DIAP

DISABILITY INCLUSION ACTION PLAN

2023 - 2028
Plain Language

ARTS HOUSE

CITY OF MELBOURNE

Contents

Image: *The Birth and Death of a Physical Artist* by roya the destroy and Peter Sette, Commissioned by Arts House for The Warehouse Residency 2023, Image credit: Tiffany Garvie

Acknowledgement of Country

Arts House is located on Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Country.

The City of Melbourne respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land we govern, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung and Bunurong / Boon Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation and pays respect to their Elders past and present. We acknowledge and honour the unbroken spiritual, cultural and political connection they have maintained to this unique place for more than 2000 generations.

We accept the invitation in the Uluru Statement from the Heart and are committed to walking together to build a better future.

About this document

This is the Plain Language version of the Disability Inclusion Action Plan. It includes all the actions we have committed to as part of this DIAP and is written in plainer, simpler language.

You can also read the Easy English version, which uses the simplest language of all three versions and includes images, or the detailed DIAP which includes more information on each action, timeline and reporting.

This document was designed by George Thomas and Jacinta Oakley under the guidance of Dr Fayen d'Evie. The DIAP logo typeface was developed by a group of students from the Experimental Typography Workshop of the RMIT Master of Communication Design: George Thomas, Chen Bai, Jarred Keith Labrooy, Yu-Pei Chang, Thuy Chi Doan, Bowen Lang, Yew Qi Yap, and Sinae Yu. It was resolved to a brandmark by Chen Bai and Jarred Keith Labrooy.

Alternative Formats

This plan is available in alternative formats on the Arts House website.

There are PDF, Word, Summary, Easy English and Plain Language versions.

There is also an audio version and an Auslan video summary of this plan.

Language

This plan uses the terms Deaf and Disabled people and person with a disability.

Arts House's Access Advisory Group decided on the language used in this plan.

We acknowledge people use different language to identify themselves and their communities. These terms change in different contexts, and we will always respect self-identification.

We recognise a broad definition of disability. Disability includes physical disability, intellectual disability and sensory disability. It also includes neurodivergence, mental illness, chronic illness, and cognitive disability.

Arts House respects the varying ways D/deaf, D/deafblind and hard of hearing people may wish to self-identity. We use 'Deaf' to respect the rights of the Deaf community that identify as part of a cultural and linguistic minority connected through their shared language, Auslan.

Throughout this document, Disability Inclusion Action Plan will be is shortened to DIAP or plan.

Purpose

The purpose of this Disability Inclusion Action Plan is to strive for a model of disability inclusion based in solidarity and Disability Justice. We want to ensure disability inclusion goes beyond compliance and competence. We recognise that Disabled people face multiple intersecting oppressions.

This plan will:

- Guide Arts House's work and make sure it's accessible, inclusive, and anti-ableist with actions that reduce barriers for Deaf and Disabled people.

- Inform Deaf and Disabled people on what to expect of Arts House's commitment to inclusivity and access.

- Commit Arts House to consultation and input from Deaf and Disabled community, respecting the knowledge, creativity, and expertise Disabled people bring.

- Embed a culture of improvement on disability inclusion, that ensures accountability to Deaf and Disabled communities, artists, audiences and staff.

- Commit to safe working environments for staff, artists, audiences and communities with regards to Covid-19 and other communicable diseases, ensuring disability and immuno-compromised communities are regularly consulted.

Introduction

As a key program of the City of Melbourne, Arts House is committed to a future where our diverse communities can be celebrated for their role in creating a vibrant cultural capital like Melbourne.

Arts House believes in the Social Model of Disability, where disability is caused by barriers in our society. Those barriers can include the physical environment, social norms, the ways we communicate, and the attitudes people have. It's our responsibility to create programs and opportunities that reduce these barriers to enable full participation by all people.

The most relevant work we create relies on the diversity of the people involved. In creating this DIAP we've drawn on knowledge learnt from our first DIAP in 2019-2022, our consultations with Deaf and Disabled people, and everything we've learnt from our sibling venues Artplay and SIGNAL.

This plan expresses how much we want to achieve over the next five years. We created it in consultation with Deaf and Disabled people in the arts community alongside Arts Access Victoria. This DIAP is informed by City of Melbourne's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan 2020 – 2024.

This plan has five focus areas:

- Culture and Employment

- Education and Training

- Creative Program

- Communication

- Venue

We view this plan as a living, working document and hope the ambitions contained within grow in step with its goals, needs and priorities, and the feedback we receive from the Deaf and Disabled community.

We aim to push beyond compliance and imagine new possibilities for contemporary art and the arts industry that will come in collaboration with community.

Who we are

Arts House is venue located in North Melbourne. We support artists to develop their new art ideas, commission major works, and provide ways for artists and audiences to connect.

We build capacity from the ground up with a commitment to the care and wellbeing of our artists, audiences and each other. We embed practices of fair and transparent payment for artists, access, safety and sustainability in all areas of our work.

