Accessible events checklist

These guidelines have been developed to help community groups and organisations think about how they can create accessible events.

What is an accessible event?

An accessible event is one where everyone can attend and participate. When we talk about accessibility, we often mean physical access eg. entry into a building. For a person using a wheelchair or crutches, steps into a building can be a barrier to access and stop them from attending an event.

When barriers like these are addressed, events can become more accessible and therefore inclusive of people with disabilities. Barriers to access can also stem from people's lack of awareness and attitudes towards disability. The more planning you do from the outset, the more likely you will be able to develop an accessible event.

Why make your event inclusive?

People in your community, regardless of their age, gender, cultural background and abilities, want to be able to participate in a range of activities and events. By making your event accessible, you are creating the opportunity for more people to attend, increasing rates of participation and the success of your event. Importantly, when events are accessible, people with disabilities can attend with their friends and family and feel part of the larger community.

Under the *Disability Discrimination Act (1992)* it is unlawful to discriminate against people with a disability, so it's always best to ensure you have taken reasonable steps to remove barriers to accessibility and inclusion. It is also worth remembering that good access not only benefits people with disabilities, but will also make the event easier to access for others. For example, pathways and entries without steps are easier to negotiate for older people, people using prams and also delivery people.

How to make your event inclusive

There are five steps to assist in planning accessible events:

1. Planning ahead

2. Promotion and written material

3. Transport and arrival at the venue

4. Inside the venue

5. Staff/volunteers

It will also help you to think through approaches for different types of disabilities. A checklist for planning events is provided at the end of this document.

Bentleigh

Bentleigh East

Brighton East

Carnegie

Caulfield

Elsternwick

Gardenvale

Glen Huntly

McKinnon

Murrumbeena

Ormond

St Kilda East

City of **GLEN EIRA**

GLEN EIRA
CITY COUNCIL

1. Planning ahead

Best practice recommends considering access requirements right from the outset of planning your event. This requires making allowances in your budget for any access requirements that may arise. Examples may include Auslan interpreters, portable ramp hire, printing in large format or Braille if requested. If the event requires registration or RSVP, details regarding access requirements can be collected along with other details such as dietary requirements.

2. Promotion and written material

How are you promoting your event? Is your material reaching the target audience? When developing flyers/brochures consider the following:

* Aim to use a minimum size 12 font, or even larger if targeting elderly people.

* Use simple fonts such as Arial that are easier to read.

* Provide good contrast between the text and background.

* Don't overcrowd the flyer with images that make it hard to read the text.

* Ensure you save your event content in Microsoft Word or other accessible electronic formats such as html or rtf so that if a person with a vision impairment requests information it is easy to produce in the requested format.

* Include a contact phone number and email for further enquiries about access provisions.

* Include the international symbol of access which is widely recognised next to the contact details, as pictured below.

* Keep written information simple and avoid using jargon where possible. Use symbols or pictures with words on signage or handouts to assist those who have difficulty reading or difficulty with the English language (easy English format).

* If using Microsoft PowerPoint, consider how people with a vision impairment will access the information during the presentation? If possible, make the presentation available in advance upon request so the recipient can change it into an accessible format and provide handouts of the presentation at the event.

* For name tags, ensure the font is large and clear with a strong contrast colour between text and background.

3. Transport and arrival at the venue

* How will people get to your event? Are there good public transport connections? Have you included this information in your promotional material?

* Parking: is there clearly marked, designated accessible parking available? If not, consider allocating a space with a clear, flat path of travel to the venue and mark this space for people who have a disabled parking permit.

* If parking space is limited, consider creating a drop-off/pick-up zone for people with disabilities. Ensure clear signage is provided and event staff are aware of this provision.

- Is there an accessible path of travel from the car park or entry point to the venue? Paths should be flat and at least one metre wide.

- For outdoor events, consider hiring temporary flooring products to create a flat and visually well-defined path of travel over grassy, bumpy or muddy areas.

- Is the entry to the venue or building free from steps? If not, can an alternative entry or a portable ramp be organised?

- If there are steps, do they have handrails to assist those using the steps?

- For larger events, have you produced a map containing access information (location of parking, toilets, accessible entrances)? You can distribute it in advance to people who RSVP or request access information.

4. Inside the venue

- Is there adequate circulation space for people using walking frames, wheelchairs, scooters and other mobility devices to move around the venue?

- Are pathways clear of trip hazards, electrical cords or other objects that protrude into pathways that may not be easily seen by some? Eg. low rubbish bins, pot plants.

- Note the floor surface of the venue — is it a non-slip, flat surface?

- Is there seating for people who may not be able to stand for the duration of the event? Include some seats with armrests as they can be easier for people get up from.

- Is seating available at the front of the event for people who have low vision or those with hearing impairments who lip-read?

- Are tea/coffee, refreshments accessible to people using a wheelchair?

- Is there seating/table area for refreshments for people who are not able to stand safely whilst eating/drinking?

- Is the lighting adequate for people to be able to read handouts, presentation material?

