

Accessible Events Guide

The purpose of this checklist is to guide you to consider each area or space from the perspective of people with a range of disability, including mobility, sensory, hearing, visual, and cognitive, noting areas that need improvement.

Promotional and Informative material

Text

- Have you used a plain font (such as Arial, Helvetica or Univers) in your invitations and promotional material?
- Is all text at least a minimum of 12 point type size?
- Have the invitations and promotional material been printed on matt paper and in contrasting colours?
- Is the text uncluttered with an absence of background graphics and patterns?

Content

- Did your invitation or promotional material state whether the venue is accessible to people who use wheelchairs?
- Did your invitation include information about the accessible facilities at the venue such as the location of parking or nearest set down area?
- Have you encouraged your invited guests to identify whether they have any access requirements such as accessible parking, an audio loop or sign language interpreter?
- Have you encouraged your invited guests to identify whether they require a Languages other than English Interpreter?
- Have you included in the invitation your email address and phone number so guests have alternative ways of communicating their attendance (also fax if applicable)?
- Is written promotional material available on request in alternative formats such as large print, audio tape, computer disk or Braille?
- Have you provided paper copies before the event for informational material? Some people with vision impairment and others, including those with brain injuries, may require copies before the event as this gives them an opportunity to read them and to be able to concentrate on what is being said once they are at the event.

Complaints

All events should have a complaints process or feedback system.

- Will a complaints register be created, with a straightforward procedure to resolve complaints relating to or involving people with disability?

External environment

Some people with disability require a continuous, even, accessible path of travel. An accessible path of travel means there are no obstacles in the internal or external environment such as revolving doors, kerbs or steps.

Where is the location of the nearest:

Bus stop: _____

Train station: _____

Accessible parking bays

- Does the venue have an accessible parking bay?

- Is the accessible parking bay/s identified by the international symbol of access? Raised sign, ground markings?
- If the accessible parking is undercover is the roof a minimum of 2500 mm in height to allow the use of a car top hoist?
- Is the distance from the car park to entrance less than 40m?

Continuous accessible path of travel

Is there a continuous accessible path of travel, including kerb ramps, to the building from the:

- Accessible parking bay/s?
- Set down area?
- If there are steps to the building: Is there a ramp available for wheelchair users? Do all steps have handrails? Is there a contrasting strip on step edges?
- If there is a ramp to the building: Is the gradient no steeper than 1:14? Does the ramp lead to the main entrance?

The building

Entrance

- Is the entrance threshold level? (Is there a step at the entrance?)
- If there is a step/s at the entrance of the doorway: is there a ramp of not more than 450 mm in length and with a gradient of 1 in 8?
- Is the entrance door easy to open?
- Is the clear door space 800 mm (preferred) or 850 mm?
- To assist those that may experience sensory overload, is there a quieter access point that could be utilised (i.e. back door entrance or fast track lane)?

Internal environment

- Is the inquiry or reception counter low enough for a wheelchair user?
- Does the venue have an accessible path of travel from the front entrance to all areas guests will use?
- If there are internal steps: Do all steps have handrails? Is there a contrasting strip on step edges?
- If there are ramps: Are they no steeper than 1:14? Do they have handrails?
- Do all doors have a clear space 800 mm (preferred) or 850 mm?
- If there is only a side approach to the door, is there 1200 mm clear space in front of the door?
- Does the venue have a non-slip floor surface or carpets with a firm low pile of 6 mm or less?

Visibility, Signage and Catering

- Does the venue have clear, directional signage to: the function room? The toilets? The quiet zone?
- Is the venue well lit?
- Are there any areas of high reflection or glare?
- Are auditory aids available at food menus to assist with reading the menu or knowing where the queue is?
- Is signage provided with Braille and large tactile font?
- Have a variety of meal options been provided and include items that are easy to eat. Include foods that do not require utensils or intricacy.
- Are staff available to assist attendees with serving items where required and have they received training on disability considerations?
- Have all dietary requirements/restrictions been considered (e.g. vegetarian, gluten free, etc.) and are they clearly labelled and easily accessible?

Toilets

- Does the venue have a gender-neutral accessible toilet?