Our work is underpinned by learning from the renewed calls for sovereignty and self-determination by all First Nations peoples, including traditional custodians on the lands on which Arts House stands: the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nation, and our neighbours, the Boon Wurrung peoples.

Contributors

Embracing the principle "nothing about us without us" originating from the Disability Rights community, Arts House believes Deaf and Disabled knowledge and expertise is central to good access work.

This plan was developed with Deaf and Disabled consultants. We used a co-design process with co-facilitated sessions led by Arts Access Victoria and Arts House.

Arts House Access Advisory Group

This is a group of Deaf and Disabled creative artists, writers and policy makers.

They have committed to help establish, consult and review key actions of the plan for two years.

Members may also be involved with the Arts House program. This means their input is deep and multi-faceted across Arts House's work.

This group includes:

- **Artemis Muñoz** (they/them) is a proud queer, bi-racial, disabled multidisciplinary artist working in independent theatre and cabaret passionate about pushing for better access and representation for the communities they are a part of.

- **Hannah Morphy-Walsh** (any pronouns) is a storyteller and member of the Footscray Community Arts Centre Board. She lives her Deaf, disabled life on the unceded lands of the sovereign Kulin Nations.

- **Jonathan Craig** (he/him) is a writer, policy advisor, audio producer and accessibility consultant. A lifelong science fiction fan, he's interested in exploring the consequences of post-humanism and the future of disability.

- **TextaQueen** (they/them) is a multi-genre artist of Goan descent living on unceded Wurundjeri land currently developing TheySwarm, a peer-mentorship artist residency for diverse and disabled artists.

- **Thomas Banks** (he/him) is a writer, artist, dancer and a business owner with mild Cerebral Palsy who often dabbles in and out of the Melbourne comedy scene.

Co-Facilitators – Arts Access Victoria

- **Margaret Mayhew** (she/her/they/them) is a queer visual artist and performer who has lived with ableism and chronic pain for 35 years. They teach at university and work at Arts Access Victoria.

- **Janice Florence** (she/her) Artistic Director and Co-Founder of Weave Movement Theatre, Janice has been a pioneering force in the field of inclusive dance and physical theatre for the past 30 years. They work at Arts Access Victoria as Manager Consultation and Training and have 20 years of Disability advocacy experience.

Consultants

- **Catherine Dunn** (she/her) is inspired by her lived experiences as a Deaf Queer woman, Catherine is passionate about connecting people through her work both in the disability advocacy sector and as an emerging artist.

- We thank former Access Advisory Group members for their consultation on the Arts House Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2019 – 2022: Fayen d'Evie, Tom Middleditch, Hannah Morphy-Walsh, Luke Duncan King and Leisa Prowd.

"As Manager of Consultancy and Training at Arts Access Victoria, I have been involved for more than three years supporting a dynamic process to improve access for Deaf and Disabled audiences and artists instigated by the management of Arts House. Through authentic commitment to their Disability Inclusion Action Plan, Arts House has opened up unprecedented opportunities for Deaf and Disabled artists, in the form of their Warehouse Residency Program.

The Residency gives generous support to develop work in a range of art forms and to initiate a blossoming of work by Deaf and Disabled artists. The DIAP and the Residency were developed in a committed collaboration and co-design process with Deaf and Disabled artists, with every effort made to make the process fully accessible, supported by Arts Access Vic. I cannot speak more highly of their willingness to listen and to learn and to respect advice from widely diverse artists."

Janice Florence, Arts Access Victoria

Arts House Access Working Group

Staff from different parts of Arts House will work on the actions committed in this DIAP. Arts House has an Access Working Group with staff who represent different skills across management, creative, marketing, venue and production, and champion access within their respective areas.

This group meets fortnightly to make sure that we act on the DIAP strategies and goals and follow our timeline.

This group includes:

- **Sarah Rowbottam** (she/her), Creative Producer

- **Adam Seymour** (he/they), Public Engagement and FOH Operations Manager

- **Bart Mangan** (he/him), Production Coordinator

- **Lucy Crossett** (she/her), Audience Engagement Coordinator

- **Bas Van De Kraats** (he/him), Business Administrator.

We thank former staff members for their input and participation in this group since it commenced in 2019: Will Box, Luke Gleeson and Ian Mcanally.

Budget commitment

Arts House has a dedicated access budget with money for

- artist and audience services/ support

- creative access consultation

- communications

- production

- advisory groups

Access is also built into each project budget. We encourage artists and companies to prioritise fundraising for access expenses at the start of a project. If funds need to be raised for a specific project this becomes an action in the DIAP.

Building-specific costs are sought annually via City of Melbourne's Disability Discrimination Act capital works budget. Learning and development costs are sought via City of Melbourne's Learning and Organisational Development budget.

Monitoring

Arts House is committed to seeking ongoing consultation and feedback from Deaf and Disabled communities throughout the implementation of this plan and its actions.

The Arts House Access Working Group steers the implementation and review of actions at fortnightly working group meetings, as well as fortnightly Arts House team meetings.

