

Creating inclusive and accessible events

Refer to this resource:

- ▶ to organise accessible and inclusive celebrations, events and engagement activities.

Activities held during annual awareness events, such as Multicultural Month, Seniors Week, NAIDOC Week, Disability Action Week and Child Protection Week, also need to be inclusive of people with disability.

Use the following checklist to help ensure your event is accessible and inclusive.

Venue

- Wheelchair accessibility — ensure people who use wheelchairs can enter, exit and move about easily, remembering some people use large powerchairs and may have a carer or support person with them. Try to integrate spaces within the seating area rather than isolating people with disability at the back of the room.
- Accessible toilets must have features for wheelchair users, including wider doors and adequate floor space to move around the toilet, as well as fixtures designed for people with disability, such as low-effort tap handles.
- Accessible adult change facilities — check online at <https://changingplaces.org.au/find-changing-places-toilet/> for accessible change facilities.
- Check with the venue that a functioning hearing induction loop is available. People with hearing aids use this sound system and it consists of a microphone to pick up the spoken word, an amplifier to process the signal and a loop cable of wire around the room, which acts as an antenna to radiate the magnetic signal to the hearing aid.
- Public announcement (PA) system is used. While some speakers may feel more comfortable without a microphone, using the PA will ensure people who are hard of hearing and those making use of the hearing induction loop can still participate.
- Neurodiversity needs are considered. People with neurodiversity may experience sensory overload. A 'break-out' room away from the main area with closeable doors may assist people with neurodiversity to regain energy or focus¹. People with neurodiversity may also be hypersensitive to:
 - visual 'clutter' — consider avoiding brightly coloured or highly patterned furnishings and carpets
 - bright lights or fluorescent lights — avoid flickering lights and consider using as much natural light as possible
 - strong smells — consider having catering away from workshop or event areas
 - background noise — consider avoiding ceiling fans.
- Speaker's platform is accessible for people who use wheelchairs. If a stage is used, lifts or ramps are required to ensure access to the stage for people who use wheelchairs.

- Ensure the reception desk is at an accessible height for people who use wheelchairs.
- Check there is space and water provided for guide, hearing or assistance dogs. Ensure the venue's event coordinators know certified assistance animals can access public venues, including dining areas. For more information on guide, hearing and assistance dogs visit: www.communities.qld.gov.au/industry-partners/guide-hearing-assistance-dogs

Sign language interpreters

- A sign language interpreter is booked if attendees indicate this requirement in their RSVP. A sign language interpreter should also be booked for large public meetings and events where members of the public do not need to RSVP. Book three weeks in advance for an Auslan sign language interpreter. Search online using the term 'Auslan Interpreter' for providers in your area.

Videos

- Any videos are captioned and contain audio description so people who are hard of hearing or vision impaired can access essential content. Live captioning services can provide captioning in real-time.
- A transcript of the video is available in Word or HTML if it is being accessed online. This allows people who are hard of hearing or vision impaired to access essential content.
- If the video is not audio described, presenters should verbalise any important visual elements, such as on-screen text.

Transport

- Public transport options are provided to attendees, including details about whether the train stations or bus services near the venue are accessible for people with disability. You may want to check that footpaths from the public transport to the venue are free of potholes and not temporarily closed.
- Venue drop-off points for taxis and other vehicles are close to the venue's entrance. Mention in the invitation if there is a kerb ramp at the drop-off point to allow a person using a wheelchair to get from the road to the entrance.

- The venue's car park includes reserved spaces for people with disability.
- Car spaces are booked if required.

PowerPoint presentations

- Any images or photographs in presentations and visual cues, for example, a show of hands, are described by the presenters.
- Any text that is specifically referred to on the screen is read by the presenters.

Invitations

- A notice is included with the invitations about accessibility and support requirements, for example: *'If you have any access or support requirements to participate fully in this event, please let us know when you RSVP. Please note: The venue is accessible for people using wheelchairs'*.
- The invitation is available in Word or HTML format. If a PDF format is used, an electronic Word or HTML version with identical information is also distributed.
- The invitation conforms to the accessibility requirements for producing readable text, especially in relation to minimum font size, font type, layout and contrast colour. Microsoft Word has the functionality to check for accessibility issues for text-to-audio for people using screen reader software (see Resource 2 for information on creating accessible information).
- Ticket booking or registration systems comply with web accessibility standards. Search online for the accessibility guidelines of the ticket booking or registration system being used.
- Event documents, such as agendas, issues papers and reports, are in accessible formats and circulated on memory sticks or by email prior to, or at, the event. Accessible formats include large print, braille and Microsoft Word.
- Images used in invitations or documents contain alternative text (see Resource 2 for information on creating accessible information).

Room layout

- There is sufficient space between chairs and tables for people who use wheelchairs, including large powerchairs.

- Seats are reserved at the front for people who are deaf or hard of hearing so there is direct line of sight to the sign language interpreter or captioning screen.
- If group activities are planned, such as ice-breaker meetings, consultations, seminars and workshops, the needs of people with disability are considered so everyone can participate fully.
- Ensure the room layout is inclusive and integrated so people with disability are not grouped separately within the venue.

Housekeeping

- If a microphone is used, the person opening the event should briefly go off-microphone to orientate people who are blind to their location. To do this, move your mouth away from the microphone and call out to the room, 'This is where I'm standing'.
- Verbal directions, as well as wayfinding signs, are used to explain the locations of toilets and emergency exits.

Catering

- Dietary needs are checked during registration or different catering choices are provided where possible.
- Sufficient seats and tables are available for carers, support workers and assistance animals.
- Everyone has room to move safely between the tables and a range of cutlery and crockery is provided.

Reference

1. Gatfield, O., Hall, G., Isaacs, K. & Mahony, J. (2018) Guidelines for Creating Autistic Inclusive Environments. Brisbane: Cooperative Research Centre for Living with Autism. Downloaded from the Autism CRC website autismcrc.com.au

For further information

All Abilities Queensland: Opportunities for all, is the state disability plan for a welcoming and inclusive Queensland. A state where people with disability are respected for their abilities and have equal access to opportunities and to contribute and participate in all that Queensland has to offer.

For more information and resources, visit: www.allabilities.qld.gov.au

Resources in this series include:

1. Creating inclusive and accessible events
2. Accessible and inclusive communication
3. Employing people with disability
4. Increasing disability awareness
5. Disability action plans and legislation
6. Increasing participation of people with disability on boards and committees
7. Accessible places and spaces