



Horsham Rural City
Council urban rural balance

Accessible Events Guide

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Selecting a Venue	6
• Transport Checklist	7
• Venue Checklist	8
Signage	11
• Signage and Maps Checklist	11
• Disability Access Signs and Symbols	12
Accessible Information	14
Marketing and Promotion	15
• Invitations and Promotional Materials Checklist	17
Accessible Toilets	17
• Toilet Checklist	19
Equipment	20
Presenters, Facilitators or Performers	21
• Presenter's Checklist	22
Catering	23
• Catering Checklist	25
Using Technology	26
• Technology Checklist	27
Contingency Planning and Emergency Procedures	28
Other Supports	28
Useful Contacts	29

Introduction

This 'Accessible Events Guide' aims to help make events more accessible for people with access requirements who may be attending as guests, presenters, participants or sponsors. It gives information and guidance on 'best practice' access provisions that will open up a section of potential market that is often overlooked and help to meet existing legal responsibilities.

This Guide aims to help:

- Think about access, inclusion and participation when planning an event at inception
- Identify barriers that make it impossible or difficult for people with a disability to access an event
- By providing a series of check lists to prompt action
- Identify issues that are not commonly considered and offers solutions
- Find further sources of advice, information and assistance.

This Guide provides general information about disability access issues, considerations and information to help ensure the event is accessible to everyone.

What is an 'accessible' event?

An 'accessible' event is an event that has removed as many barriers as possible to ensure everyone can participate in the event in an inclusive, equitable manner. An accessible event improves the experience for all people including people with support needs, families, carers, senior citizens, parents with prams, performers and anyone carrying equipment.

Why should we make our events 'accessible'?

When hosting events within the community it is important to ensure that all people have an equal opportunity to participate in all meetings, consultations, functions and events.

Some reasons to think about access and how to plan to meet the requirements of people with a disability include:

- Our communities want everyone to have an opportunity to attend
- People with a disability can also influence the choices of their families and friends, especially if they have had a previous bad experience attending inaccessible events
- Everyone benefits when access is better.

Not providing equitable access to guests can have serious legal implications. It is also a legal obligation. The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) is a Federal law to protect the rights of people with a disability. The Act makes it illegal to treat people with support needs inequitably and applies in all settings of community activity.

Your team

Your own team is critical to ensuring the event is as accessible as possible. If they are well prepared and trained they will be able to deal with any problems and make any necessary changes on the day as the need arises.

Communication

Communicating or supporting people with a disability needs to be respectful and inclusive. Below are tips about inclusive language and how best to communicate with people with any disability or support needs.

Please remember: Place the emphasis on the person not the disability – hence person with..... Remember that people with disabilities are as diverse as others. They may have terminology preferences that should be respected.

Inclusive Language

Say:	Avoid Saying:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person with a disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victim, suffers from, deformed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person with cerebral palsy or low vision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Afflicted by or with, blind or can't see
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person with a physical disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crippled, the crippled, invalid spastic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person who uses a wheelchair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wheelchair bound, confined to a wheelchair
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person who is hard of hearing or person who is deaf 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deaf and dumb, deaf mute, mute
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessible parking, accessible toilets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disabled toilets, handicapped parking

Communication Tips

Do:	Don't:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Look at the individual when addressing them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell an individual you admire their courage or determination
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask an individual about the best way to communicate if you are unsure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stare at or avoid looking at a visible disability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak directly to a person with a disability, even if he or she is accompanied by a carer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Express sympathy for the individual
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Offer assistance if it appears necessary, but don't assume it will be accepted. Wait for acceptance before proceeding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feel uncomfortable using the word "see" when addressing a person with a low vision, or "hear" when addressing a person who is deaf or hard of hearing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend your hand to shake when meeting someone, even someone with a physical disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assume someone with a speech or hearing issue is intellectually impaired
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enjoy a 'normal' conversation with the person 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presume the individual is more fragile or sensitive than others

Hearing Protocols

- Use a sound system for all events where possible
- Have a sign indicating 'best listening seats' and verbally indicate before the meeting that they are available
- If a sound system is being used, all forms of oral or aural input need to be connected, i.e. all speakers and any audio visual presentations
- Use a sound system for all events where possible
- Ensure good lighting above and in front of the speaker
- Allow time for consultation to take place between interpreters and the event manager before the meeting to establish specific requirements
- Position the interpreter adjacent to the speaker and in clear visual range to all other speakers

