

## ACCESSIBILITY

### Overview

In the contemporary environment, there is absolutely no excuse to not make provisions within your project scope for your venue/site/event to be accessible: to persons with a disability, to persons with small children (if appropriate) or who are pregnant, or for the elderly/infirm.

There is a range of fantastic resources regarding accessibility and the arts, none more so than Arts Access Victoria (<http://artsaccess.com.au>) who are at the forefront of ensuring that venues and programming are accessible to people with a disability.

Key elements to consider include:

- Does your venue offer seating solutions for wheelchair users, either through permanent wheelchair places or easily removable seating in locations where wheelchair users can view the performance without obstructing access/egress? Does this location allow for a companion or carer to sit adjacent, as it should?
- Does your venue have accessible bathrooms, including suitable change and feeding areas for children? If not, you should consider hiring a portable accessible unit.
- Does your venue have a hearing loop or assistive hearing technology, for people who use hearing aids or have hearing impairments?
- Could your performance be Auslan-interpreted?
- Could you offer a relaxed performance or event space for patrons with sensory sensitivities or autism-spectrum disorders?
- Does your venue have the capacity to offer safe spaces or chillout zones for patrons with emotional health requirements?
- Could your session be audio-described for persons with low vision or blindness?
- Does your venue have appropriate visibility aids or tactile indicators for blind or vision-impaired audiences? Consider reserving some front- or second-row seating for vision-impaired patrons.

Remember that patrons with a companion card are entitled to be accompanied by a carer/companion; other patrons may be accompanied by a seeing eye or companion dog: it is against the law to prevent entitled patrons from entering if accompanied by a companion/carers or companion animal.

You should consider undertaking some simple sensitivity training for your staff, as sometime staff will not have encountered patrons with certain disabilities before. It's ok to ask a patron if they would like assistance and to listen to their answer: respect and egalitarianism are key.

All staff should be prepared to assist persons if requested, and some key elements to interacting with patrons with a disability are outlined below:

- Offer help if you think it is appropriate or if asked to provide it, but make sure it has been accepted before you give it: don't take someone by the arm and lead them unless you have been asked to.
- People with disabilities are the experts on their own needs: they will tell you what you need to do to help, if you ask them and listen to what they say.
- Treat the person with the same respect you would give anyone else. Use their first name only if you are doing the same with others. Treat adults with disabilities as adults.
- Don't make jokes or ask questions about their impairment, wheelchair or dog; you wouldn't make personal remarks about other service users, so don't do it with people with disabilities.

In summary: always ask; avoid making assumptions; and take your lead from the person.

**Sample Controls**

HAZARD	Accessibility				
INHERENT RISKS	Lack of accessibility for audiences				
INHERENT RISK RATING	2B	TOLERATION LEVEL	MEDIUM	ACCEPTABLE RISK?	NO
CONTROLS TO BE IMPLEMENTED TO REDUCE RISKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Venue staff to know how to assist persons with disabilities during an evacuation</li> <li>All staff to be aware of the locations and use of 'Places of Safe Refuge'</li> <li>Venue to be accessible to all patrons: via lifts/lifting aids, accessible amenities, accessible and wheelchair seating</li> <li>Any non-accessible elements of the event to be advertised thus</li> <li>Provision to be made, where possible, to provide additional accessibility services such as an Auslan-interpreted presentation, installation of Assistive Hearing Technology etc</li> <li>All accessible pathways and access points to be preserved in event plans</li> </ul>				
RESIDUAL RISK RATING	2D	TOLERATION LEVEL	LOW	ACCEPTABLE RISK?	YES
RESPONSIBILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Event Team</li> <li>Staff and Contractors</li> <li>Venue</li> </ul>				

*This document is current as at June 2019 and provides a summary of information from planning experts, along with relevant government and statutory bodies.*

*For further information and to ensure you are working to the most relevant and recent legislation and/or guidelines, visit:*

- [Event Accessibility Checklist](#)
- [City of Maribyrnong](#)
- [Worksafe](#)