair'.

Language is personal and it is important to ask the person how they want to be referred to. Some people with autism, for example, prefer identity-first language. For example, 'Sarah is autistic', rather than the more broadly accepted 'Sarah has autism'.

Resources

- [Language Guide (Australian Federation of Disability Organisations)](#)
- [Inclusive language (Australian Network on Disability)](#)
- SA Government [‘Report It Right’ Media Guidelines (Inclusive SA)](#)

Focus on accessibility rather than disability

Accessibility includes others with access requirements such as children, carers and older people. Use ‘accessible parking’ rather than ‘disabled parking’.

Don’t assume all disabilities are visible

There are many disabilities (including psychosocial, chronic fatigue syndrome, cystic fibrosis, diabetes and autism) that may not be visible but must considered when planning and communicating information about your event.

Training is essential to ensure staff are well-informed on communicating with people who may have different needs.

Further information

[Invisible Disabilities (Ideas)](#).

People with disability as objects of inspiration

Don’t use language that implies a person with disability is inspirational because they have lived experience of disability. People with disability are living their lives, implying that they are inspirational simply for doing so is patronising and can cause offence.

Further information

[Stella Young, I’m not your inspiration, thank you very much (TED Talk 9.03 mins).](#)

Event Code of Conduct

Providing a code of conduct to event attendees is an easy way to set clear expectations for how an event should run and how participants should behave. A code of conduct can also be a good way to communication information about the accessibility of the event.

Example Code of Conduct

To ensure the safety and inclusivity of everyone this event, all speakers, participants and staff are required to uphold this code of conduct. To do this we ask that you:

- follow the instructions of the event facilitator, including on limiting discussions that are off-topic or of an inappropriate nature

- respect the identity, names and pronouns of everyone at the event. If you're unsure of the correct pronunciation of names, correct pronouns or appropriate language to use, ask politely

- honour timed discussion and question limits and share the space and encourage others to share their views and experiences

- do not engage in demeaning, argumentative or antagonising behaviour.

- avoid assumptions or stereotyping

- understand that shouting, swearing, harassment, threatening or humiliating behaviour is unacceptable, and you will be removed from the event

- respect the diversity of languages, cultures, opinions, expertise

- understand that attendees are welcome to leave the session at any time without explanation.

Further resources

Government Communications (Department of the Premier and Cabinet).

Planning an accessible and inclusive event

Has an overall event plan been developed?

- developing an event plan ensures the access needs of a range of organisers and visitors are considered from an early stage. Planning the event with these needs in mind will provide a better chance of making the event accessible and welcoming and significantly reduce the potential for future problems and unintended discrimination to occur.

- retrofitting solutions as an afterthought can be more expensive and time consuming.

- accessibility supports need to be organised and scheduled in advance. For example, booking an Auslan interpreter, sourcing a portable ramp, converting materials into alternative accessible formats.

This toolkit does not cover all aspects of event planning and you will need to…

- develop a plan that provides a timeline for preparation, execution, windup and evaluation, and covers all contingencies (sometimes called a run sheet)

- pull together an event team

- consider defining the purpose of the event, the size of the event, the target audience, potential location and what might be included and excluded

- determine the budget and sources of funding, staffing, safety, security and emergency procedures, stakeholder engagement, hiring of equipment, catering, marketing, design and communications

- registrations and ticketing (remember to consider privacy and security of information)

- engaging/contracting presenters, and interpreters and Aboriginal elders to provide a Welcome to Country.

With each element of planning, consideration for those with disability must be included, particularly relating to safety, security and emergency procedures. You will also want to:

- ensure overall inclusiveness (refer to the introduction to this toolkit), and
- acknowledge and engage with the traditional custodians on the land on which you intend to hold your event.

Have people with lived experience of disability been included in the planning?

People with disability can help you to:

- choose an accessible location or venue to hold an event
- design an accessible layout including entrances and exits
- advise on accessible and inclusive marketing and promotions, equipment, lighting, sound and many other aspects of an event.

Consider who these people might be as well as representing a range of different visitors. You will hear something different from a wheelchair user and a person with autism. Some different groups to consider are:

- Mobility
- Vision
- Hearing
- Cognitive – including neurodiverse
- Psychosocial
- Older adults
- Parents with children
- Carers.

As you work your way through this guideline you will see different aspects of planning where the experience and knowledge of people with lived experience can help. Further information can be found in the Engagement and Consultation with People Living with Disability toolkit.

