

Accessible Events checklist



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Introduction

This checklist is to be used in conjunction with the Accessible Events Guide and summarises the key considerations required to deliver an accessible event.

The checklist is not exhaustive and each event will have challenges that are unique to the nature and location of the event. This checklist has been designed to assist with event delivery and to complement any insights gained from research, co-design, focus groups and user-testing during the event planning phase.

Being proactive and reflecting on the access and inclusion needs of attendees will help address most issues before they become a challenge or barrier for people, however, it is important to consult with your planned attendees along the way to understand their requirements and adjustments you need to make.

The checklist does not replace your event planning processes but is an additional resource focused on the accessibility features of an event.

Event planning

PRE-EVENT SCOPING AND CONSULTATION

Gather learnings from colleagues, partners, peak bodies, and key stakeholders about their experiences of running events.

- Review prior event reports and seek feedback from colleagues.
- Review what worked well, what didn't work well and any feedback from guests.
- How were any issues addressed and was the outcome satisfactory for all participants, including people with disability?
- Review feedback and audits of previous and similar events, considering feedback from participants with disability.
- Confirm your advice about accessibility is current; changes in technology can create unexpected barriers.
- Fill in any information gaps; what do you need to get more information about? This may require discussions or focus groups including people with disability.

Invest in the involvement and awareness of the disability community.

- Consider employing staff who live with disability.
- Support your staff with disability awareness training.
- Consider disability inclusive procurement.
- Consider hiring a disability access consultant to guide the planning of your event to ensure it is accessible.

VENUE AND LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

Choose a venue that is accessible and investigate how the venue meets the access needs of attendees with disability.

Consider access to the following when selecting a venue:

- Proximity to public transport.
- Unimpeded wheelchair access including entryways, ramps, toilets, and lifts, ensuring automatic doors and non-automated doors that (at least) meet the Australian Standards for minimum wheelchair door width of 850mm. The doorway must be unobstructed to give enough room for the wheelchair user to approach the doorway, negotiate any turns, unlock and unlatch the door and pass through the doorway.
- 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. If there is a speaker who uses a wheelchair, ensure accessibility to the stage with a ramp or a lift.
- Request the venue's accessibility guide to understand the adjustments available to people with disability.
- Automated doors.
- Accessible stage ramps and handrails on stairs.
- Availability of outdoor spaces to cater for toileting of guide dogs or assistance animals.
- Different road surfaces, location of ramps and the gradient of pathways.
- Braille signage and Tactile Surface Ground Indicators.
- Hearing loop.
- Accessible bathrooms that are left or right-hand indicative (displaying signage) and preferably on the same level as the event.
- Changing place toilet.
- Capacity for quiet spaces for people who experience fatigue or sensory overload.

VENUE AND LOCATION CONSIDERATIONS

- Capacity for an accessible viewing platform in front of the stage if required as this provides attendees in wheelchairs or people of short stature a vantage point to comfortably view the event.
 - Range of microphone options including handheld, lapel and microphone on a stand through the AV provider.
 - Restrictions on the type and size of bags that guests can bring in with them.
 - Venue capacity based on a table distance of two (2) metres to allow ease of wheelchair access.
 - Free or low-cost accessible parking near the venue with accessible, lit pathways from the carpark to the venue.
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- Develop your own plan for addressing common accessibility issues that you may identify in the venue.
 - Get feedback from people who will be affected by these issues.
 - Share this plan with all relevant parties including staff, vendors, security, emergency services, volunteers and attendees.
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- Ensure reasonable adjustments and accommodations are made for people with specific needs.
 - Ensure appropriate accessible seating and nearby seating in the row in front or behind is designated for people with disability attending as part of a group.
 - Ensure people who have a hearing impairment are seated close to interpreters and that hearing loops are in use.
 - Ensure the catering is accessible including from a range of high and low tables or create an alternative process for people with disability to order food from onsite vendors and have it delivered to them.
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- Consider how people with disability, the venue staff and other relevant parties will be briefed on accessibility adjustments at the venue and the evacuation procedure for people with disability.
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SELECTING A PLATFORM FOR ONLINE EVENTS

Decide on a platform for the online event.