- Brief speaker or presenters to not walk between the sign interpreters and the person who is deaf or hard of hearing
- Position tables so all listeners have a direct line of vision to all speakers
- Give time and opportunity so people can relocate to a better hearing position before the start or during breaks
- Allow only one speaker at a time
- Use visual backup, e.g. printed notes, agenda, PowerPoint presentation when appropriate
- Any DVDs used must have subtitles or closed captions Ensure that when visual information is being used, verbal explanations are also provided
- Ensure that all speakers, including those asking questions, speak from the front or use a microphone
- Repeat questions if necessary
- If 'break out' groups are planned and if they are separated by distance or a sound barrier such as partition or in a separate room, ensure there is a backup plan for people who are deaf

Selecting a Venue

When planning an event, selecting a venue is likely to be one of the first things you do and one of the most critical. You might already have criteria to use in your search for a venue, such as location, the number of people it can hold, the cost, or whether it has the facilities to suit your event such as a stage area, workshop breakout spaces or outdoor areas. At this stage think about the criteria to help you find a venue that is accessible.

As a starting point, only consider venues that allow people to enter, exit and move around the building or site with ease, that offers accessible toilet facilities and where the event can take place on one floor only.

Deciding on the best space for the event is critical to the events overall success. Assuming event aims and objectives have been established, the task is to find a suitable location that meets all requirements and is disability friendly. Use the following check lists when evaluating accessibility of the preferred venue.

Transport

Getting people to and from the venues safely and efficiently is essential. If you plan to give information out about how to reach the venue and available public transport then you need to consider the needs of people with a disability and frail older people who want to attend.

Transport Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you checked if accessible public transport is available to the venue or site?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the public transport deliver passengers close to the venue?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there shelter at the pick up or drop off point?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you mentioned its location in the marketing information?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a clear path of travel to the venue from the transport drop off point?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a drop off point close to venue entrance for cars?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there some accessible parking bays near the entrance to the venue?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the accessible parking bays clearly identified?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the accessible car parking bays on firm level ground?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a clear level path of travel from the car parking spaces to the entrance?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If there are no parking facilities at the venue, have you checked if it's possible to reserve spaces for people with a disability?

Leaving the Event

<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you made provisions for queues for taxis and maxi taxis?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you provided seating in the venue for people waiting for transport?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you organised for someone to act as a steward to let people know when their transport has arrived?

Lifts

Lifts are invaluable for providing access for people with limited mobility. It is advisable to check the lift to ensure that it:

- Works
- Is wide enough for a wheelchair or scooter and a carer
- Has buttons at a level that a seated person can reach
- Can be operated without a carer for independent users of wheelchairs.

Quiet spaces

It is a good idea to provide a quiet room for rest, especially if your event is going to be long and crowded. Some people with mental health issues, fatigue or nursing mothers will particularly welcome this.

Venue Checklist

Approach to venue:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the venue within close proximity to public transport?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the approach to the venue have a firm level surface? (no loose gravel)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have any obstructions near the entry been removed?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the signage outside and inside the venue large, clear and easy to read?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If there are stairs, do they have contrasting strips or hazard markers on the surface?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If a ramp is required, does it have handrails?



For indoor events:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the main door automatic or easy to open?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the reception counter at wheelchair height?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a lift with buttons at an appropriate height for people of short stature?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there generally good manoeuvrability in the venue?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the floor, non slip or low pile carpet?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there good air circulation and acoustics?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there any 'hearing loops' available?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there an accessible toilet available on the same level as the event?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If there is a chair lift or any other hoisting equipment, will there be a trained operator available on the day?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the lighting equivalent to 'office' brightness? (No 'mood' lighting)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there facilities for assistance animals? (Somewhere to go outside to relieve themselves)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the evacuation procedure signs within clear view of someone in a seated position?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the emergency equipment, like a fire extinguisher, accessible to someone in a seated position?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the stage or platform accessible for someone in a wheelchair?

For short events, networking or announcements:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a table available to place cups or plates?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there some chairs available for people who want to sit and space for wheelchairs or scooters where they can move easily?

For seated functions:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there enough room to manoeuvre between tables when guests are all seated?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the front seats reserved for people with low vision or hard of hearing?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there spaces at tables where seats can be removed for wheelchairs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there enough room under the table for wheelchairs to move into? (no pedestal table legs)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are chairs available with arm rests for people with limited mobility?

For outdoor events:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you applied for the appropriate permits or road closures?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a site map for disability access provisions? (see sample map to follow)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you organised an accessible portable toilet?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there chairs in the shade?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there free drinking water available?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If there are stall holder stands or tables, are they at a wheelchair friendly height?