The group will report on actions every six months and meet annually with the Arts House Access Advisory Group, Arts Access Victoria and Creative Program Lead to review the actions and implementation of the plan. An annual summary and progress report in text and Auslan will be published on the Arts House website.

Arts House provides quarterly updates to Senior Policy Officer Access and Inclusion against accessibility initiatives in the City of Melbourne Disability Access and Inclusion Plan. Annual reporting to Council will be facilitated via presentations at Creative City Councillor Portfolio and Disability Advisory Committee meetings.

The DIAP will be comprehensively reviewed and revised every five years, following appropriate consultation processes with the Deaf and Disabled community and other relevant stakeholders.

A summary report of key achievements identified by Arts House from the 2019 – 2022 report can be found here.

Feedback

Arts House values community feedback on our progress in meeting the goals and actions outlined in this plan. We recognise that the experience of disability and accessibility is diverse and unique to individuals, and people still face barriers. We strive to remove as many of these barriers as possible but understand we won't always get it right. We are open to receiving constructive feedback and encourage individuals and organisations to share their thoughts and experiences to ensure our continued improvement.

Feedback can be shared in the following ways:

1. Online survey (anonymous)

2. Providing feedback over the phone (03) 9322 3720 to Arts House reception

3. Providing feedback in Auslan. Arts House can coordinate translation

4. Emailing artshouse@melbourne.vic.gov.au with your feedback

Arts House will acknowledge receipt of all feedback. You are welcome to request a status update on your feedback and how it has been considered.

All feedback will be reviewed at Arts House Access Working Group meetings, Arts House staff meetings, and be available to the Access Advisory Group at the annual review.

Contact us

Phone (03) 9322 3720

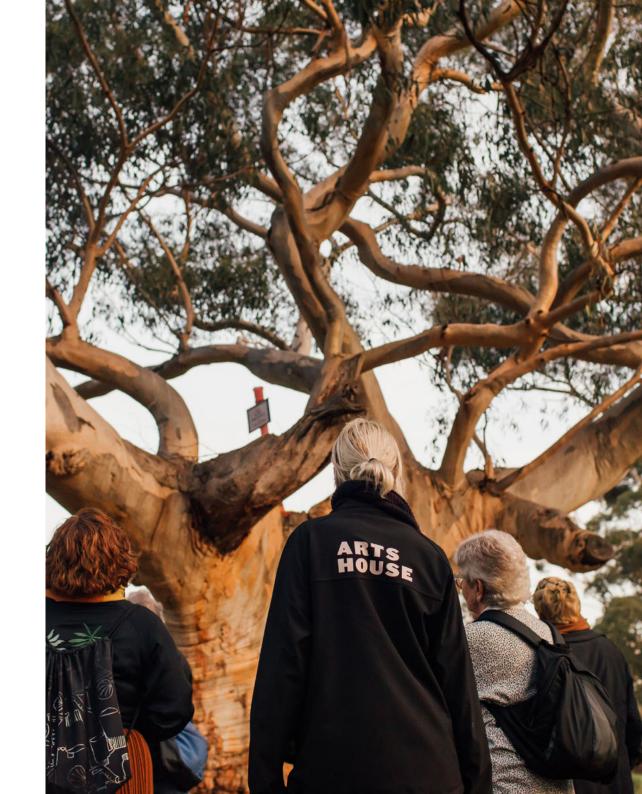Email artshouse@melbourne.vic.gov.au

If you need help to speak or listen: Contact Arts House at the City of Melbourne through the National Relay Service or NRS.

Call the NRS help desk
1800 555 660

Go to the NRS website
communications.gov.au/accesshub/nr

Image: *Ruth Crow Walks* by Lorna Hannan and Hannah Morphy-Walsh, Commissioned by Arts House as part of Refuge 2021, Image credit: Anne Moffat

Key Actions and Focus Areas

Focus Area 1: Culture and Employment

Who Arts House employs and engages

Arts House will employ more Deaf and Disabled people as staff, contractors, casuals and consultants. Our culture is driven by who is part of our organisation and who gets to be part of making decisions about our work. Arts House will be a safe place for people to talk about their access needs and ask for things that will make their work easier, safer, or more comfortable for them.

We want to make sure this DIAP is a priority. It can't sit on a shelf in the background, and it can't rely on a few individual staff members. We need to make sure that accessibility is part of all our work for everyone.

Image: *Running Machine* by Yuiko Masukawa, Sam Mcgilp, Harrison Hall, Makoto Uemura & Kazuhiko Hiwa, Commissioned by Arts House for BLEED 2022, Photo credit: Tiffany Garvie

1.1   We will work with City of Melbourne People and Culture Branch and Deaf and Disabled people to review the way Arts House hires people.

We will get rid of barriers and bias by:

- letting people apply in different formats

- having flexible application timelines

- removing ableist selection criteria

- using Plain English and accessible language

In job ads we will highlight the things that could make the job more accessible, like working part time, job sharing, and being able to work from home.

1.2   We will create a summary for new job roles in plain language and advertise it on the Arts House website. The summary should also highlight the things that could make the job more accessible, like working part time, job sharing, and being able to work from home.

