East Gippsland Shire Council

Event Management Toolkit

Guide to developing an Access and Inclusion Plan

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Does our event need an Access and Inclusion Plan?

Hosting events that are inclusive and accessible is not a passing trend; nor is it optional – after all, events are all about building community, and 1 in 5 Australians live with disability. In fact, being accessible is required by law to avoid discrimination.

Events are improving accessibility more than ever before, to meet the high demand for accessible events, and to meet the wide variety of different access needs attendees have.

Once you provide an access service, people come. Glastonbury initially had 100 requests for accessible campsite and now has over 1,000. Increased demand for access services, such as sign language interpretation, has been evident at events over the last decade.

Events play a key influencing role in sectors such as the arts and sports, and the actions of events have a ripple effect. Events can be influential in their roles with suppliers and venues, providing education on access needs and encouraging them to include access services.

Events have to navigate a range of challenges around access, such as making decisions about which shows get what sort of access, using multiple venues out of the control of the event organisers, and managing difficult physical environments such as outdoor spaces.

Developing an Access and Inclusion Plan means you will have thought through all the ways in which accessibility intersects with your event (or could and should intersect with it). Access doesn't have to necessarily be difficult or expensive, but it does take thought and planning – and it be difficult to retrofit or quickly organise access at the last minute.

Using this document

This document provides event organisers with a template to use to develop an Access and Inclusion Plan to improve their events' accessibility and its engagement with people with disability. It is designed to help event organisers understand what they need to consider, and how to go about putting a plan together that will be effective.

Such plans are titled with a variety of names depending on where you are in Australia. For example, in NSW where there is the Disability Inclusion Act 2014 (NSW), these plans are called Disability Inclusion Action Plans. You can call your plan whatever makes sense for you, so long as it aligns with your state's legislation.

This document has been developed with the support of Morwenna Collett, a consultant who specialises in accessible events.

How to develop your Plan

There are many ways to develop an Access and Inclusion Plan. Here is one approach.

1. **Assign a coordinator to develop the Plan**
   Allocate a volunteer team member to coordinate the development of the plan so it has the focus and attention it requires. If necessary, this coordinator can call on the help of a small subcommittee, and if funding permits, you may also wish to appoint an Access Consultant (ideally one with lived experience of disability) to work with you on development and implementation.

2. **Design your methodology and approach**
   Plan for enough time to develop a quality and useful document. Refer to examples of other plans and consult with your Council for assistance.

3. **Desktop review**
   You will need to first understand key legislation that are relevant to access for your event, such as the federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and your state Disability Act, which you can find online. Review any work done or being done to increase access and inclusion for your event and your community. Review your existing policies and procedures with an accessibility lens.

4. **Consult with people internally and externally**
   It is important to hear from the event's internal and external stakeholders, particularly people with disability who have attended your event, and relevant disability peak bodies, such as via interviews and surveys.

5. **Analysis and draft**
   The coordinator (or consultant if you have engaged one) will need to analyse all the information from the desktop review and consultation to identify where gaps and opportunities are before beginning to draft the Plan.

6. **Test and seek feedback**
   The draft Plan should be shared with the committee and any committee members who have specific actions to deliver under the plan, to ensure it is realistic and achievable.

7. **Publish**
   Your Plan should be published on your website and registered with the Australian Human Rights Commission**.**

8. **Implement**
   Lastly, start to implement your planned changes to improve your event's accessibility, making more progress each year.

Plan format

Below is a list of the headings often found in an Access and Inclusion Plan. These should be tailored to the needs of your event.

Plan section	Details
Plan title and length	Access and Inclusion Plan (or other title) Include the years the plan covers (typically, Access and Inclusion Plans are developed for about three years)
Alternative Formats	List of what other formats the Plan is available in (e.g. screen reader friendly word, rich text format (rtf), html format, large print)
Introduction	This should introduce the Plan and its ambitions/vision
Glossary or definitions	Often words like Disability, Inclusion, Accessibility, or Intersectionality might be defined in the front of the Plan. Sometimes Plans will detail which specific type of disability language they have used ('Person first' or 'identity first')
Who we are	Plans often include a description of the event to contextualise the Plan
Disability statistics	Relevant statistics can be included to frame the Plan e.g. Census data on disability in the community, or statistics from peak sports bodies on participants with disability
Policy context	Explanation of how this Plan fits in with other organisational documents (e.g. an event's Strategic Plan). This section should also reference what legislation and Australian standards have been used to guide the plan's development
Highlights and achievements	Events are rarely starting from scratch when designing these plans. Talk about the good work you've already done to increase access, either through a list of activities or some case studies.
Governance, monitoring and review	This should outline when and how the Plan will be monitored and any reporting will happen
Plan details	This is where the Plan's vision and high-level goals should be outlined.
Contact us	Invitation to provide any feedback on the plan and contact details

Areas to consider in your Plan

Event organisers need to consider all the different touchpoints for access across an event, such as customer service, artist management, marketing, and event production.