Have you identified, removed or cordoned off hazards:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Water features or wet grass?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Overhanging foliage or branches?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cables? (Will you need mats to cover them?)



Accessibility Site Maps and Programs

Another great way of ensuring everyone with a disability enjoys the event is to produce site maps and programs with the relevant information. These can be distributed at the event at the entry or information table. Please pay particular attention to the icons and use the International symbols for disability access i.e. white writing (or symbols) on blue background.

Signage

In order to make the event more accessible it is also appropriate to make sure the signage is consistent with that effort. Consider creating signage for:

- Where the free drinking water is located
- Reserved spaces for people using wheelchairs or mobility scooters in an easily manoeuvrable space and with space for a carer.
- Reserved seats in the front row for people with low vision or hard of hearing.

Use signage that identifies politically correct language:

- 'Accessible Toilet' not 'Disabled Toilet'
- 'Accessible Parking' not 'Disabled Parking'
- 'Accessible Entry' not 'Disabled Entry'.

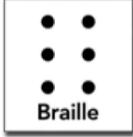
Signage and Maps Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have signage for all the features of your event?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is it clear and located at a height for someone in a seated position?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the letters in non serif font, and written in 'sentence case?' (upper and lower case – not all capitals)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you added directional markers or arrows?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you made sure that there are no watermarks and they are printed on matt paper?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do they have the appropriate symbols? (See sample of recognised symbols to follow)

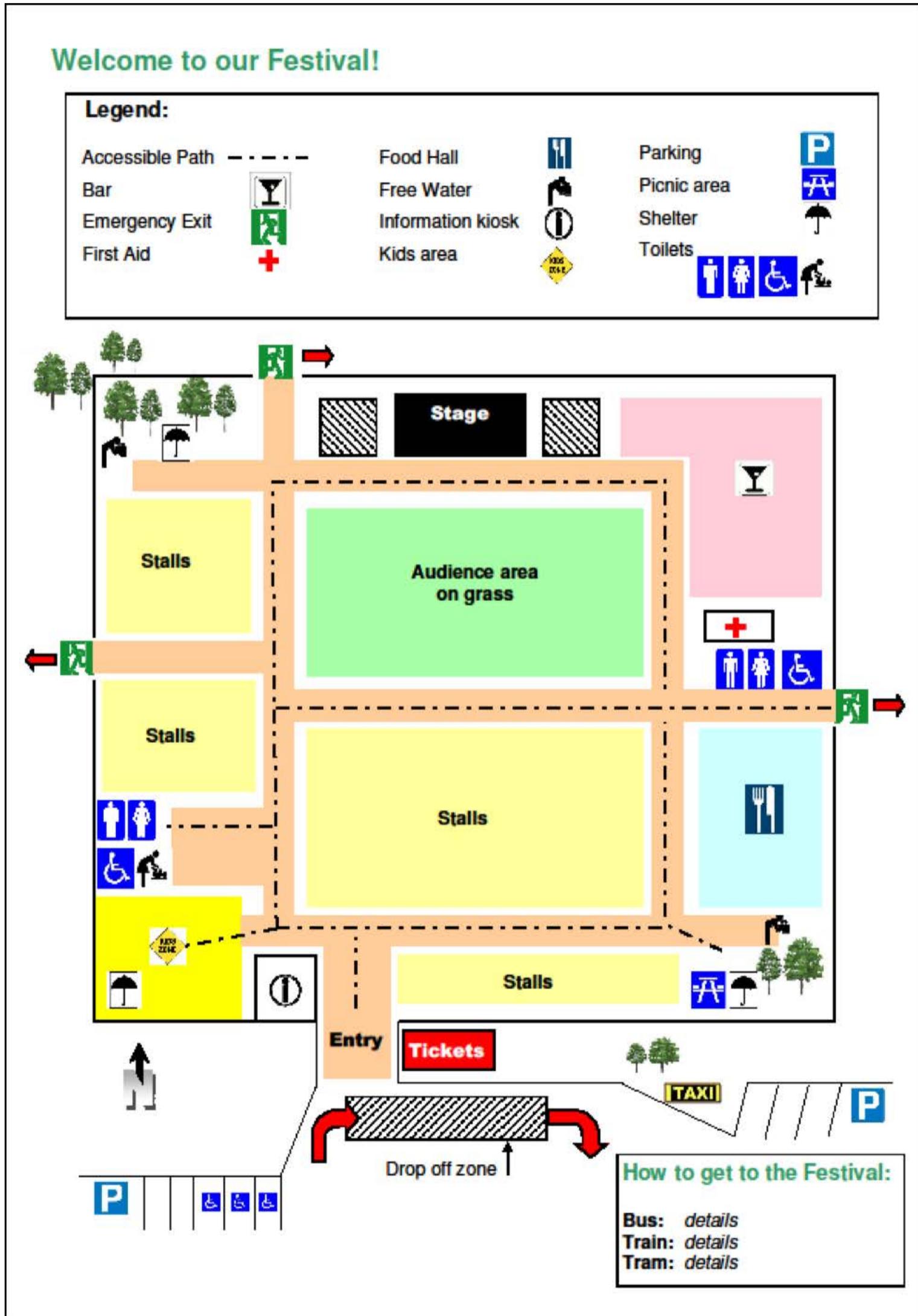
Site maps – have you indicated:

