Accessible Communications and Events

Checklist

Accessibility: Why is it Important?

Living with a disability, illness, or age-related condition can be challenging when accessing information and events.

There are some different kinds of *structural* and *social* barriers people may encounter at an event, such as:

Attitude: Stereotyping, bias and discrimination can make it difficult for a person living with a disability to fully participate in events, activities and social settings.

Communication: Not everyone communicates in the same ways. Reading, writing, hearing, speaking and understanding can take many different forms for people with disability.

Physical: Objects or structures that prevent access, such as stairs and kerbs, can make it difficult for people with limited mobility to move around a space.

This document provides best practice recommendations, guidelines and a checklist for:

1. Accessible Communications

2. Accessible Events

1. Accessible Communications

Websites and Digital Communication

Many sight-impaired people use screen readers to access digital materials and websites. This technology reads aloud the words on the screen.

All websites should meet the current minimum standard of WCAG 2.1 AA. For more information about WCAG 2.1 AA, go to www.apsacademy.gov.au.

Accessibility Tips: Screen Readers

Web pages are **more accessible** for Screen Readers than Word or PDF documents.

Screen readers cannot read text **embedded** into an image.

Check your website accessibility with the handy tools at **wave.webaim.org.**

Printed Communication

Printed materials are most accessible to people when the page looks simple and uncluttered. Using plain language will help to get your message across in a clear and concise manner.

- Text should be of a high contrast to the background as this is easier for people with a vision
- impairment. Black text on a yellow background is the clearest option. Avoid using reflective materials e.g. a high gloss finish
- Use an easy to read font such as 12 point Arial or Helvetica
- Sentence case is the easiest to read – avoid writing in all capitals.

Plain Language

The average Australian reads and comprehends language at a year 8 level. Using plain language will assist with making your communication accessible to a wider audience.

- Avoid the use of slang words - not everyone understands them
- Write out full names rather than using acronyms
- Avoid scientific, medical or business jargon.

Inclusive Language

Using inclusive language supports people living with disability and difference. For example:
- Use person-centred language like "person living with a disability" rather than "disabled person"
- Use inclusive, gender neutral language, such as "sportsperson" or "police officer".

Amnesty International provides a comprehensive guide to using inclusive language.

Do...
Use good colour contrasts.
Black text on a yellow background is the clearest option

Don't...
Use similar colours. Low colour contrasts are much harder to read

Requesting RSVPs and Attendance

When inviting people to attend your event, the following considerations can help people to make informed choices, and feel more confident about attending.

They can also help you to plan ahead around accessibility needs.

- Include multiple options when requesting RSVP's. For example, give options to email, phone or send a text message
- Ask if the attendees have any access requirements
- Ask if attendees have any dietary requirements.

Accessibility Tips: Facility Details

Include details of facilities in invitations and event promotions to be clear about the accessibility of the venue. For example:
- Disability parking bays
- Accessible toilets
- Entry stairs or ramps.

Alternative Formats

Try to use a range of communication options to reach a wide audience.
This can include:
- Internet and social media
- Newspapers
- Radio
- Posters
- Flyers.

Check in with customers with sensory disabilities about their preferred format for communications, so that you can provide those formats. Include the statement "this is available in other formats upon request" on all materials being sent to the public.

This may include electronic sound files, large print etc. There are organisations such as the Association for the Blind that can help you with this.

Accessibility Tips: Sounds and Vision

Alternative formats may include:
- Electronic sound files
- Large print
- Captions in video
- Audio loop.

What is an audio loop?

An audio loop is a piece of equipment that allows sound to be transmitted directly into a hearing aid.

They can be permanently fixed in a building or transportable.

Audio loops are available to purchase or hire - for more information, contact Hearing Loop Australia.