- Investigate the options each platform offers and any implications for accessibility. Always seek advice from people with disability, inclusion consultancies, disability organisations, online reviews and commentary when choosing the registration platform and have it tested by people with a diverse range of backgrounds and disabilities.
- Test the platforms in advance and rehearse all functions you will need to perform. This may include setting up an Auslan interpreter, using captions as well as common features such as break out rooms.
- Share the meeting link to people in advance so they have enough time to prepare.

Plan for inclusive interaction during the online event.

- Consider a variety of meeting formats that engage people in different and inclusive ways. For example: group discussions, break out groups, chat-only discussions, personal reflection activities.
 - Consider including Auslan interpreting, captioning and audio description and how these are supported by your chosen platform.
 - Investigate whether you can provide a telephone number as an alternative dial-in method for participants with no computer or internet access.
 - Consider booking a meeting room so that those without internet or requiring additional support may be able to join from your office.
 - Consider session lengths to allow for breaks and to keep the attention of participants.
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PROMOTION AND MARKETING

Ensure your communication materials are accessible.

- Develop resources in Easy English, especially around key topics including safety, services, venue wayfinding and what to expect at the event.
- Provide information in a range of formats including website, email, hard copy (via post or for collection) and social media.
- When creating accessible communication materials, consider the language used.
- Be predictable and use consistent design logic, language and branding.
- Do not complicate instructions or key concepts, use logical steps in simple formats.
- Provide information in a variety of formats including words and images.
- Make the most important information the easiest to find and ensure a simple and logical flow.
- Give people the details they need to make an informed decision.

Ensure social media use is inclusive in content and delivery.

- Publish meaningful alternative text (alt-text) with your images. Ensure that they describe the picture and convey a meaning.
- Keep the use of emojis to a minimum.
- Where possible, don't place text that is important within images.
- Put @ mentions and # hashtags at the end of a post.
- Format # hashtags in 'CamelCase', capitalising the first letter of each word.
- Make sure the colour contrast is between 4.5:1 to 7:1.
- Provide closed captions when you publish video. If you use the auto captioning function, review the text to ensure it's accurate.
- Provide clear audio where possible. Try to film without background noise and speak clearly (where possible ensure the speaker's lips are visible).
- Keep the post simple, clear and interesting.
- Use inclusive language.
- Include an image description as well as alt-text. This can be done in the image caption or the comments.

PROMOTION AND MARKETING

Share important information people will need to plan their attendance.

Ensure the following information is provided to all guests ahead of the event:

- Date and time of the event including the time zone the event is being held in.
 - Cost including available discounts and how to register for them.
 - Detail existence of concession tickets for people with companions/companion cards.
 - Include the program guide, agenda or overview, noting the duration of the event, break times, loud performances, strobe warnings and information on who is going to perform, play or present.
 - Provide accessible details in the map of the venue. These could include access paths, shade locations, food and water locations, accessible, standard, and ambulant toilets, quiet spaces and location of first aid support. Include the scale of the map so people can gauge distances.
 - Detail what food options are available and when.
 - Detail what accessibility supports are available and any booking deadlines for these services. For example, alternative entry points, early entry to the venue, captions on screens, accessible facilities such as bathrooms and quiet spaces, the types of ground surface for people using mobility equipment, the existence of hearing loops, Auslan interpreters, live captioning, audio descriptions of any videos shown, ear plugs or headphones.
 - Include contact details for the organisers to discuss accessibility requirements for both the event and the venue.
 - Advise people about the restrictions that exist and what reasonable adjustments will be made for people with disability. For example, pre-approval for bags and equipment essential to their disability to be bought in to the venue and where they can go to find out more information about the venue and the major event.
 - Include information about what is not available so potential patrons can plan ahead e.g. no accessible toilet.
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REGISTRATION

Ensure an accessible registration process that allows self service.

- Determine the platform used for event registration.
- Ensure the platform used for registration process is simple and easy to complete, and the technology works for screen readers.
- Provide options to confirm preferred method of communication.
- Ensure participants can register through a variety of means e.g. phone, email or online.
- Where possible or appropriate, consider offering discounted tickets or bursaries for people with a disability and companion card holders.
- Consider flexible cancellation policies that cater for the unpredictable complexity that can come with living with a disability. This includes the availability of support staff, reliance on technology and complexity around health.
- Provide information on where people can go if they would like additional event information.

Include questions about access requirements in the registration process.