<input type="checkbox"/>	Where the roads are closed?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Key access points?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Drop off points for people with a disability?
<input type="checkbox"/>	First aid site?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Information counter?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessible and public toilets?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessible parking bays and other parking?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Stage locations?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Catering sites?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Occasional seating or shaded areas?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Accessible routes, ramps or paths?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Hazards?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact mobile phone numbers for assistance?

Disability Access Signs and Symbols

International Wheelchair Symbol		Accessible Unisex Toilet (left handed)	
Assistive Hearing Device (hearing loop and 'T' switch)		Closed Captioning	
Large Print Symbol		Low Vision	
Clear Directional Signage		Braille Available	

Sample Site Map



Myth Busting

Using accessible car parking

Most of us would be aware that there are designated, accessible parking bays for people who qualify for a 'disabled parking sticker'. There are substantial fines for parking illegally in these spaces – motorists must never park illegally – even if its “just for a few minutes and there was nowhere else to park” or” I was just delivering something quickly”.

Using accessible toilets

Unlike car parking, there is no legal status or criteria for using accessible toilets. Able bodied people are welcome to use these toilets on the condition that there are no people with a disability heading for the toilet. Use only if the mainstream toilets are unavailable or baby change facilities are only included in the accessible toilet.

Please note: People with a disability should never have to wait in a queue to use an accessible toilet that is being occupied by an able-bodied person.

Accessible Information

When producing written information for the event, such as programs, hand outs or agendas, think about how to make these accessible for all people to encompass everyone of all abilities. Sometimes this might include producing information in different formats.

There are a number of different formats that people may prefer or require. For people who have low vision, these include large print documents, audio tape or an accessible electronic format.

When managing a conference or seminar, be aware that other organisations may have reading material or brochures that are not accessible. This could be material produced by sponsors or exhibitors and inserted into delegate packs. Ask these organisations to ensure they provide accessible information including information in alternative formats.

Example: If paperwork and or handouts are only available as printed material then a resident who is blind is unable to participate equally in the event.

Many people with low vision, brain injuries or where English is a second language, would welcome receiving copies of papers 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.

Also consider using accessible and alternate formats for:

• Name tags	• PowerPoint presentations
• Evaluation forms	• Upload on web
• Presenter's notes	

Visual Information

When using presentation tools such as PowerPoint or video, be aware that the information presented may need to be communicated in a different way in order to ensure that people that have low vision can access the information. This may involve a simple description of what other participants are seeing or may involve the production of accessible electronic or audio copies of the material. Presenters need to be briefed about meeting the needs of guests with support needs.

Audio Information

There are a number of ways in which access to audio information can be provided for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Material may be provided in a written form prior to or at the event. Note takers sitting beside a person may provide a running written 'commentary' on the event, hearing augmentation may be available, such as a hearing loop or radio frequency system, a steno-captioner (LRC = Live Remote Captioning) may be employed to reproduce speeches in real-time, projected onto a screen and for those people who use Auslan sign language, an interpreter may be provided.

Marketing and Promotion

The marketing and publicity of the event is crucial to how successful it will be. Thinking clearly about who the intended target audience are will help to decide the best way to advertise and get the message across. Key media outlets to consider include the local newspaper, entertainment sections in the papers, community and school newsletters, social media, community and commercial radio stations and relevant websites. The flyers or posters should fit on one A4 page and must provide a name and a variety of contact options of the relevant person who is best equipped to field all media enquiries. Remember a person who is deaf cannot use a landline but they can use SMS function on mobiles or email.

Marketing Materials

- In written material, use a large font size in a clear 'sans serif' style such as Arial, no less than 12pt. and use a good contrast between text and background
- If you promote the event on a website, check it is accessible and compatible with the range of specialist hardware and software that people with a disability use to access electronic information
- Ensure the content of all the promotional material is finalised in an accessible electronic format such as Word, html or rtf before sending it off for desktop publishing. This will ensure that if a person with a low vision requires access to the material, it is easy to produce in a preferred format.