Have people with lived experience of disability been involved in organising the event?

People with disability can assist with auditing the setup and layout of the event or be employed in the set up.

Have accessibility supports been budgeted for?

Allow for inclusion and accessibility requirements such as web design, transport, ramps, wayfinding signs, lighting, sound and accessible toilets, and live captioning for both in person and virtual events.

Has event timing taken accessibility into account?

When planning, consider the days of the week, times of the day, event length and opportunities for breaks that make the event more accessible and inclusive.

Is marketing material accessible?

All marketing material, regardless of the marketing channel (for example, social media, printed flier or digital advertisement) must be easy to understand and in accessible formats. Further information can be found in the Accessible communication toolkit.

Making documents and designs as accessible as possible will reduce demand for special accessible versions. You should:

- write in plain language
- write as concisely as possible
- make your design as legible as possible, using clear graphics and well-contrasted colours throughout the designs
- use a minimum 12-point sans serif font, such as Arial or Helvetica, and
- include image description for photos.

Other items to consider include:

- providing a contact name, phone and email details for event enquiries relating to accessibility
- ensuring promotional material can be accessed with accessible software (such as screen readers, screen magnifiers, captions or audio descriptions).

Are alternative formats available?

People with some types of visual impairments, learning disabilities, dexterity or literacy difficulties (such as dyslexia) are likely to have difficulty accessing information in written text – even in the largest font size.

To reach your entire audience, you will need to consider other accessible formats (also known as alternative formats) that meet your audience's needs in addition to making your initial materials more accessible. Alternative formats can include large print, braille, electronic text tactual graphics.

Some formats suit one person more than another [9]:

- Alternatives to visual materials: audio, audio description, braille, telephone, large print
- Alternatives to audio materials: Auslan, Makaton, subtitling, textphone, SMS National Relay Service.
- Extra options for people with learning disabilities or low English literacy: audio, audio description, easy read, easy access, Makaton, subtitles, video

You should also consider any preferences your target audience may have for receiving information, for example, younger Deaf people may respond better to an SMS message than sub-titled advert. Researching your audience will help you best meet their needs.

You will need to supply alternative formats and languages upon request. Include contact details so people can make such requests.

Further information

- [A beginner's guide to accessible content (Australian Network on Disability](#).
- [Accessible communication guidelines (Government of South Australia)](#).
- [Guidance on accessible communication formats (UK Government)](#)
- [How to make social media accessible: Our top three tips (Vision Australia)](#)
- [Two-Way Street](#).

Sample communication board
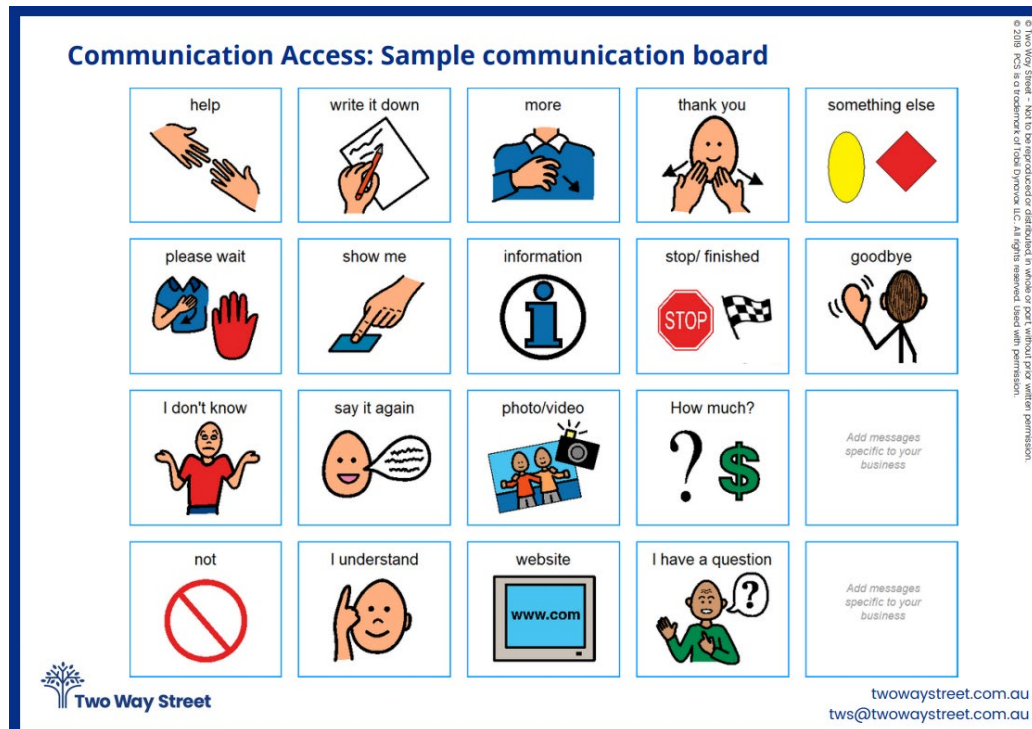
Materials need to include detailed information on what will be available and what has been done at the event and venue to make it accessible.

