Guide to Accessible Events

People with disability can face barriers when attending and participating in public events and functions in a variety of ways.

They may experience difficulty hearing what is said, seeing small print on an invitation, climbing steps to the venue, understanding signage or using a rest room in the building or locating an accessible facility at the event.

Incorporating simple strategies into the planning phase of an event, whether that be a workshop, consultation, function or concert will help event organisers to create a memorable experience that will likely attract more customers.

Why is planning for accessible and inclusive events important?

Approximately 20% or one (1) in five (5) people in Western Australia have one or more types of disability.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics 2016 Census, it was estimated that there were 2,888 people living within the City of Bayswater that reported a need for assistance due to a disability.

Event organisers should be aware of legislation that protects the rights of people with disability which includes the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992, and in Western Australia, there is a further requirement under the Disability Services Act 1993.

Did you know that a person with a disability can be someone who:
- Is deaf or has a hearing impairment
- Is blind or has vision impairment
- Has an intellectual or learning disability
- Has a physical or mobility impairment
- Lives with a mental health issue

It simply makes good business sense to plan your event with inclusion in mind, as it is highly likely people with disability whether an employee, volunteer, performer, stallholder, agent or contractor, participant or spectator will be involved at some point - whether that be in the planning, running or gathering feedback phases.

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What is inclusive communication?

Planning an event should go beyond the provision of accessible toilets and parking infrastructure and toward demonstrating how your event has embedded welcoming and inclusive practices.

Communicate using people-first language

Always start with using people-first language to respectfully speak about an individual with a disability. People-first language emphasizes the person is first, not the disability. By placing the person first, the disability is no longer the primary, defining characteristic of an individual but one of several aspects of the whole person.

For example, when referring to a person with disability, refer to the person first by using phrases such as: "a person who ...", "a person with ..." or, "person who has..." instead of "the disabled" or 'the blind' or "confined to a wheelchair", as these terms imply that these persons are separate from the rest of society.

Respectful communication means to:

- Treat a person with respect, be patient and listen attentively;
- Never make assumptions about what people can do;
- Never attempt to speak or finish sentences when you are talking to a person with disability;
- Address a person with disability directly, not their family member or support person;
- Do not assume assistance is needed; and
- Accept a person's right to refuse help, using positive body language.

Ensuring that friendly and understanding staff or volunteers are available to assist or provide information at event site entry points will make a big difference. Also, having regular audio announcements and clear, large print directional signage to help locate accessible facilities (including for people's assistance animals) will also be warmly welcomed.

Accessible information tips

Many communication difficulties can be avoided with informed planning such as:

- using clear and concise language;
- using appropriate font style, colour and size;
- providing information in alternative formats;
- providing audio loops;
- using Auslan sign language interpreters;
- captioning videos;
- designing accessible websites; and
- displaying information in an accessible location.

Use of disability access symbols

Inclusive practices can be seen in event information that is provided or promoted as 'being available in a range of alternative formats'. The use of disability access symbols are also a visual cue to help make people feel welcome and learn about the accessibility and inclusivity of your event.

International Symbol of Access

International symbol of Deafness

Sign Language Interpretation Symbol

Assistive Listening Symbol

Disability Access Information Symbol

WA Companion Card

Another inclusive practice is the WA Companion Card. A Companion Card is for people who need the assistance of a Companion or carer at all times to enable them to participate in community based activities and venues. The City of Bayswater is an affiliate of the Companion Card program. For further information visit the WA Companion Card website.

WA Companion Card Symbol

Planning an accessible and inclusive event checklist

This self-checklist is a starting point to guide event organisers to better plan the design and delivery of an accessible and inclusive event.

Event Organiser	Yes	No	N/A
Engage the event team			
Provide staff and volunteers' induction and information to increase awareness on what access and inclusion will look like at the event (i.e. locations of accessible infrastructure such as toilets, parking, thoroughfare, signage, service help, etc.).			
Provide training to staff and volunteers about the use of inclusive communication and how to use assistive equipment if provided, such as a portable hearing loops.			
Emphasis on need for effective communication between event staff and patrons to address access concerns that may arise, to ensure they are comfortable dealing with complaints.			
Ensure the organising team are familiar with accessibility aspects of Emergency Procedures i.e. Do the procedures take into account people with sensory impairments and mobility impairments? Reference: https://www.and.org.au/pages/evacuation-procedures.html			
Provide opportunities for people with disability to assist with staff inductions, training and briefings.			
Schedule a debrief with the organising team post-event to learn what accessible and inclusive elements worked and what can be improved. Also seek feedback from attendees to assist with improving future events.			
Engage the right Contractors			
Check with contractors, performers, presenters, special guests and staff in advance to identify specific requirements prior to organising staging and setting up performance spaces.			
Plan how information will be conveyed on where to locate accessible facilities (i.e. green rooms, accessible toilets, parking, first aid posts, service help, etc.).			
Invite feedback from contractors post-event on opportunities to improve event accessibility.			
Engage the right food vendors and stall holders			
Will there be a range of food and beverages to suit variant dietary needs?			
Will there be the provision of large print signage at the ground level with good colour contrast or printed menus with large font?			
Will food service stations or stallholder outlets be at an accessible height and provide sufficient wheelchair circulation space to view food, beverage or merchandise?			

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Learn more

There is a wide range of information and tools available online to help event organisers plan and deliver an accessible and inclusive event or function.

Accessible Events – A guide for Meeting and Event Organisers
Meetings and Events Australia
https://www.meetingsevents.com.au/sites/default/files/uploaded-content/website-content/accessible_events_guide.pdf

Event Accessibility Checklist
Australian Network on Disability
https://www.and.org.au/pages/event-checklist.html
https://www.and.org.au/pages/evacuation-procedures.html

Creating Accessible Events
Disability Services Commission
http://www.disability.wa.gov.au/Global/Publications/Understanding%20disability/Built%20environment/Creating%20accessible%20events.pdf

Missed Business – How to attract more customers by providing better access to your business
Australian Human Rights Commission and Marrickville Council
https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/projects/missed-business-how-attract-more-customers-providing-better

Questions? We are here to help

The City of Bayswater is committed to delivering public events that are consistent with the intent of our Access and Inclusion Plan 2020 – 2024

If you are considering planning a community event within the City of Bayswater, we are here to help, support and guide you through the City's event application process. Applications are necessary – as the event organiser you are required to comply with the WA guidelines for concerts, events and organised gatherings, and the Health Act 1911.

The City of Bayswater Event Guidelines will help to guide you through planning your event together with a range of venues that might be suitable if considering delivering an event in the City.

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Contact us:

Contact Community Development

City of Bayswater
61 Broun Avenue, Morley WA 6062
Telephone: 9272 0622
Email: mail@bayswater.wa.gov.au
Website: www.bayswater.wa.gov.au

National Relay Service

Contact the City of Bayswater at no charge:

Voice Relay – 1300 555 727
TTY – 13 36 77
SMS relay – 0423 677 767
Website: www.communications.gov.au

Translating and Interpreting Service
131 450
Website: www.tisnational.gov.au/en/Non-English-speakers

Alternative Formats

This publication is available upon request in alternative formats, including hard copy in large or standard print, electronic format, audio and Braille.

This publication can be found on the City's website and can be made available in languages other than English upon request.