Invitations

Sending out invitations to potential guests that may include people with a disability needs to follow the guidelines and suggestions as indicated on the checklist.

Tips on designing your invitations with access requirements in mind:

Ensure you ask if extra supports are required that could include:

• Interpreters	• Hearing loop
• Dietary needs	• Offer more than one RSVP contact method
• Carers	• Translator
• Transport	• Note taker

Admission Fees

Consider the cost of an event for people with a disability as they often require a carer which may incur extra costs. If people with a disability have a carer and are eligible for a companion card - the carer will enter for free.

Invitation:

- Text to be 'sentence case' (not all caps)
- Text to be justified left, Arial - size 12 pt. min
- Offer more than one RSVP contact method

<p>Invitation</p> <p>Please join us to celebrate....</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Do you require any extra supports?</p> <p>RSVP:</p> <p>Phone: _____</p> <p>Mobile: _____</p> <p>Email: _____</p> <p>TTY: _____</p> <p></p>
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Potential extra supports could include:

- Interpreters
- Dietary needs
- Carers
- Transport
- LRC = Live Remote Captioning
- Note Taker
- 'Hearing loop' / Hearing Augmentation assistance

Invitations and Promotional Materials Checklist

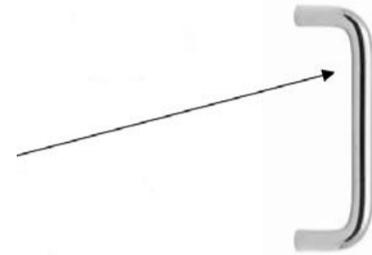
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are universal symbols of access used?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the text in non serif text and size 12 pt? e.g. Tahoma or Arial?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do your invitations or programs have plain backgrounds? Is there at least 80% contrast between background and text?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you mentioned that the venue is 'accessible'?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you asked if guests have any support needs?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you provided several alternate contact details for RSVP?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are your promotional materials available in alternate formats? (large text, audio, online)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are your promotional materials or programs printed on matt paper?

Accessible Toilets

Horsham Rural City Council supports accessible events, and strongly recommends that 5% of total toilets required should be accessible to people with disabilities. People using assistance animals will also benefit from being able to use accessible toilets, as will anyone with prams and young children.

Here are some quick guidelines:

- Ensure accessible toilets are non-gender specific, unisex and family friendly
- Accessible toilets must be located with the other toilets and have accessible pathways to them
- Toilets must be nearby the activity
- Accessible toilets also need accessible 'D' shaped handles, locks and signage
- Accessible toilets should never be used for storage
- Accessible basins must be provided within the accessible toilets.



Where possible, place an 'LH' or 'RH' on the sign that indicates whether the toilet is a Left or Right hand rail transfer.

Please note: As a tip for checking if a lock or door is easy to use, try clenching a fist and try the handles or locks - if you can't open or lock it, it will be very difficult for some people with a disability.



Toilet Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the toilet at least 2300 x 1900mm in size?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the toilet be unlocked for the event?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the signage leading to the toilet easy to see?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there plenty of circulation space outside the toilet?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is it a unisex, family friendly toilet with a change table?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the door automatic and outward opening?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If it's an inward opening door, is there enough room in the toilet for potentially 2 carers and the person with a disability?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the door opening at least 850mm wide?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the room free of storage items?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Can the door be locked easily?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the room well lit?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there an 'L' shaped continuous grab rail beside the pan?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the flush button within easy reach?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the sanitary container within easy reach and on the non transfer ?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a lever handle on the basin?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the soap dispenser at a height for a wheelchair user?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Does the mirror go all the way down to the basin?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there leg room under the basin?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the hand dryer or towel dispenser at a height for a wheelchair user?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there coat hooks at a wheelchair height?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there shelves at wheelchair height?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there spare rolls of toilet paper available?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If this toilet is not suitable, have you organised a rental accessible toilet?

Equipment

Access ramps must be provided everywhere that steps are located. Ramps should not be located at the back of venues or stages. Portable access ramps can be used to provide temporary access where steps would otherwise prevent access for wheelchair users or people with limited mobility. Portable access ramps should not be relied on but are good for emergencies.

There are technical standards applicable for access ramps and should adhere to gradients of 1:14. If the ramp is too steep, then it will not be any use and may well be dangerous to use.