1.3   We will include Deaf and Disabled people on employment selection panels.

1.4   When we're recruiting for any kind of role we'll actively seek out Deaf and Disabled people to apply. We'll build on existing disability networks, partners and advisors to reach people. City of Melbourne People and Culture will keep advertising new roles to disability employment agencies.

1.5   When we offer someone a new role we'll give them the chance to talk about their contract in person or online.

1.6   We will advocate for a full time Access Coordinator who identifies as Deaf or Disabled. This person would work across Arts House, SIGNAL and ArtPlay to advocate for Deaf and Disabled artists and audiences. They would also help create a safe accessible environment and see that we follow through on all our DIAP actions.

1.7   We will make sure the ideas from the DIAP are part of Arts House's culture. We will keep access as a regular topic on the agenda for all our fortnightly team and weekly program meetings.

1.8   We will have a diverse representation of Deaf and Disabled people on Arts House advisory groups, peer selection, and co-design processes.

1.9   We will keep sharing what we learn and looking for ways to work with Artplay, SIGNAL, and Libraries through annual meetings.

1.10   Keep upholding good health and hygiene practices at Arts House, including but not limited to following COVID-19 instructions from the State government:

- seeking advice from immunocompromised and disability communities

- providing masks and hand sanitizer on entry to venue

- encouraging people to wear masks on our website and venue signs

Focus Area 2: Learning and Training

**How Arts House provides ongoing training
and learning opportunities**

Arts House is committed to being a safe workplace
for artists, staff and audiences. We are committed to
changing ableist attitudes and getting rid of practices that
discriminate against Deaf and Disabled people.

We will make sure no one is excluded from training
opportunities. We will regularly give everyone a chance to
give and get feedback. We will make sure staff have access
to a range of different perspectives from different Disabled
communities including:

- different types of disabilities

- multiply-marginalised Disabled people

- a mix of trainers from Disabled-led organisations and
  independent Disabled trainers.

When we can, we will invite artists, contractors, and other
teams in our Branch to come to the trainings we organise too.

Image: *Hg57 Urban Heat Island* by Latai Taumoepeau, Presented by
Arts House for Refuge 2017 Heatwave, Image credit: Bryony Jackson

2.1   We will create a disability and accessibility training program. We'll review it every year, and all staff, including casuals, will have equal chance to participate in all training and refresher courses.

Type of training relevant to Arts House includes, but is not limited to:

- d/Deaf awareness

- Autism and Neurodiversity

- Sighted Guide

- Competing access needs

- Augmentative and Alternative Communication (e.g., communication boards, text to speech devices)

- Cultural Safety in a Disability context

- Basic Auslan

- Mental health and trauma-informed work

2.2   When new staff join we'll give them an access info pack with a copy of the DIAP and other accessibility resources. The Access Working Group will meet with new staff to talk about the DIAP, answer their questions, and hear their ideas.

All staff can ask to come to the fortnightly Access Working Group meetings to share updates on actions or give feedback.

The Access Working group will share what they've learnt and give and get feedback from all staff at staff meetings, project debriefs, and Branch meetings.

2.3   As part of the CultureLAB and The Warehouse Residency programs we will include ways for artists to learn more about:

- making their art accessible

- creating an access rider

- other relevant topics

We'll also create a list of accessibility resources gathered from Arts House training and workshops and make sure we consistently share it with artists we work with.

2.4   We'll make sure all staff are trained in safety processes for fire and emergency exits, including what mobility aid users should do, and what to do if a lift breaks down.

Focus Area 3: Creative Program

How Arts House applies principles of access and inclusion to the creative program

We have a vital role in supporting artists to think about accessibility from the very beginning of their idea. We will support artists to create a more meaningful experience for audiences and Deaf and Disabled communities.

We know it's important that we have clear pathways for Deaf and Disabled artists to develop their skills and create and show their work on their own terms. We will keep supporting Disabled artists by commissioning them through The Warehouse Residency and other programs. We aim to be flexible, to respect lived experience, and be a safe caring environment for all artists however they work with us.

Image: *I Am (Not) This Body* by Leisa Prowd, Commissioned by Arts House through The Warehouse Residency and Co-Presented by Melbourne Fringe 2023, Image credit: Tom Noble

3.1　We will keep supporting projects led by Deaf and Disabled artists and curators. We will try to make our work sustainable and to keep improving. We will seek out and invite Deaf and Disabled artists and curators to be part of our Creative Program. We will also support and encourage Deaf and Disabled artists to submit Expressions of Interest (EOI) to our development programs.

The Warehouse Residency runs from 2022 – 2027. It's a five-year program we're leading to commission new work by Deaf and Disabled artists. We will take the things we learn through that program and make them part of all our Creative programs.

3.2　Before our Season launches we will ask Deaf and Disabled people how we can make them more accessible. We will ask how we can target Deaf and Disabled communities for events and performances. We will act on what they say.