- Do you have any specific support requirements? For example: sighted guide, wheelchair access, quiet space, Auslan interpreter.
- Do you have any dietary requirements?
- Is there anything we can do to improve your participation at this event?
- Would you like to receive information in advance to help you prepare for the event? If so, what is the best way to provide this information (email, post, phone call or SMS)?
- To better understand the people attending, please outline any access needs or disability requirements you have and how it might impact your enjoyment or participation in this event.

Consider options for registration confirmation.

- Send confirmation emails and/or text messages once registration is received.
- Send pre-event SMS reminders one day before and on the morning of the event.
- Enable event to be linked to calendars.
- Include the event link in all reminders and calendar invitations.

Getting to the event

TRANSPORT

Provide information on accessible transport options to the event.

- Include information about travel time, so attendees can plan how long it might take for them to travel to the venue.
- Include distances from local public transport stations to the venue.

Prepare additional supports around transport.

- Liaise with local public transport operators to ensure extra services and staff are available so that people with disability can utilise the public transport to venues and have support with embarking and disembarkation.
- Provide appropriate signage from public transport stations and hubs, and at the venue, and test these with people with disability so they can easily navigate their way to the venue.
- Inform taxi companies about the event so they know when there will be a high demand for taxis including wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- Provide assistance to people with disability at taxi ranks so they can get the type of vehicle they need.
- Ensure sufficient front of house staffing to assist during entry and exit to ensure people with disability have sufficient space to move and negotiate any mobility equipment.

PARKING

Ensure sufficient accessible parking spaces available within close proximity to venue.

- Offer free, or low-cost accessible parking near the venue with accessible, lit pathways from the car park to the venue.
- Consider buggy transport from carpark to entry points depending on the distance between them.
- Provide information about available parking options to attendees.

During the event

HOUSEKEEPING

- Set a warm and welcoming tone.
- Encourage staff and volunteers to warmly welcome all attendees and set a tone of togetherness, respect and inclusivity.
 - Ensure everyone is aware of the adjustments and resources available to ensure people with disability are supported.
 - Implement a process for supporting people as they arrive to the venue including clear signage, ample parking and drop off spaces, and accessible registration processes.
 - Ensure that lighting and sound is inclusive of people who experience sensory overload.
 - Set up a customer service desk with staff who can help participants during your event.
 - Do not assume that everyone has had access to the information shared as part of your promotions and marketing strategy, and have QR codes or links to information available.
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- Ensure signage is distinct, consistent, simple and easily visible.
- Put up accessible, clear signage with large, clear font at key points including at eye and waist level.
 - Set up items at the acceptable height (viewable at all heights for people in wheelchairs, children, tall people and tested in a crowd in advance) and ensure it has clear directions.
 - Consider the imagery – pictures and icons are often best. Painted signs on the floor can also help with wayfinding.
 - Consider signage locations – signage should be placed at carparks and transport hubs that direct people to major venue locations.
 - Ensure positive or neutral language is used when providing particular seating areas for those with accessibility requirements e.g. accessible seating or reserved seating.
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During an **online event**, allow time for the facilitator to run through housekeeping.

- Ask people to say their name when they first start speaking.
- Describe yourself and what you are wearing and look like.
- Mention accessibility features (Auslan, captioning, taking a break if you need).
- Troubleshooting support available.
- Contact person and event or meeting guidelines.
- Explain options for how people can communicate with the group e.g. hands up function, chat function.
- Whether or not you want people to mute themselves or turn their cameras on or off.
- If someone has requested specific methods of communication, explain these to the group without naming the person requesting them.
- Remind people to be respectful of each other.
- If using an Auslan interpreter, ensure they are properly set up for the session. Make sure they are pinned (or similar) and that Auslan communicating participants can see them.

FLOORPLAN AND SEATING

Where possible, give everyone, including people using wheelchairs, an opportunity to choose where they sit.

Consider the following when organising and designating seating:

- Where possible, ensure two (2) metre spacing between tables to allow easy passage for those guests using wheelchairs and wheeled assistance devices.
- Reserved seating that could be booked first by companion groups, then opened to general public.
- Seating at the front with clear line of sight to people speaking should be provided as preference for people with hearing impairments.
- Early access to seating for those with additional requirements.
- Providing staff to personally direct guests to seats so that everyone is able to easily find their allocated place.
- Some, if not all, seating has back and arm rests.
- For standing events, ensure there is a variety of table heights, including standing height tables and lower seated level tables.
- Ensure temporary structures including booths and displays are accessible where possible.