Here are tips for each area of the event's planning and delivery to get you started. You may not be able to implement these all at once. In that case, ensure your Plan outlines how you will improve access to your event over time.

Event Team Position	Ideas to consider for accessibility
Executive Committee	- Develop, then periodically review the event's Access and Inclusion Plan to ensure continuous improvement (at least annually). - Establish a Disability Advisory Committee to inform access and inclusion tasks. - Add access and inclusion into project management and budget templates. - Add access and inclusion as an agenda item for meetings. - Provide Disability Confidence Training for staff and volunteers. - Seek opportunities to secure funding and support for access improvement. - Include information on access and access improvement in the event's annual report.
Program Coordinator	- Actively seek out, program, and/or commission artists with disability. - Ask all performers whether they have any access requirements. - Consider which performances in your event could benefit from specific access services, including Auslan for major addresses and presentations, Captioning, Audio Description, and Relaxed Performances, and program these in. - Provide hearing loops where public address systems are used or provide a screen that transcribes audio into text for people with low hearing. - Ensure timetabling takes into account the time that people with disability may require to move between sessions. - Ensure any digital content for your event (e.g. livestreams) include access services (e.g. Auslan, Audio Description). - Provide PowerPoint presentations in hard copy, in Word online, and as an audio description for vision-impaired patrons. Offer Companion Card ticketing (e.g. free tickets for accompanying carers with a Companion Card)
Operations Coordinator	- Choose venues that are wheelchair accessible and have Hearing Loops, where possible. - Ensure there is accessible parking, transport, and drop-off/pick-up areas nearby that is clearly signed. - Provide appropriate signage to make wayfinding easy for everyone. Ensure signs use large font and good colour contrast (e.g. black text on white background) with appropriate symbols (e.g. 'running man' to indicate an exit). - When building temporary sites, consider wheelchair and other types of access. For example, pathways from transport and parking, and those inside the venue, are of gentle slope, at least one metre wide, made of sturdy material and not obstructed. If running an outdoor event on grass, sand or other surfaces, provide temporary pathways (e.g. metal or rubber mats) to stage areas, toilets, food vendors and transport. Ensure accessible pathways run to the toilets from the main site (i.e. at least one metre wide concrete or firm gravel on a gentle slope). Ensure doors are at least 850 mm wide, or a clearly signposted alternative door is provided.

	• Where paths are not accessible, use signage to directs patrons to an accessible route. • Provide appropriate seating, rest areas, and a quiet space, if possible. Provide some seating with arm supports to help people enter and leave their seats. Ensure fixed seating and tables provide space for wheelchair and pram access. • Ensure emergency evacuation procedures plan for people with disability. • Have a unisex accessible toilet available and clearly signed for use by parents or carers with differently gendered children or clients. If possible, have other accessible toilet types (e.g. PWD toilets, ambulant toilets and/or changing places facilities with ceiling hoist) with their location clearly signposted. • Provide a signposted dog toileting area for guide dogs. • Ensure suppliers consider access and inclusion when they provide the event with products and services. • Ensure food vans/stands and drinking fountains are accessible to wheelchair users. • Have stages accessible by ramp or lift in addition to, or instead of, stairs. • Have lift entrances at least 1,400 mm wide, with Braille signage and raised tactile numbers. • Ensure lighting is strong enough for those who lip read. • Provide warnings if strobe lighting will be used.
Volunteer Coordinator	• Review the recruitment and selection process to ensure it is accessible for people with various access requirements, and that there are a range of accessible volunteering jobs. • Provide internships for people with disability to learn skills. • Ask all staff about their own access requirements and provide any reasonable adjustments that may be required. • Brief all staff, volunteers, and security personal on the event's accessibility elements, to ensure they are comfortable supporting people of all abilities to access the event. • Assign a staff member who is comfortable dealing with complaints to address access concerns that may arise during the event.
Marketing Coordinator	• Use inclusive and accessible language. • Promote the event's access services. • Ensure promotional material lists aids to contacting the event, including the Translating and Interpreting Service, the National Relay Service, email, phone, and an SMS number. • Actively promote accessible events to relevant communities (e.g. Deaf community, Blind and low vision community, neurodiverse community), possibly via partnerships with relevant organisations, such as disability advocacy organisations • Ensure all social media posts are accessible. Include Alt Text for images, image descriptions, captions in videos, and hashtags with CamelCase (capitalising each word in the hashtag)
Website Manager	Website function • Choose a Content Management System that supports accessibility. Use a web plugin that enables browser modifications for accessibility, e.g. https://userway.org • Ensure the website is compliant with the Web Content Accessibly Guidelines, ideally to an AA level • Ensure all content can be accessed with a keyboard in a logical way. • Use headings and subheadings correctly to organise the structure of your content. • Include proper Alt Text for images (a written description of images). • Include captioning on all videos. • Give links unique and descriptive names.