- Access ramps must be well lit (if event is at night)
- Access ramps must have a slip resistant tread
- Portable access ramps can be hired from most suppliers and are great for outdoor events.

Matting

Accessible matting is temporary plastic flooring that when placed together can be used to create pathways or assembly areas on unstable surfaces. It provides safe access for people who use wheelchairs, scooters, pushers, prams and for people with limited mobility. Accessible matting is especially useful to create pathways over grassed or muddy areas and can be used on any flat surface. Access matting has a slip resistant tread and can be purchased or hired through various hire companies. It is a good idea to ensure you have adequate staff to install and remove matting.

Using Podiums or Stages

Podiums or stages can cause a problem for presenters with a disability if they do not have a permanent accessible ramp or equivalent. Temporary ramps and other access options may not be ideal unless they have been assessed by an authorised auditor. If there is no suitable access, consider bringing the stage area to level ground and ensure all presenters or performers are on that level.

Reserved Seating

Creating reserved seating areas near stages, performance and ceremony sites within good viewing and hearing distance of the action is a great way to ensure accessibility for everyone. People with mobility issues or chronic illnesses will find

this particularly helpful. Older people and people that are hard of hearing or low vision find reserved seating useful.

Do not forget to ensure that:

- There is an accessible pathway leading to the area
- The area is situated on a flat and even surface and if located on grass, that access matting has been used
- There is adequate space for wheelchairs and carers
- There is signage on the reserved seats
- Coordinator monitor the area to ensure seating is always available

Presenters, Facilitators or Performers

Speakers and presenters need to be aware of the requirements in advance of people attending an event. Presenters may need to supply copies of PowerPoint presentations in a hard copy for people with low vision and make a commitment to upload their presentations onto the website and make them available in large print format. Do not upload or email PDFs as they are not compatible with most screen reading technology.

Example: People who are deaf can become tired watching interpreters - provide hard copies to read. Or use RLC (Remote Live Captioning) service while allows people to have a live, real time script of the proceedings that can be read at their speed.

Plan for a briefing session to explain how to work with Auslan (Australian sign language) interpreters who are supporting people who are deaf or hard of hearing. Have hard copies of materials available and any other arrangements that may need to be put in place.

For people with low vision, it is also useful to remind speakers to describe any slides or visual material they use during a presentation for audience members who have a low vision. Facilitators may have additional responsibilities, like explaining evacuation procedures. They need to be aware that they should describe exits in terms of left, right and north, south, rather than pointing or saying 'over there'.

Presenter's Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you considered the needs of performers who may have a disability when setting up staging, performance spaces and programming?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you communicated with the performers in advance to identify any specific requirements?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you allowed time to rehearse and orientate a presenter who has a low vision across the stage before the event?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you allowed extra turnaround time that may be required when working with performers with a disability?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Do you have a stage manager who is aware of access issues and available at a moment's notice?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If there is a ramp, are there handrails?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are any change areas or waiting spaces accessible?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there supports available if required?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there accessible pathways between stage, waiting spaces or toilets?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there provision on stage for attendant carer if required?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you organised Auslan interpreters if requested?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you briefed presenters to not walk between the sign interpreters and the deaf person?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you asked presenters to provide accessible information for the audience?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you read and understood the protocols for dealing with a person who is hard of hearing?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you asked presenters to provide large text handouts for the audience?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you had a briefing session with presenters about the protocols for using Auslan interpreters?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you briefed the presenters about explaining any visual material to people who have low vision?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you briefed presenters about the need for captioning on any videos?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you briefed the facilitator about explaining housekeeping or evacuation procedures by describing exits in terms of left, right and north, south, rather than using visual cues?

Catering

Catering at events can range from a cup of tea and a biscuit to fast food stall holders or a sit down banquet. It is useful to provide different catering choices where practical and to ensure that catering staff are briefed on helping people with a disability and frail aged people with their selection and service.

Serving food

Consider the potential access issues that may arise for someone who has a vision or mobility impairment when providing:

- Plated food - provide someone to help cut up the food
- Finger food - make cutlery, bendable straws and napkins available
- Self serve - assistance may be needed to choose food and carry plates to a table
- Provide some seating - even at standing events!
- Table arrangements - plan for manoeuvrability space between seats - when people are seated on them
- Chairs - provide some with armrests
- Spaces for wheelchairs - remove a few chairs to make space.

Water Necessities

All events must have a sufficient supply of freely available drinking water and clear directional signage to water. Ensure there is additional water available for extreme weather and that all drinking fountains and facilities are at a height appropriate for people using wheelchairs.

Please note: a washbasin does not constitute a drinking fountain!