- Is the toilet situated on the same floor as the function?
- Does the door have a clear space of 800 mm (preferred) or 850 mm?
- If the door of the toilet door opens inwards is the space large enough for the person in a wheelchair to shut the door once inside?
- Is there 950 mm space at one side of the toilet pan?
- Is there a grab rail next to the toilet at 800 mm – 810 mm high, preferably in an “L” shape?

Quiet Zones

A Quiet Zone is sometimes also called a Quiet Area or Chill out Zone and is a space for attendee’s to have a break from the event that facilitates a sensory rest for those who may experience difficulties with sensory regulation in loud and/or overstimulating environments. For people who may experience sensory challenges, they may leave events early or avoid them altogether, which can limit their engagement in the community and participation in activities.

- Has a quiet area been provided free from sensory overload (scent-free, background noise, luminance contrasts)?
- Has the location and correct usage of the quiet area been sign posted?

Functions

Communication and content

- Is there a position where the interpreter will stand, so people who are deaf or hard of hearing can see both the person speaking and the interpreter’s face and hand movements?
- Can the audio-visual technicians position spotlights for the interpreter which distribute light clearly and evenly to the face and upper body?
- Does the venue have an audio loop installed?
- If there is an audio loop: what type: induction loop/ infra-red/FM? Has it been placed towards the front of the room with clear sight lines to the stage and the interpreter?
- Is there an Acknowledgement of or Welcome to Country?

Sit down function

- Are there sufficient walkways (1000 mm or wider) in the function room?
- Is there 900 mm space between tables?
- Is there 710 mm to 840 mm space under the table to allow a wheelchair to slide comfortably underneath?

Staff

- Will training be conducted for event and venue staff on disability considerations (access, assisted persons, assistance animals, terminology, communication)?

Tips for communication and assistance

- 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 people 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.
- Allow the person time to ask questions and try not to rush them. Try not to overload the person with information.

For people who have a hearing impairment or are 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.
- If a Deaf person is there with a sign language interpreter, always address your comments directly to the Deaf person rather than to the interpreter.
- Pen and paper: have a pen and paper on hand to help you communicate with the person.

For people who have a vision impairment or are 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.
- If a blind person asks for assistance to go somewhere, ask which side you should be on 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.

Accessible language:

Use the language that the individual prefers, but the below are some examples of person- first language:

- 'Accessible Toilet' not 'Disabled Toilet';
- 'Accessible Parking' not 'Disabled Parking';
- 'Accessible Entry' not 'Disabled Entry'. And always refer to:
- a person with a disability rather than a disabled person;
- a person who uses a wheelchair rather than someone confined to one;
- a person who is blind rather than a person who suffers blindness.

Please note the information in this guide has been collated from the following:

Equal Access: Disability Access Consultants. (nd.) *Accessibility in Public Events and Concerts Checklist*.

<https://www.disabilityaccessconsultants.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Accessibility-in-Public-Events-and-Concerts-Checklist.pdf>

Meetings and Events Australia. (2019). *Accessible Events: A Guide for Meeting and Event Organisers*.

https://www.meetingevents.com.au/sites/default/files/uploaded-content/website-content/accessible_events_guide.pdf

Edith Cowan University Australia (2020). *Accessible Event Checklist*.

https://www.ecu.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/895732/Accessible-Events-Checklist-2020.pdf

Government of Western Australia: Disability Services Commission. City of Cockburn. (n.d). *Accessible Events Checklist*. https://www.cockburn.wa.gov.au/getattachment/06237614-bd30-4b64-902b-c98872d78f23/ECM_7433296_v1_Accessible-Events-Checklist-Department-of-Communities-pdf.aspx

Victorian Government Department of Human Services (2010). *Accessible events guidelines and checklist for organisers, chairs, speakers and MCs*. <https://providers.dffh.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2017-08/Accessible-events-guidelines-checklist.doc>

Australian Federation of Disability Organisations. (nd). *Event Accessibility Checklist*.

<https://www.afdo.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Checklist-Accessible-Events.pdf>

Shire of Augusta Margaret River. (2021). *Inclusive Event Checklist*.

<https://www.amrshire.wa.gov.au/getmedia/0be5bf04-1ab6-4830-9b84-0e4e8eb3e025/Inclusive-Event-Checklist.pdf>