Types of information to include are:

- Mobility map

- Accessible parking, drop-off and public transport

- Accessible pathways around the venue

- Accessible toilets including changing places, baby change

- Accessible facilities, quiet room, access for assistance animals

- Technical facilities, wi-fi, Public Address systems, hearing augmentation, video conferencing

- Accessible furniture and equipment

- Catering, food and beverages

- Companion card honoured

- Customer assistance

- Emergency evacuation

- Image descriptions on visuals.

Does the site map and program highlight accessibility?

A well-marked simple site map highlighting aspect of accessibility is important. This will include information on pathways, signage, times, access to sites/events/ locations, accessible toilets and access to catering. A well laid out program, consistent with accessible communication guidelines is important.

The program should include disability information such as seating options for people using wheelchairs or with other mobility aids. Deaf or hard of hearing people will need to be seated as close as possible to interpreters.

Is the event website WCAG 2.1 compliant?

Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) makes online content and information accessible and is widely available to government agencies and local councils. It is good practice to have website information that outlines everything to create an accessible and inclusive event.

Further information

State Government Online Accessibility Toolkit.

Have you considered using assistive technology?

There are many different assistive technologies that can help improve event accessibility. Exploring assistive technologies to support those who provide their accessibility needs in their event registration should be considered. These include:

- Mobility devices such as wheelchairs and scooters

- Computer access to large key keyboards and mouse alternatives

- Hearing amplifiers

- Magnifiers

- Screen reader support

- Communication boards

- Closed captioning services

- Aira service or BindiMaps for navigation.

Further information

[Assistive Technology Australia](#).

Is the registration process accessible and informative?

Registration needs to be available through multiple methods, including phone, email and online. If your registration is primarily through an online option, provide people with phone and email contact details should they need to register in an alternative way.

Registration forms need to include:

- accessibility features of the venue

- information on parking, drop off points and public transport. Important information about public transport includes:

  - Accessible transport services – not all bus services are accessible.

  - Accessible stations – bus, train, tram, ferry (not all stations are accessible, provide details of the accessible station closest to the venue)

  - Accessible pathways linking the station and the venue.

To enable organisers to make arrangements before the event, ensure participants are asked to provide information on their:

- accessibility requirements

- adjustments

- communication requirements such as Auslan interpreters or captioning

- dietary restrictions and sensitivities.

Further information

[State Government Online Accessibility Toolkit](#).

Has allowance been made for assistance animals?

People may bring an assistance animal with them. Provision needs to be made for rest, play, toileting and water.

Further information

[Guide Dogs](#).

Has consideration been given to allowing entry by companions?

Some people with a significant disability are accompanied by a support person who carry an authorised Companion Card. Consideration needs to be given to promoting entry to persons with a Companion Card who accompany a person with disability.

Further information

 [Companion Card](#).

Has accessibility been considered for catering?

It is important to consider how catering will be made accessible. This will depend on many factors, including:

- catering to be provided and how menus will be made accessible
- what access requirements may be needed
- whether assistance will be needed to access the food and drink itself
- accessible places to eat
- providing accessible food counters and bendable straws.

Also, consider proximity to accessible toilets from the catering and eating locations.

Are staff available to assist people with disability?

All staff should be trained in disability awareness and be prepared to support a person with disability where needed. Providing a dedicated person at the entry to an event who is clearly identified as a person to go to for information or assistance for people with disability

is good practice. If you are holding a large or spread-out event, having an information post or table where people can go for assistance will be useful.

Consider additional points for accessibility and inclusivity on your checklist.

Do you have enough staff and volunteers? Have they received disability awareness training?