	• Ensure the website uses [accessible colour contrast](#). • Design forms for accessibility. • PDF documents aren't accessible to Screen Reader users unless they have specifically been set up that way, so provide downloadable material in Word format as well as PDF. • Ensure online video or audio material includes a written transcript. • Ensure ticketing processes are accessible, and that accessible tickets can be booked online, if possible. Information provision • Ensure the website provides information on access and accessible events to attendees and participants. • Provide information on venue accessibility, including a site- or venue-access map, specifies whether a hearing loop and/or sign language interpreters will be available, and whether approved companions or carers are provided with free entry. • Provide a way for attendees and participants to ask questions about accessibility prior to booking tickets, and a way to provide their access requirements when booking tickets.
Post-Event Review	• Ask questions about access and inclusion in the post-event survey to learn what improvements can be made next year • Ensure all feedback and survey processes are accessible

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Action plan

There are many ways to frame an Action Plan table within an Access and Inclusion Plan. Here's one example.

Objective	Action Number	Action	Performance measure	Responsibility	Timeframe	Budget	Implementation notes	Status
Example: Volunteer confidence and competence *Build volunteers' skills and understanding of disability and accessibility*	*1.1*	*Provide Disability Training to staff and key suppliers (security, cleaners, catering staff) during induction.*	*All staff inducted*	*Volunteer Coordinator*	*Ongoing*	*$100 per person*	*[Training source listed here]*	*To be complete by end of financial year*

Inclusive event examples

Event Access and Inclusion Plan examples

The Unconformity and Perth Festival provide an example of an Access and Inclusion Plan (in different formats in the case of Perth Festival), as well as how they communicate information for attendees about the access services the events provide.

The following websites show how events plan for and communicate access to attendees.

Inclusive events

- The Mundi Mundi Bash and Big Red Bash are very remote yet accessible camping music festivals
- Deni Ute Muster provides accessibility information
- Liveworks Festival provides accessibility information
- Sydney Festival is an example of how a festival communicates to attendees about the access services available for a range of disabilities
- Edinburgh Fringe Festival provides information for suppliers on how to provide access services during the festival ('how to put on an accessible show')
- Glastonbury Music Festival provides information for attendees on access services available at the festival
- The Great Escape provides information for attendees on access services available at the festival
- Edinburgh International Festival provides information for attendees on access services available at the festival

Disability specific events

- Ability Fest - an event that aims to use music as a platform to normalise disability (unfortunately the website is only a holding page for several months of the year)
- Undercover Artist Festival – an event that profiles and promotes outstanding work by performing artists with disability
- Isol-Aide "Access All Areas" Festival - Isol-Aid performances showcase Deaf and disabled musicians
- Dadafest, UK – a platform to showcase the work of disabled, Deaf and neurodivergent artists
- Ten Fifty Entertainment, USA – a provider of access services to events

Resources

- Guide to Accessible Outdoor Events (Accessibility Directorate of Ontario)
- Event Accessibility Guidelines - Planning Guide for Making Temporary Events Accessible (ADA National Network)
- Accessible Temporary Events (Great Plains ADA Centre)
- Accessibility Services Canada – lots of great resources, but particularly their Guide to Festivals and Outdoor Events
- Inclusive and accessible online event guidelines (City of Sydney)
- Edinburgh Fringe – offers online equalities training and a guide on making your show accessible
- Attitude is Everything – offers a wealth of great resources and the whole website is worth delving into. Relevant highlights include The Charter of Best Practice (with associated toolkit), DIY Access Guide and the State of Access Report
- Resources (Accessible Arts)
- 7 Inclusive Principles for the arts during COVID (#WeShallNotBeRemoved)
- British Council Arts, *Access to Live Music for Disabled Audiences: Glastonbury Festival & Band on the Wall* (video)
- Building a musically inclusive future for Australian artists, participants and audiences - elements and success factors (Report) – 2018 Churchill Fellowship Report by Morwenna Collett, which examined inclusive music programmes, venues and festivals which actively engage disabled people.
- Producers Guide to Access (Melbourne Fringe Festival