3.3　We will give artists part of CultureLAB and The Warehouse Residency the tools they need to consider making as many elements of their work as accessible as possible. This includes the chance to consult with accessibility experts.

We will keep working with artists at Arts House to prioritise access throughout the stages of creating their work. This will include disabled representation in creative teams and making sure access costs are part of their budget.

3.4　We will ensure all artists working at Arts House have access to support services. These include interpreters, captioning, transport, access equipment, and other needs the artist requires.

Artists can make access requests and we'll remain flexible and responsive because access is evolving.

3.5   We'll make sure we have a diverse representation of Deaf and Disabled creatives across all our programs. Our EOI opportunities, call-outs, and applications will be as accessible as possible, including:

- having disability partner organisations offer people support with their EOIs

- giving information in a range of communication formats

- soft deadlines and flexible submission dates where possible

- ability to submit an EOI in a range of formats including recorded meetings, audio, video, Auslan, text.

3.6   We will keep offering digital programming so audiences can engage with contemporary art at home or remotely. We will work with artists to present digital works or consider digital elements of their work.

3.7   We will explore partnerships for co-commissioning and co-presenting Disability led work. We will keep learning about new approaches to access and inclusion. We will keep learning from Disabled activists and artists. We will keep sharing our own experiences and what we learn from our work.

3.8   We will negotiate with artists for specific measures for access and inclusion for people with compromised immunity. This is to recognise and minimise the impacts of COVID-19 and ongoing pandemics. For example:

- audience capacity limits

- masked hours

- encouraging fragrance free events

Focus Area 4: Communication

Promote inclusion and participation in the community of Deaf and Disabled people

The first edition of Arts House DIAP 2019 - 2022 saw major access improvements to the way we communicate including:

- achieving WCAG 2.0 web accessibility for the Arts House website

- making companion card tickets bookable via the website

- consistently using access symbols on event pages and social media

These changes are now part of how Arts House communicates online and across our ticketing platform. Moving forward, our focus will be on building relationships with Deaf and Disabled people, having a more diverse audience, and establishing Arts House as a trusted venue that the Deaf and Disabled community can rely on for accessible events and venue experience.

Image: *Here We Are Amongst You by Rawcus, Presented by Arts House 2022, Image credit: Aaron Walker*

4.1   We will promote the DIAP on our website and within City of Melbourne internally. The plan will be available in different formats including:

- Audio

- Easy English

- Auslan

- Plain text and PDF

- Summary

- Plain Language

4.2   We will find ways to reach out to diverse communities and invite them to be part of our audience. We will include input from Deaf and Disabled consultants. Strategies could include:

- ways for target communities to learn about the program that are tailored for them e.g. morning teas

- partnerships with Deaf and Disabled organisations

- Auslan / Access ambassadors

- including clear information about our access services on our ticketing platform

- other ways to build Arts House's reputation and get rid of any barriers to accessing our venue

- communicating about our events in relevant languages including Auslan

4.3   All print and digital content will be guided by accessible design principles. We will be consistent with publishing access symbols, image descriptions, ALT text and closed captioning when we promote events.

4.4   Our social media posts and website content should highlight sensory elements like audio, visual, tactile or other sensory features of a performance or artwork, e.g. audio snippets for blind/ low vision communities.

4.5   We will create strategies for promoting Arts House programming to communities who might not be online. This could include, but not limited to:

- letterbox drops in North Melbourne

- street and building posters

- radio advertising

- regular articles in North-West City News

- neighbourhood morning teas with Season launches

4.6   When we advertise an event we will make sure we include access notes and a social story at least two weeks before the show starts. We'll link to the access info in all pre-show communications and event reminders.

4.7   Arts House will always provide key information and access details about meetings of any scale so people can prepare themselves to attend, for example:

- inside/outside or ventilated space

- communication services are offered including Auslan

- if meet and assist is offered

- running order and sense of what will happen on the day

- any scents or disruptions happening in the building

4.8   The accessibility page on Arts House website will have the most up to date information about visiting the venue, open hours, and access keys and sensory maps. The website will also include a range of ways people can meet with us – in person, phone, Zoom, text chat, etc.

4.9   Our ticketing pathways will be accessible, including making it easy to book with a Companion Card, options to book online and via phone, and access tickets remain at the lowest price point.

4.10   Following State guidelines, maintain COVID-19 safe practice messaging on signs, pre-show communication and website. Continue to provide full refunds to ticket holders with COVID-19 illness or symptoms.

Focus Area 5: Venue

How Arts House works towards making its physical and online spaces accessible to artists and audiences

Arts House is committed to keep improving our venue, digital spaces, and facilities so that all artists and audiences can comfortably use our spaces. This includes the way we work day-to-day. Sometimes we can't make changes by ourselves and need to seek help. When that happens we'll speak up about what needs to happen and advocate for improvements in our environment, technologies and equipment.