Accessible Communications Checklist

Item	Y/N	Notes
Website Accessibility Standards • Good colour contrasts • Accessible to screen readers • Easy to follow navigation • Uses plain language.		
Written Material • Plain 11 or 12 point font • Easy to read • Strong contrasting colours.		
Invitations • State venue wheelchair accessibility • State accessible parking options • State accessible toilet options • Alternative RSVP and communication options • Request people who need assistance to identify themselves.		
Alternative promotional options, such as sound, for people who are unable to read or have vision impairment		
Captions on all videos		

2. Accessible Events

Presentations

When making a presentation, ensure everyone in the room can see and hear you well.

• Presenters should be visible to all people
• Use equipment such as microphones to carry sound
• Avoid using jargon or acronyms. Keep the presentation simple using plain English
• Any presentation material such as PowerPoints should be formatted appropriately with a font of at least 24 points
• Consider using captions or sub-titles on digital presentations
• Consider using hearing loops for verbal presentations.

Accessibility Tips: Auslan

Auslan (Australian Sign Language) Interpreters can be booked through the WA Deaf Society Website.
• Interpreters usually require at least 5 days' notice and you can expect fees to be in the region of $500 for two hours including travel to a regional area. Fees may increase for non-office hours.
• Visit the WA Deaf Society website for more information.

Signage

Clear signage at an event assists with ensuring participants have a good experience.
This includes directions into and out of the event, toilets and other relevant facilities.

• Ensure the signage does not block pathways
• Ensure the signage is visible for people in wheelchairs and shorter people.

Pathways

Pathways should be clear, continuous and wide enough for a wheelchair.

Tactile pathway indicators laid at road crossings and from carparks will assist sight-impaired people with finding main buildings and reception areas.

Ramps

A ramp gradient of 1:14 is considered suitable for a standard wheelchair.
- Long ramps should always have handrails
- The handrails should curve under at the ends to avoid accidents.

Need infrastructure to increase accessibility?
Consider hiring the free Enable Accessibility Trailer based in Bunbury from Enable WA.

Doorways

Wheelchairs vary in size and manoeuvrability and therefore require more room for turning and reversing.
- Doorways should be a minimum 800mm wide to allow standard wheelchair access.

Toilets

Toilets should be located in close proximity to the main event.
Ensure accessible toilets:
- Are labelled as "unisex" or "gender neutral." This allows a Carer of the opposite sex to enter
- Have accessible taps and flush mechanisms (levers)
- Have accessible toilet paper.

Floors and Stages

Sand and grass are very difficult to negotiate with wheeled mobility supports.
- Indoor flooring should have a non-slip floor surface
- Carpets should have a firm low pile of 6mm or less
- If your event has a stage, ensure it is accessible for people with mobility aids.

Seating and Tables

There should be enough seating available to allow people to rest.
During a sit down function:
- Create adequate room between tables for wheelchairs to move through
- Create enough room under the table for wheelchairs to sit there
- Remove a chair or two from several tables to allow wheelchair users a choice of position and to sit with family and friends.

Lighting

Flashing lights can create challenges for people with light sensitivity or epilepsy.
- Events that have flashing or strobing lights should contain a warning.

Want to talk to us about accessibility?

Found a Shire of Harvey facility that is not accessible? REPORT IT

Contact our Community Development Team

97293000

communitydevelopment@harvey.wa.gov.au

Shire of Harvey Access and Inclusion Plan 2021-2026

Accessible Events Checklist

Item	Y/N	Notes
Wheelchair accessibility check • Ramps and handrails (vs stairs) • Doorways minimum 800mm wide • Turning circles big enough for wheelchairs • Level, non-slip flooring • Suitable toilet facilities • Accessible parking bays • Clear, continuous pathways • Stage is accessible with mobility aids.		
Clear, accessible signage for: • Event entry • Event exit • Toilets • Parking.		
Adequate lighting		
Warning about flashing or strobe lights		
Reception counter a suitable level for wheelchair users and shorter people		
Presenters visible to the whole audience, easy to understand and clearly spoken		
Digital presentations clear and captioned for the Deaf or hearing impaired		
Does the event display or presentation require an audio loop?		
Does the event require an Auslan interpeter?		
Do staff and volunteers have a good level of disability awareness?		
Community-wide events: Quiet zone ("chill zone") or a low sensory zone		