Before the event, all staff, including volunteers, need to be briefed on safety protocols, and access and exiting issues. They also need to be trained on how to communicate information in an accessible, inclusive and respectful manner.

Audience members should be greeted at the entrance to the venue and provided with information about registration, seating, availability of toilet facilities and catering.

Staff and volunteers need to be well informed on communicating with someone who is:

- non-verbal
- using a mobility aid
- using an assistance animal
- living with visual or hearing impairment.

Many government agencies provide disability awareness training, or you can look at external providers.

Further information

- [Disability Awareness](#)
- [Let's Talk Disability](#)
- [Access and Inclusion (Scope Global)](#).

Has consideration been given to broader inclusivity?

Do not overlook other areas of diversity. The event also needs to be inclusive of people from diverse cultural backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and people from LGBTIQA+ communities. The intersectionality between disability and other areas of diversity create overlapping risk for bias, discrimination and disadvantage.

Has safety information been provided to the MC by the event organiser?

At the opening of the event, the MC should provide directions about the venue layout, location of fire exits, toilets, catering area and information stall.

Accessible venue considerations

To host an event where everyone feels safe and respected and able to fully participate, it is best practice to meet the requirements listed in this section.

It is a good idea to inspect the venue before the event to identify any issues that may act as barriers for people with disability accessing the space safely and with dignity.

Is the proposed venue accessible?

Consider the accessibility of potential venues. Before the event, conduct an accessibility audit in person and consider what needs to be done to make the venue more accessible.

Is the pathway to the venue entrance safe and accessible?

Surfaces such as gravel and grass pose risks for many people, including wheelchair and mobility aid users, people who have impaired vision, older people and people with prams. Firm, even surfaces are best. Slip-resistant surfaces may need to be temporarily installed.

Are there steps at the entrance or inside the venue?

If steps are permanent, handrails must be in place. Where there are stairs, a nearby step-free accessible pathway is required with appropriate signage to indicate how to find it.

Further information

Accessible wayfinding and signage toolkit.

Is there a ramp at the entrance of the venue?

For the venue to be accessible, a 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. All primary venue entrances should have level access or an accessible ramp.

Further information

[Ramp gradient calculator (Viva Access)](#).

Can the venue be accessed by a lift?

Providing a lift is not always possible but may be important depending on your intended audience. Many people may find steps or a ramp inaccessible.

Is the venue doorway wide enough for people using a wheelchair or mobility aid?

To provide accessible entry, the minimum doorway clearance must be 850mm.

Are all doors at the venue easy to open and keep open during access?

Heavy doors present an issue for many people, including people with disability, older people and children. Reduce door force to 20N max. or hold doors open where possible.

Is the entrance foyer clear of obstacles?

Power cords, furniture and any trip hazards must be removed, secured or covered to provide easy and safe access. Place seating and furniture away from the main access.

Are clear signs positioned outside the venue?

Signs written in a large font should indicate:

- the accessible entrance to the venue
- location of accessible parking areas
- drop-off points
- toilets.

Depending on your audience, signs can be displayed in diverse languages and include cultural protocols. Consider the colours, contrasting elements and surfaces to ensure easy readability and reduced reflection. Consider options for voiced information, QR codes and text that can be read by reading apps.

Further information

Accessible wayfinding and signage toolkit

Accessible communication toolkit

Are accessible toilets and toilets for ambulant people readily available?

Provide a range of toilets including standard, unisex accessible and toilets for ambulant people that can be used by people with a range of needs (for example, parent with pram or a person using crutches). One wheelchair-accessible toilet per ten standard toilets is best practice. Accessible toilets are required to provide enough space to accommodate a wheelchair user and assistance person with sufficient turning circle as required per Australian Standard 1428.1, and with doors opening outwards. The wash basin, mirror and grab rails need to be at a height accessible for wheelchair or mobility aid users.

Accessible toilets should be available outside the venue, at easily accessed points in the venue and near catering. Portaloos will need to be hired if accessible toilets are not available. The Marveloo and the Placeable Pods are examples of portable Changing Places facilities available for hire for events and festivals.

Further information

What doors are best wheelchair access (Doorstop).

Changing Places toilets – toilets with extra space and ceiling hoists

Portable Changing Places toilets – Placeable Pods and Marveloos

Design for Everyone Guide – Toilets and Change Rooms (Sport and Recreation Victoria).