Image: *I am here, You are there, I miss you* by Neika Lehman, Commissioned by Arts House for Refuge 2021, Photo credit: Bryony Jackson

5.1   Advocate for accessible public transport and increased accessible parking near the venue.

5.2   Advocate for an accessible wheelchair ramp at North Melbourne Town Hall Queensberry Street entrance.

5.3   Increase visibility and maintain independent public access for all step-free entrances to North Melbourne Town Hall located on George Johnson Lane and Errol Street.

5.4   Install alarm panel on Errol Street entrance to allow for independent access for artists and staff.

5.5   Update permanent signs to include braille and directions to building entry points. Ensure opening hours and directions about entry points are up to date and easy to find.

5.6   Make sure we have a Quiet Space that's available during venue and opening hours. It will be clearly advertised on signs across the venue, website and pre-event information. Artists and staff will know about the Quiet Space and what it's for.

5.7   Maintain up-to-date access info packs. Work with Deaf and Disabled access consultants to develop an access key for Arts House venue.

5.8   Ask visitors about their views and experience of our venues (including getting in the venue) and act on their feedback to create a welcoming and accessible venue and surrounds.

5.9   Consult with Disabled people (especially neurodivergent Disabled people) to find out how we can improve sensory accessibility at our venues and act on their feedback. This could include noise and adjustable lighting and we will focus on how to deal with competing access needs.

5.10   Make our venue safer for everyone by improving ventilation and maintaining safe air quality standards in enclosed spaces where possible.

5.11   Make sure common spaces are accessible for a range of access needs and make reasonable adjustments to areas identified by access consultants including, but not limited to:

- bar height in foyer

- table and chair options with varying heights for events and foyer

- different sized chair options for events and foyer

- general kitchen access to appliances, fridge, etc

- we'll undertake further consultation if new adjustments need to be made.

5.12   Investigate and trial the use of innovative digital technologies to improve experiences for people with disabilities attending events at the venue or at home.

5.13   Research and identify technical equipment that will improve the way our access service work at the venue and events, for example - audio description equipment kit.

Glossary

This glossary includes definitions of words and phrases that are vital to this plan and align with the Social Model of Disability. We sought advice from our Access Advisory Group and Arts Access Victoria as part of the consultation process. Definitions align with the context of Arts House's work.

Accessibility is the practice of making information, activities, and/or environments sensible, meaningful, and usable for as many people as possible (from see, write, hear). Accessibility can include universal and/or adaptive design. It includes consulting with Disabled people to find out our access needs, and planning for these needs to be met, and providing information if they cannot be met.

Access rider is a document or statement that outlines the access requests of an individual. An access rider outlines important issues that might pose barriers. It allows both artists and organisations to feel comfortable working together. (Reference: unlimited UK)

Access guide is a document with more details about what you can expect to hear, see, feel and do during an event. This document contains access information, warnings, transport, venue details and COVID safety.

Ableism refers to barriers, beliefs and discrimination against Deaf and Disabled people. Ableism is the oppression of Disabled people - it is systemic and individual, direct and indirect, intentional and unintentional.

Anti-ableism identifies and changes the barriers and discrimination experienced by Disabled people. It is about systemic change and equity for Disabled people. It is different to 'Disability inclusion' which may seek to adapt or augment ableist design or systems to allow Disabled people to take part.

Audio Description is a service for people who are blind or have low vision to access performance, film and visual art. Audio description can offered with an audio receiver or an audio describer sitting next to the person. During gaps in dialogue, it describes visual elements such as scenes, settings, actions and costumes.

Auslan is the language of the Deaf community in Australia. Deaf and Hard of Hearing people use Auslan as well as partners and family members, Auslan students and Auslan interpreters. Many Auslan users have English as a second language and cannot rely on written English to access information. (Reference: Auslan.org.au).

Autism affects the way individuals interact with others and how they experience the world around them. Every autistic person is different and each person has unique strengths and challenges when processing senses, thinking, moving, communicating and socialising. (Reference: amaze.org.au)

Briefing is the process of sharing key information about an event to staff, contractors, participants or audiences. Briefing can occur in private or public, in small or large groups, or in written or verbal form. It is an important part of creating cultural safety.

Debriefing is the process of reflecting on a project by staff, contractors, participants or audiences, after an event has occurred. Debriefing can occur in private or public, in small or large groups, or in written or verbal form. It is an important part of creating cultural safety.

Competing Access Needs Different Deaf and Disabled people might have access needs that conflict. For example, a Deaf person relying on brighter light to read lips Vs an Autistic person relying on dimmer light to avoid sensory overload. Planning for access involves talking with Deaf and Disabled people, and finding ways to address competing access needs. This includes providing information about the lighting and sound levels of an event so Disabled people can choose if and how they take part.

Constructive feedback is used to share a situation or experience that allows people to find a solution to any problems that may arise. Constructive feedback needs all parties to have the physical and emotional space to communicate. Ableism is often traumatic for Disabled people, and people may need time and space to be able to communicate about their experience. Trust is required for individuals to feel heard and requests acted on.