The amount of water required will vary but will be determined by:

- Season
- Time of day
- Number of guests expected
- Size of the event venue
- Anticipated time each guest will spend at the event
- Number of staff, performers and volunteers
- Level of activity, i.e. physical event or sedentary event

Catering Equipment

- Always provide cutlery for people who can't hold food in their hands
- Mugs are preferable to cups and saucers as they are easier to manage and hold the larger handle
- Paper napkins - always provide napkins
- Always provide bendable straws for people who cannot hold a mug

Selection of Food

The provision of a variety of high quality foods is essential for a successful event. Have you considered the following when selecting food stalls for your event and included it on marketing materials or registration forms?

Consider providing:

• Catering for special diets	• Low calorie
• Coeliac	• Multicultural food options
• Dairy free	• Soft food
• Diabetes	• Stalls with accessible serverise
• Gluten free	• Vegan
• Good environmental practices i.e. organic, fair trade, local produce	• Vegetarian
• Halal or kosher	• Wheat free.
• Healthy options	



Catering Checklist

<input type="checkbox"/>	If catering is self-service, is there staff to assist people with a disability with food choices and carrying food to an eating area?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there seats and tables available?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If outdoors, are the seats in the shade?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are the menus accessible and in large clear text?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are staff prepared to talk through the menu if someone can't read or see?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you provided napkins, cutlery and crockery even for finger food?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you provided some mugs instead of cups and saucers?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you provided plenty of free drinking water?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you provided bendable straws for people who can't hold their cups?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there enough manoeuvrability space between tables?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you considered having a number of food and beverage stations spread around the venue?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you made provision for dietary needs for people from different cultural backgrounds?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Have you considered providing for people with different dietary needs?

Example: A conference centre has a policy of only providing a self-service buffet at lunchtime for delegates. Some people with limited mobility or low vision may find it difficult or impossible to carry or hold food from a buffet bar and eat without placing their plate on a table.

Food Vendors

The provision of high quality, affordable foods at public events contributes to the comfort of guests and is often a necessity. Therefore, it is imperative to choose sub contractors for events that are aware of their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act to provide accessible food stalls. Please ensure that they also identify the content of the food for people who may have allergies.

Using Technology

Sound Systems

Sound systems help people who are hard of hearing or deaf so it is a priority to consider having a sound system at every event. Microphones are an essential part of the sound system and directly connect to hearing augmentation.

Other considerations relate to the alternate types of microphones:

- Roving microphones for audience to participate and still be heard
- Lapel microphones - are ideal for presenters who may be seated and not using the lectern microphone or those who like to walk away from the lectern
- Lecterns - be aware that people using wheelchairs cannot use a standard non-adjustable lectern, so make other provisions
- Hearing augmentation - if there is not one installed in the venue, portable loops or units can be hired
- Laptops and Projectors ensure that reserved seating up the front is available for people who have sensory impairments

Please note: People who use hearing aids do not necessarily need the volume turned up excessively.

Public Address Systems

Public Address (PA) systems play an important role at many events, helping to ensure that people can hear what is being said in large venues. At conferences and seminars, where members of the audience are invited to ask questions from the floor, it will be important to have staff equipped with portable microphones for the audience to use. Always check the quality and the volume of the PA system for clarity and comfort. Also ensure the PA system is supplemented by a hearing augmentation system to assist people who use a hearing aid.

Information Announcements

The use of clear audio announcements, made regularly from a stage, performance and ceremony sites, alerting visitors to the accessible features of the event and giving directions is a good way of ensuring everyone is informed.

Example: A person who is deaf or hard of hearing is watching an interpreter intently and someone walks between the interpreter and themselves - it is not only bad etiquette but it interrupts the conversation as if the sound and light has been switched off.

Lighting

Lighting must be appropriate for whoever is sitting in an audience. Particular attention must be paid to people with disabilities to ensure that they can all follow what is happening.

Technology Checklist

Website

<input type="checkbox"/>	Are all event marketing and other information uploaded on the website?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are all presentations available on the website in word format (no PDF)?

Microphones

<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there provisions for alternate types of microphones?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Roving, lapel and fixed microphones?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Are there alternate options for a lectern that a seated person can use?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a hearing loop installed and in good working order?
<input type="checkbox"/>	If there is not a hearing loop installed, have you organised Council's portable hearing loop via Wired and Council's Access Team?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there a support person to set up a presentation on a laptop and available to change slides for a presenter who is unable to do so?

Lighting

<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there enough lighting to see the Auslan interpreter (if present)?
<input type="checkbox"/>	Is there enough lighting for a person who is deaf or hard of hearing to lip-read?