Is there an area where people can be safely dropped off at the entrance?

This is important for people who arrive by taxi, who are assisted by support workers, older people or those with children. If possible, the drop off point should incorporate a kerb ramp that allows those with mobility devices to move safely from the road to footpath.

Are accessible car parking spaces close to the entrance?

If there are no formal parking spaces, you may choose to cordon off an area near the entrance for this purpose. Depending on the event, the local council may be able to assist with temporary parking restrictions.

Are public transport services available?

If public transport is convenient and close to the venue, ensure this information is included in all publicity and communications. Consider other options if needed, such as access cabs or shuttle buses. Don't assume public transport services and stops are accessible. Confirm if there are specific accessible services and the location of the closest accessible station or stop.

Further information

[Adelaide Metro](#).

Is there a registration table or registration area in the foyer of the venue?

Tables need to be at a height accessible for wheelchair or mobility aid users. Registration information should be available in a range of formats, including web-based, large print and audio, with sufficient trained and identifiable staff to assist attendees.

Does the venue have fixed seating?

If seating is fixed, check to see if some seats can be removed or if there is an accessible area which can be used for wheelchair or mobility aid users and those attending with carers/companions. People using wheelchairs or mobility aids should not be relegated to

areas where event participation is restricted; consider how to best include people with disability. Provide various seating options for example, front and back.

Is there a permanent or temporary stage being used at the event?

Participants must be able to easily access the stage by a ramp or steps. All access requirements for participants, guest speakers and the MC must be identified before the event to ensure easy and safe access to and from the stage.

Is there an area designated to view an Auslan interpreter?

People who use sign language must have area close to the Auslan interpreter to ensure they have an unobstructed view of that person.

Further information

[Auslan–English Interpreting (Deaf Can:DO)](#).

Are power points available to recharge mobility aids/scooters?

If the event is an all-day event you may need to provide access to power for mobility aid users. Power points need to be in a location and at a height that are easily accessible.

Is there a quiet room available?

People with neuro-sensitivity can require a quiet place to be away from noise for a period of time. It's good to have seating and kits to help reduce sensory overload, for example fidget spinners, earplugs and quiet play items.

Are hazards appropriately cordoned off?

Hazards must be identified and either removed or appropriately cordoned off.

Is First Aid equipment up-to-date and accessible?

First Aid equipment must be kept updated, adequately signed, and staff and volunteers trained in first aid procedures.

Are emergency management plans in place?

Event organisers must ensure staff are trained, and that appropriate plans are in place to evacuate participants in an emergency, especially people with disability. There must be accessible contact information for emergency services — SA Ambulance, Police, Metropolitan Fire Service.

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP) may also be considered.

Further information

- [Evacuation Procedures (Australian Network on Disability)](#)
- [Event Safety (SafeWork SA)](#).

Is lighting in the venue suitable?

You must inform your audience before the event if strobe lighting, flash photography or special effects such as smoke are to be used. These effects can trigger sensory overload or seizures. Lighting should be sufficient to provide safe movement around the venue and to also focus on the presenter and Auslan interpreter. If lights are dimmed during the event, equip staff with torches.

What are the impacts of sound at the venue?

Provide information on sound levels in event information for people with hearing sensitivity or other hearing requirements.

Have sound and audio-visual requirements been explored?

Microphones need to be height adjustable for presenters, or lapel mics can be used when appropriate. Portable microphones need to be available for audience questions, with staff to assist. Provide a space for Auslan interpreters at the front of the stage and ensure the

audience have an unobstructed view. All video presentations should be captioned, and audio described where appropriate. A hearing loop may also be required.

Further information

- [NDIS (ai live)](#)
- [Auslan Connections](#)
- [Leedall Audio Visual & Technology Solutions](#).

Is the catering area accessible and is there a variety of meal options available?

Food stalls or stations need to be sufficiently spaced to allow free movement for wheelchair and mobility aid users, and at an accessible height. Offer meals that are easy to eat, and ensure dietary requirements are catered for. Cutlery, paper serviettes and bendable straws should be provided, and ensure staff are available to assist if required. Place food at the edge of tables and not in the middle, to ensure it can be reached from a seated position.

Are there accessible areas protected from the weather, and is water provided?

If there are no natural shade areas or areas protected from the weather, hire sunshades or marquees with appropriate seating. Provide water for participants and assistance animals. Cover grass areas with slip-resistant surfaces to allow access for wheelchair and mobility aid users.