- Is there clear signage indicating location of toilets, reception desk etc.?

- Does the venue have accessible toilets? Check these are clear of clutter and not being used for storage.

- If using a stage, is it accessible to those with mobility difficulties?

- For large events in open spaces, consider hiring portable accessible toilets. Unisex toilets are advisable for people requiring assistance or who attend with a carer of the opposite sex.

- For outdoor events, make sure there are sufficient chairs and rest areas in the shade.

5. Staff/volunteers

- Are staff at the event aware of access provisions? Can they direct people to the accessible entrance, toilets etc.?

- Are staff easy to identify if someone needs assistance (uniform, clear name tag, help desk, etc.)?

- Ensure staff are aware that assistance animals, including guide dogs and hearing dogs are legally allowed to be at events.

Responding to different needs and access requirements

It is also important to consider access requirements for other types of disability eg. vision and hearing impairment and autism.

For vision impairment:

- Provide even lighting throughout the venue.

- Provide large, clear signage and/or Braille signage.

- Minimise clutter and cords, equipment, furniture that could be a trip hazard.

- Printed material in large print or Braille on request.

- Identify yourself by name when engaging with a vision impaired person.

- Don't pat or distract a working dog in its harness.

For hearing impairment:

- Consider how much background noise there is — will it make it difficult for people to focus on the presentation?

- If required, provide sign language interpreters.

- If producing or using a DVD or similar material for the community, consider adding captioning so that people with hearing impairments can access key messages.

- Use Microsoft PowerPoint to support guest speakers or written handouts of notes.

- Use adequate lighting for speakers to assist those who lip-read.

- Use adequate audio and sound equipment for presentations.

- Always face the person so they can read your lips.

- Have pen and paper ready to help you communicate, if required.

- Don't shout or exaggerate your speech — it's much harder for lip-readers to understand.

For people with autism or behaviour problems:

How stimulating or busy is the environment? Lots of noise and colour can overstimulate some people. Consider having a quiet room or space that parents or carers can use to reduce the sensory overload.

Concession cards that support access to community activities

You may choose to accept these cards or not at your event, there is no obligation. However, be aware that some people may present them on then day or call ahead to see if you accept them, so it's best to make a decision before the day of the event about concession cards and rates.

The Companion Card provides free entry to a carer who is supporting a person with a significant and permanent disability to access an event or activity.

The Carer Card is provided to carers and recognises the contribution unpaid carers make to the community. Council provides carers with concession rates if they have the Carer Card.

Support from Glen Eira City Council

Council's MetroAccess officer focuses on improving inclusion of people with disabilities in our community. MetroAccess is available to provide advice and support to individuals or organisations planning events in Glen Eira, email metroaccess@gleneira.vic.gov.au or phone 9524 3333.

Useful websites

Expression Australia: www.expression.com.au | info@expression.com.au | Phone: 9473 1111 or toll free 1300 780 225

Captioning (subtitles): www.mediaaccess.org.au | Phone: 02 9212 6242

Vision Australia: www.visionaustralia.org.au | Phone: 1300 847 466

Easy English Guide (Scope Victoria): www.scopeaust.org.au/service/accessible-information

Accessible Events Checklist	Yes	No	N/A
Before the event			
Have you budgeted for potential access requirements? (Eg. portable ramp, sign language interpreters, Braille printing.)			
Have you considered which venue is most appropriate overall for your target audience in regards to ease of access, lighting, sound, parking, lifts, steps and public transport?			
Promotion			
Is your electronic invitation or flyer in Microsoft Word format as well as PDF?			
Is your invitation easy to read? (Font size minimum 12, contrast of text to background.)			
Have you provided access information or used the access symbol on the invitation?			
Does your invitation include contact details for accessibility enquiries?			
Venue			
Does the venue provide accessible car parking? If not, can you allocate a space for an accessible parking bay or drop-off zone and provide temporary signage?			
Is there a clear and safe path of travel from the carpark to the building?			
Is there ramp access into the building? If not, can a portable ramp be used?			
If there are steps, are handrails provided?			
Is there adequate circulation inside the venue for people using mobility devices or needing assistance of another person?			
Have you provided an accessible toilet?			
Is there clear signage for assistance, toilets, lifts, help desk, etc.?			
Is there adequate lighting to ensure safety and comfort of people with low vision?			
Have you provided audio/sound system for presenters?			
If you have developed a site map, does it include accessibility features?			
Have you removed or secured potential trip hazards?			
Will people using wheelchairs be able to reach objects? Eg. refreshments, water taps.			
Have you allocated space for wheelchair or scooter users amongst seating and tables?			
Have you provided seating and rest areas, particularly at outdoor events?			
Staff			
Are staff aware of location of accessible features, eg. parking bays and toilets?			
Have staff developed handouts to accompany presentations? Consider doing some in large print to assist those with low vision.			
Do you have extra staff available if people require assistance? Eg. with refreshments, being escorted in/out of building etc.			