Contingency Planning and Emergency Procedures

Contingency planning for assisting people with a disability may require a suitably experienced person to be on hand in case there is unexpected access or disability related issues. Despite the best planning and taking all necessary precautions, emergencies can occur, so plans and procedures need to be developed. It is valuable to remember that in any major incident, for the purposes of the law, the venue is considered a crime scene and will be under total control of the police.

It is equally important that emergency procedures include how best to assist people with support needs in the event of an emergency for example:

- Ensure all exits and assembly points are accessible for everyone
- Make sure there are sufficient staff to provide additional assistance and identify people with support needs who may need help to evacuate
- Provide information to all carers, interpreters and coordinators for the event, with regard to their obligations in case of an emergency
- Provide flashing lights at all activities and stages to alert people who are deaf or hard of hearing of emergency situations.

Other Supports

Interpreters

Obviously when we think about interpreters, we generally think about other languages. People who are deaf also need sign interpreters (Auslan) as they too have English as their second language. It would be advisable to book interpreters well in advance as there are more events than interpreters available.

Useful contacts below to source interpreters etc. Be warned, that if the event is longer than an hour, budget for two interpreters as they need a rest every 20 minutes or so. Also, interpreters need to be catered for with food, beverages and maybe accommodation and allow time for any briefing and set up components beforehand. Provide two spare seats in the front row for the interpreters for any event.

Example: People who are deaf can become tired watching interpreters - provide hard copies to read ahead of time.

Assistance Animals

We are familiar with seeing guide dogs helping people who have low vision and need to cater for their needs. Ensure there is an area for the animals nearby to stretch their legs in the breaks and relieve themselves. It may be of interest that there are other assistance animals as well as dogs – ‘hearing dogs’ who alert their companions about any sounds that may be relevant e.g. door bells or alarms etc. All these valuable animals are able to go anywhere their owners want to and it would be discriminatory to prevent their entry to venues. People who have anxiety disorders may also have support animals and ‘Delta dogs’ are also a recognised support animal.

Useful Contacts

Services:	Role:	Contact details:
Hearing Supports	Government and education DVDs can be captioned free by Media Access. Free captioning downloads available.	W: www.mediaaccess.org.au P: 02 9212 6242 E: info@mediaaccess.org.au
Auslan	Auslan Interpreters and Auslan lessons	W: www.auslandconnections.com.au (www.expression.com.au) P: 1300 010 877 E: vic@auslanconnections.com.au TTY: 03 9473 1199 F: 03 9473 1144 SMS: 0401 775 383
LRC	LRC = Live Remote Captioning	W: www.redbeemedia.com.au

Hearing Augmentation	Purchasing Hearing Augmentation or Loops	W: www.wom.com.au E: info@wom.com.au P: 03 9723 0660 F: 03 9723 9305 TTY: 03 9723 0660
Relay Services	National Relay Services (NRS)	W: www.relayservice.com.au Voice: 1800 555 660 TTY: 1800 555 630 SMS: 0416 001 350 F: 1800 555 690 E: helpdesk@relayservice.com.au
Wimmera Hearing Society	Audiologists 24B Roberts Avenue Horsham	P: 03 5382 7501
Vision Issues	Vision Australia: braille and guide dogs	W: www.visionaustralia.org.au P: 1300 847 466 E: info@visionaustralia.org TTY: 133 677
Tourism	Tourism Victoria	W: www.business.vic.gov.au P: 132 215 TTY: 1900 555 677 ask for 1800 136 034
Multicultural Arts	Multicultural Arts Victoria	W: www.multiculturalarts.com.au P: 03 9188 3681 E: office@multiculturalarts.com.au P: 03 9188 3681 F: 03 9686 6643
Food Safety	Victorian Government food safety	W: www2.health.vic.gov.au E: enquiries@dhhs.vic.gov.au

Liquor and Gambling Licensing Victoria	Provision of licences for gambling and serving of alcohol	W: www.vcglr.vic.gov.au P: 1300 182 457
Music License	Provision of licences for playing recorded or live music	W: www.apraamcos.com.au P: 1300 852 388 E: licence@apra.com.au
Waste Management	Waste wise event signage and event tool kit	W: www.sustainability.vic.gov.au P: 1300 363 744 E: info@sustainability.vic.gov.au

Contact Us

E: council@hrcc.vic.gov.au

Civic Centre, 18 Roberts Avenue
PO Box 511
HORSHAM VIC 3402
Ph: 03 5382 9777
F: 03 5382 1111
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