Cultural Safety A person feels culturally safe when they can embody and express their cultural identity and be understood with dignity by others. Even in spaces where racism and prejudice are not express, ignorance about a person's culture can be unsafe. Cultural safety, like all forms of safety, is difficult to define because of the varied needs that people hold, both as groups and as Deaf and Disabled individuals. What helps one person to feel safe may not support another person. The first goal of cultural safety is shared understanding about a person or group's needs.

Deaf Arts House respects the varying ways D/deaf, D/deafblind and hard of hearing people may wish to self-identity. We use 'Deaf' to respect the rights of the Deaf community that identify as part of a cultural and linguistic minority connected through their shared language, Auslan.

Disabled is used in identify first language to describe Disabled people. It acknowledges Disability Pride and individual's history as a community in challenging Disabling structures and barriers. Some people prefer person first language like Person With a Disability (PWD) or Person Living with Disability.

Disability networks refers to Deaf and Disabled individuals, advocates, and Deaf-led or Disabled-led organisations and community groups who have or may engage with Arts House as advisers, patrons, consultants or promoters. It also includes the networks of individuals and groups linked to the Arts House Disability Advisory Group.

Disability Discrimination Act is a Commonwealth Act passed in 1992. It prohibits discrimination against Disabled people in jobs, education, public space, accommodation etc. Discrimination is defined to include failing to make reasonable adjustments for the person. Complaints are referred to the Australian Human Rights Commission. The Disability Discrimination Act is different to the Victorian Disability Act (2006) which is a set of legislated guidelines for systemic reform for organisations based in Victoria, and linked to the Inclusive Victoria State Disability Plan (2022-2026).

Disability Justice Building on the disability rights movement, disability justice acknowledges the intersectionality of disabled people who belong to additional marginalised communities. It aims to create ongoing change for people with disabilities by taking a comprehensive approach to help secure rights for people who identify as Black, First Nations, global diaspora and LGBTQIA+ communities, as well as people experiencing incarceration, financial hardship and social exclusion. Coined by disabled queer collective Sins Invalid in 2015, the term recognises these diverse structures of oppression and how they interact and impact each other, and finds ways to create ongoing change for multiple marginalised groups.

Easy English is a way of delivering visual documents for people with barriers to reading written English. These barriers may be sensory, intellectual or language based. It is sometimes called Easy Read. Easy English uses images to illustrate key ideas and concepts. It uses short sentences, simple words with a large font and a lot of space. Easy English documents need to be prepared by an accredited translator.

Flexible refers to being responsive to immediate feedback or changing circumstances when implementing aspects of this plan.

Plain English is a way of communicating in written or spoken English which is easy and quick to understand. Its goal is to make sure the audience can understand the information the first time they read or hear it. Government websites and many organisations are using plain English for public documents. Plain English uses simple, direct sentences and avoids or explains complex terminology. (Reference: Centre for Inclusive Design)

Immunocompromised refers to anyone who has an immune system more susceptible to illness, infectious diseases, including COVID-19. Immunocompromised people may develop further illness, or severe symptoms if they are exposed to virus, bacteria, chemicals or scents that most people experience as a minor inconvenience, or not at all.

Inclusion is the process of allowing someone to share in an activity or privilege. In the context of JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) work, inclusion is strongly connected to diversity initiatives, whereby organisations seek to rectify the exclusion of marginalised groups by inviting their presence and involvement. Inclusion frameworks do not address the fundamental power dynamics that created an exclusive environment in the first place, and therefore are not sufficient to address inequity and injustice within organisations or societal groups at large. Furthermore, many communities are seeking self-determination and autonomy rather than inclusion into the very institutions and systems that cause harm. Many Deaf and Disabled people prefer to focus on Equity.

Intersectional describes how multiple systems of exclusion and injustice impact many people. It refers to how ableism intersects with racism, and/or sexism and/or homophobia and other forms of exclusion. Intersectionality addresses the separation and siloing of Equity and Inclusion planning in many organisations.

Lived Experience refers to the experiences that people have of disability and ableism. Ableist systems rely on medical diagnosis and classification of Disabled people. Disabled advocacy centres Deaf and Disabled people's experiences and not diagnosis. This means we can address the barriers that people with similar experiences may also face.

Living document refers to a document that is regularly updated through a review and consultation process. It is useful for Disability advocacy because the language that we use often changes. It is useful for this DIAP, because it can ensure that actions can respond and adapt to monitoring and feedback from Disabled communities.

Mitigate is a way of reducing the impact of barriers for some Disabled people. If a barrier cannot be eliminated, a plan will try to mitigate it. For example, stairs can be mitigated by installing a lift, holding events on the ground floor, or having remote access. Mitigation is also used where conflicting access needs may present a barrier for some Disabled people, but are necessary for inclusion of other people.

Neurodiversity is a framework for thinking about the different ways our minds work. Developed by neurodivergent people, it is a rejection of shame and stigma. Neurodiversity affirms that there is value in difference.

Neurodivergence is a term for when a person's brain works in ways that differ significantly from dominant societal standards of 'normal'. Some neurodivergence can include Autism, ADHD/ADD, Dyslexia, Synesthesia, and Hyperlexia. Like many communities some neurodivergent people identify with the term Disabled and some don't for a variety of reasons.