Further information

[Protecting My Skin (Cancer Council of SA).](#)

Holding accessible and inclusive online events

When is it appropriate to hold an event online?

An online event may be appropriate for:

- information sessions

- consultations

- seminars

- conferences

- training sessions.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, various online events were held, including music festivals and comedy shows. Holding an event online can have benefits, allowing participation by those who are restricted in their ability to attend a venue. People with disability may also benefit from live streaming of an event or by accessing recordings after the event.

What are the considerations for holding an event online for people with disability?

Take into account the general access and inclusion points outlined in the previous guidelines. Also consider:

- how easy it will be for people with visual or hearing disabilities to participate

- whether an interpreter can be added or invited to the event

- if live captioning is a possibility

- whether the event can be recorded and shared afterwards.

What are some of the most common platforms to use?

Two common online platforms for events and meetings are Zoom and Microsoft Teams.

Some platforms require participants to download the program or app to their device and may require a participant to sign-up to the program. It is important to understand these and other possible limitations before deciding on a platform to use. It is also important to understand any limitations on use of a platform on different operating systems.

Zoom and Teams can support Auslan interpreters. Typically, the interpreter will be invited to the virtual event as a separate participant.

At a minimum, live captioning should be made available for Zoom and Microsoft Teams events. If possible, record the event and provide recordings afterwards as well. This may not be feasible for your organisation due to their security or privacy policies. Check with your IT department.

Further information

- [Closed captioning and live transcription (Zoom Help Centre)](#)
- [Use live captions in a Teams meeting - Office Support (microsoft.com)](#).

After your event

Whether your event was community-based or online, it is important to have time to celebrate the success of your event and consider any learnings gained for the process. This provides great insight that you can apply to the next event your plan.

Is it possible to hold an after-event celebration and debrief?

Once the event is over, there will be a lot to do but you need to also make the time to celebrate with the others who planned and helped run the event.

This could be an after-event party or some other form of celebration where everyone should be given an opportunity to have a say about the event and to be thanked.

A debrief is a simple process of allowing everyone to have a voice about what they thought worked well and what they thought could have been done better. It is a good idea to make a written record of this for future reference and to assist with future events.

Surveying participants about the event's accessibility

It is important to ask people with disability who attended or participated in the event to provide feedback on what they thought of the event, and in particular questions about

accessibility. This will provide insights as to what was done well and where things could be improved.

You will also have the opportunity to provide appropriate and timely follow up to participants. Creating a record of the feedback, which could be gathered by survey, can assist with holding future events.

Ensure there is an accessible online version of the feedback form.

Universal accessibility symbols

Universal symbols provide information that is recognisable and accessible. They should be used for:

- signage

- maps

- event publicity

- websites, and

- all communications

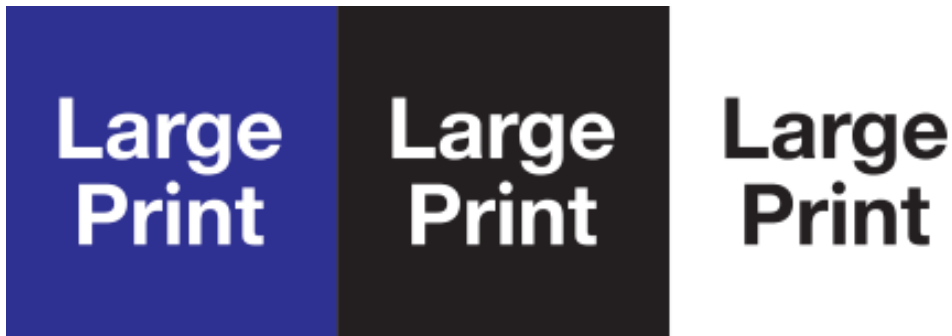to ensure your event is inclusive and safe for everyone.

Wheelchair-accessible

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

Large print

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

Access (other than print or braille) 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.

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. If you have a choice, closed captions are preferable to subtitles or open captions.

Information

Indicates the location for information about the event and accessibility.

Sign language interpretation

Indicates that an AUSLAN sign language interpretation is provided.

Teletypewriter (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.

Production of images from the Graphic Artists Guild, commissioned by NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet 2018.