STAFF AND SUPPLIERS

Ensure dedicated staff and volunteers are responsible for considering the welfare of attendees who may require additional support, including those with disability.

- Provide additional training on how to support people well and what supports are available at the event.
- Ensure these people are easily identifiable but not in a way that would stigmatise the people who are seeking them out. This could be a badge, lanyard or shirt colour.
- Assign someone the task of monitoring the use of toilets, quiet spaces and carparks to ensure they are being used by the people who need them.
- Provide options for people with disability to do their own problem solving if technology and other supports are not working properly. This could be a contact number, SMS or email address that is constantly monitored.

Presenters or performers should be briefed about accessible actions they can take.

- Ensure the speakers, host, performers, or artists of your event showcase diversity.
- Advise performers and speakers in advance if an Auslan interpreter will be present and request they provide a copy of their speech notes so the Auslan interpreter can familiarise themselves with the content.
- Provide lots of support, information, rehearsal opportunities and generally build relationships and connections – people will give their best if they feel supported and seen.
- Consult with your suppliers throughout the procurement process to ensure that reasonable accessibility adjustments to the process are provided where required.
- In advance, discuss audio visual requirements for performers and entertainment to ensure that appropriate facilities are provided to meet their needs and cater for the audience.
- Ensure that any presentations provided are in line with best practice accessibility guidelines.
- Brief Masters of Ceremonies and panel discussion hosts to repeat or paraphrase any questions which may have been difficult for attendees to hear or understand.
- Describe their own appearance at the start of the presentation.
- Brief staff at venues on how best to help people requiring assistance so they know where to go and what to do, how to communicate with people with disability, and can provide people with assistance in accessing lifts, trouble-shooting issues and getting to accessible seating.

STAFF AND SUPPLIERS

Using presentation slides.

- Use a simple background and clear font that has a high contrast from the background.
- Do not overcrowd slides with excessive words.
- Read the text out on each slide and describe what is on the screen.
- Explain the images you use and their purpose or metaphorical contribution.
- Explain the meaning behind complex graphs or pictures and avoid jargon and technical language.
- Where possible, give participants slides in advance so they have time to process them before the presentation.
- Include alt-text for images and graphics in any presentation you are sharing.

Provide advanced warning and signage regarding loud noises, bright lighting, special effects and pyrotechnics which may be used during the event.

ENDING THE EVENT

Enact your general exit plan.

- Give participants warning the event is about to end.
 - Clearly announce the event has ended and invite guests to leave when they are ready via the exits.
 - Encourage a staggered exit for guests.
 - Have easily identifiable people to assist guests to leave the venue safely.
 - Facilitate people with disability to leave first if they want to.
 - Include a designated lane and ushers on hand to assist people with disability to exit without being pushed or trampled.
 - Provide designated pick-up spots that are safe, well-lit and easy to access outside the venue.
 - Ensure you have people stationed at taxi pick up points and carparks to troubleshoot.
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After the event

FEEDBACK

Feedback is a great way of learning what was successful and what areas need improvement.

- Seek out participants for an evaluation of the event to improve accessibility – via online survey or people giving their responses over the phone.
 - Gather feedback from staff, volunteers, vendors and other relevant parties in a similar evaluation process to improve accessibility.
 - Follow up any complaints, concerns or incidents that occurred during the event.
 - Host a debrief meeting after the event to thank all staff and volunteers who assisted and gain their feedback on what went well and what can be improved for next time.
 - Collate this feedback and lessons learned. Make it available to anyone who is planning future events.
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Closing remarks

Creating events that are accessible and inclusive requires a dedicated approach, a willingness to learn and develop skills, ask questions, and problem solve to get the best outcomes.

People with disability can be your most helpful co-designers of accessible and inclusive events. It is important to start with this lens and focus from the beginning of the planning, design, delivery, and evaluation of your event. Inclusive events will deliver great experiences and outcomes for everyone.

Contact us

For more information please contact Events and Engagement, Department of the Premier and Cabinet by phone (07) 3003 9200 or by email eventsandengagement@premiers.qld.gov.au