Reconciliation refers to policies aimed at addressing the dispossession, exclusion and oppression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples by colonialism. Reconciliation involves meeting with Indigenous custodians of the location of any organization, acknowledging Indigenous sovereignty, and promoting self-determined social and cultural renewal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Recruitment at Arts House may involve three things: engagement of contractors in a specific project; direct hiring of short-term casual staff by Arts House, or liaising with City of Melbourne for employment of long-term staff.

Simple English is ways of communicating in English with people who have barriers to reading written or hearing spoken English. These barriers may be sensory, intellectual or language based. Simple English may include Easy English documents or Plain English documents or spoken words.

Self-identification is very important for Disabled people and Disability Advocacy. Disabled people are often diagnosed, defined and classified by non-Disabled 'experts'. These experts are part of medical, education and welfare systems which silence Disabled people. These systems have often excluded us from social, cultural and political participation. Disabled advocates self-identify and self-describe as a way of claiming agency. This helps us survive and challenge these ableist systems.

Self-determined relates to the phrase 'nothing about us without us'. It means that Disabled people define, describe, create and have control over plans, events or creative expressions with Disabled content.

Social Model of Disability was developed by people with Disability and is recognised by the UN. It says that people are disabled by barriers in society, or people's attitudes. It is different to the Medical model of disability. The medical model says people are disabled by their impairments or differences. The medical model focuses on individual diagnosis and correction or adaptation. The social model focuses on addressing structural and social barriers, so people with disability have more independence, choice and control.

Trauma Informed practice consists of an awareness that a large number of Disabled and marginalized people are living with the impacts of overwhelming experiences of harm, often by organisations and institution. It follows the principles of embedding safety, trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment into planning events and engagement, and focuses on developing relationships with marginalized communities. (Reference: blue knot Foundation)

Arts House Specific Glossary

Contemporary performance/art is used to describe hybrid performance and artworks works. They cross the fields of Experimental Theatre, Dance, Video Art, Visual Art, Music, Installation and Performance Art. They often do not adhere to one specific field's practice.

Contractors are people who provide a paid service for Arts House or City of Melbourne. They can be employed by another company or can be sole traders. Some contractors will only come to Arts House for one job, others will come in regularly.

Casuals are people employed by Arts House on a casual basis. This means they do not have fixed working hours, but work shifts when required. Examples of casuals are crew and front of house staff who work at Arts House when an event is on.

Consultants are people from outside the organisation who provide advice to Arts House. They get paid for their services, and can be engaged for specific projects or in an ongoing capacity.

Staff are people employed by City of Melbourne for the Arts House program. Staff can be permanent or casual. Permanent staff work regular hours every week, casuals do not have a fixed work pattern.

Access Working Group is a group of Arts House staff who meet every two weeks and represent different skills across management, creative, marketing, venue and production, and champion access within their respective areas and steer actions in the plan.

The Warehouse Residency is a five-year commitment from Arts House. It centres and celebrates the creation and presentation of new work by D/deaf and Disabled artists. The program upholds principles of flexibility, self-determination, respecting lived experience and creating an environment of safety and care. Arts House will support two projects each year, until 2027.

CultureLAB is a creative development program to create new work. It supports independent artists, collectives, and small-medium organisations. CultureLAB is one of the pathways through which Arts House commissions work for our presentation seasons.

Expression of Interest (EOI) is an application for a project or proposal at Arts House. An EOI might include information such as how the applicant plans to develop the project/idea and who is involved. It might include what the audience experience might be, access requirements/ requests and a budget. Arts House opens EOIs each year for The Warehouse Residency and CultureLAB. Applicants can apply in a variety of formats – video, audio, written, Auslan.

References

Arts Access Victoria 'Choose Art Glossary'

Arts House 'Disability Inclusion and Action Plan 2019-2021'

Caroline Bowditch 'Cultural Safety in a Disability Context' Arts Access Victoria training

Auslan Signbank 'History of Auslan'

Australian Human Rights Commission 'Disability discrimination'

Autistic Self Advocacy Network Australia New Zealand

Blue Knot Foundation 'Building a Trauma informed World'

Centre for Inclusive Design 'Easy English vs Plain English'

City of Melbourne 'Disability Inclusion and Access Plan'

Neuro-Diversity Educator, 'Neurodiversity terms' on Copyright 2019 Sonny Jane Wise @livedexperienceeducator all rights reserved

Paula Abood 'Understanding the Culturally Diverse Creative Landscape and Intersectionality' Presentation by for Diversity Arts Australia Fair Play Regional Vic, 2023

Ruth de Souza and Robyn Higgins 'Taking Action for Cultural Safety' 2020

State Government of Victoria 'Inclusive Victoria State Disability Plan'

Image: *More Than Words Can Say* by Sam Martin and Catherine Dunn
Commissioned by Arts House through The Warehouse Residency 2022, Photo credit: Jacinta Oaten