Tools, checklists and samples

1. Event checklist: Preparing for an accessible and inclusive event
2. Event checklist: Holding an accessible and inclusive event
3. Event checklist: Holding an accessible and inclusive online event
4. Sample participant survey
5. Sample accessible map of event site

Checklist 1: Preparing for an accessible and inclusive event

☐ Has an overall event plan been developed?

☐ Have people with lived experience of disability been included in the planning?

☐ Have people with lived experience of disability been included in setting up the event?

☐ Have people with lived experience of disability been included in the running of the event?

☐ Have issues of accessibility been allowed for in the budget?

☐ Has event timing taken into account accessibility?

☐ Is marketing material accessible?

☐ Does marketing material include accessibility information relating to the event?

☐ Does information in the site map and program highlight accessibility?

☐ Is the event website WCAG compliant?

☐ Has consideration been given to use of assistive technology?

☐ Is the registration process accessible and informative?

☐ Has allowance been made for assistance animals?

☐ Has consideration been given to allowing entry by companions?

☐ Has accessibility been considered for catering?

☐ Do you have enough staff and volunteers, and has disability awareness training been provided?

☐ Has consideration been given to broader inclusivity?

Checklist 2: Holding an accessible and inclusive event

Is the proposed venue accessible?

Check (where applicable):

☐ Pathways to the venue entrance are safe and accessible

☐ Handrails are in place for stairs

☐ Ramps are installed and meet the required standards

☐ Access ways to lifts are clear and lifts are operating

☐ Doorways are wide enough for wheelchairs

☐ Doors are easy to open and keep open to enable access

☐ Entry ways, walkways and foyers are clear of hazards

☐ Signage is clear, visible and meets guidelines

☐ Sufficient accessible toilets are available (1 per 10 toilets)

☐ Accessible toilets meet required standards

☐ Accessible toilets are placed outside and inside the venue and near catering

☐ There are accessible drop off points near the entrance to the event/venue

☐ There is sufficient accessible car parking available close to the entrance

☐ Public transport is available nearby and accessible to the entrance

☐ Additional public transport options are provided (for example, taxi, shuttle bus)

☐ The registration table or area is easily accessible to people with disability

☐ A person at a nominated location is identified to assist and provide information to people with disability

☐ Seating arrangements allow for wheelchairs, mobility aids and companions

☐ Staging and other setup arrangements allow for appropriate access

☐ An unobstructed view of Auslan translators is provided for attendees

☐ A quiet room is provided for attendees including sensory kits

☐ First aid kits are accessible and up to date

☐ Hazards are identified and either removed or cordoned off

☐ The emergency plan includes specific information relating to evacuation of people with disability

Is the proposed event inclusive?

☐ Lighting is suitable for people with disability to move about, to see information and Auslan interpreters and does not contribute to sensory overload

☐ Sound takes into account possible impacts on people with sensory sensitivity and includes hearing loops

☐ Audio-visual equipment and projection caters for people with disability

☐ The MC has and is instructed to share disability access information

☐ Catering area and food and drink are accessible

☐ Cutlery, plates and utensils cater for the needs of people with disability

☐ Staff are available to assist those with disability in the catering area

☐ Staff are available at the entrance to the event/venue and in the venue to assist people with disability

Additional considerations (add your own)

☐

☐

☐

☐

Checklist 3: Holding an accessible and inclusive online event

Access for people who are blind, have low vision or have sensory sensitivity

☐ Make sure the speaker's face is well-lit and can be clearly seen.

☐ Ensure speakers identify themselves before speaking.

☐ If there is a method that will be used to vote or flag who can speak next, make sure all participants can access the process.

☐ Describe live activity out loud.

☐ Describe any images, read any text that appears on screen, and describe any gestures as if you were explaining it to someone who isn't in the same room as you.

Access for people who have intellectual or developmental disability

☐ Spend time explaining how to use online platforms and check for understanding.

☐ Repeat information if necessary.

☐ Use accessible, plain language during the event and avoid using jargon.

☐ Include thinking time and breaks into your event.

☐ Leave time for questions.

☐ Read messages in chat boxes out loud to everyone.

After the online event

☐ Share materials in an accessible format.

☐ Share recordings of sessions and speakers if available

☐ If the event was live-tweeted, or if a Twitter chat was part of the event, create a collection of those tweets for anyone who was unable to participate live.

☐ Offer attendees the opportunity to provide feedback about the event, including accessibility, to help you prepare to plan the next one.

Sample participant survey

[Questions can be separated into multiple questions or aspects deleted or changed. A survey can be delivered through a tool such as Survey Monkey or other online platform. Be careful not to ask for, or use, personal information that breaches information privacy laws.]

_____

This survey seeks feedback from you as an event participant. Your responses will help us to run better events in the future.

We would like to know how accessible the event and venue were for you and for other people living with disability.

The survey is optional, and you do not need to provide your name or contact details. However, you may choose to provide your name and contact details so that we can contact you for further information. If you are unable to complete the survey but would like to provide feedback through other means you can contact us by phone or email.

Event: (add name of event and location)

Your contact details (optional - if you would like to be contacted for further information)

Name (optional): Click or tap here to enter text.

Phone (optional): Click or tap here to enter text.

Email (optional): Click or tap here to enter text.

Event organiser's contact phone number: *(to be added)*

Event organiser's contact email address: *(to be added)*

Please answer the questions as fully as you can. You may be assisted by someone else to complete the survey. The questions all relate to the event *(add here)* you recently attended.

The registration process was user-friendly for people with a disability

Strongly agree ☐   Agree ☐   Neutral ☐   Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Please give your reason for choosing this response (free text)

The website/social media/site map/printed information included useful information about accessibility at the event and/or venue

Strongly agree ☐   Agree ☐   Neutral ☐   Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Please give your reason for choosing this response (free text)

Getting to the event/venue was easy for people with disability

Strongly agree ☐   Agree ☐   Neutral ☐   Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Please give your reason for choosing this response (free text)

Entering the event/venue was easy for people with disability

Strongly agree ☐   Agree ☐   Neutral ☐   Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Please give your reason for choosing this response (free text)

There was a person and/or information at the event/venue that was helpful for people with disability

Strongly agree ☐   Agree ☐   Neutral ☐   Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Please give your reason for choosing this response (free text)

It was easy for people with disability to access the main arena/auditorium/catering area/toilets in the event/venue, including use of doorways and pathways

Strongly agree ☐   Agree ☐   Neutral ☐   Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Please give your reason for choosing this response (free text)

Inside the event/venue, there were accessible and good places set aside for people with disability (this might include a place for a mobility scooter, wheelchair, walker, assistance animal or placement near an Auslan interpreter)

Strongly agree ☐   Agree ☐   Neutral ☐   Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Please give your reason for choosing this response (free text)

Inside the event/venue, there supports for people with disability (this might include a hearing loop, wide corridors, automatic doors, adjusted lighting or sound, good signage, people available to assist, an Auslan interpreter or other assistive technology or equipment)

Strongly agree ☐   Agree ☐   Neutral ☐   Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree ☐

Please give your reason for choosing this response (free text)

Please provide any other feedback or comments on your experience in attending this event (free text)

Thank you for completing this survey.

_____

Sample accessible map of event site

Accessibility Features Festival Site Map – 2020 event (WOMAD New Zealand).

Further information and resources

- [The benefit of designing for everyone (Centre for Inclusive Design)](#)
- [Accessible Events Guide (Horsham Rural City Council)](#)
- [Accessible Events Guide (Meetings and Events Australia) PDF 408KB](#)
- [Disability Rights (Australian Human Rights Commission)](#)
- [Event Accessibility Checklist (Australian Network on Disability)](#)
- [Toolkit for accessible and community events (NSW Government) PDF 1.2 MB](#)
- [Accessible Public Events and Concerts (Disability Access Consultants)](#)
- [Inclusive and accessible event guidelines (City of Sydney)](#)
- [Disability Employment (South Australian Public Sector)](#)
- [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy and Plan (South Australian Public Sector)](#)
- ['Report It Right' Media Reporting Guidelines (Inclusive SA)](#)
- [Inclusion Australia](#)
- [South Australian Council on Intellectual Disability](#)
- [Universal Access Symbols (Arts Access Victoria)](#)
- [Event Starter Guide – Accessibility (NSW Government)](#)
- [Gender diverse and intersex children and young people support procedure (Government of South Australia, Department for Education) PDF 239 KB](#)
- [State Government Online Accessibility Toolkit](#)
- [Website Design System (Government of South Australia)](#).

Toolkit feedback

This toolkit was developed by the Department of Human Services.

Email DHSDisabilityinclusion@sa.gov.au Phone [(08) 8415 4383](#)

The information in this publication can be provided in an alternative format or another language on request.

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