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# Building Access Requirements

## Handbook – for functions and events

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## Introduction

This handbook provides advice to assist in ensuring that all employees have equitable access to venues for functions/events hosted or supported by the Department of Education and Training.

Events include, but are not limited to, meetings, workshops, focus groups and conferences.

When organising a function/event, there are two main considerations:

- I. Who is attending?
- II. What requirements are necessary to allow all people to attend?

On the day of the function/event, it is a good practice to have someone wait in the reception area to greet and direct participants, check access to the meeting room, and remove any obstacles or barriers that may pose a problem to participants.

To enable everyone to interact and communicate effectively:

- inform participants if a person with a sensory disability attends (with the individual's permission)
- introduce each participant for the benefit of people who have vision impairments
- provide nametags in large print to assist people to easily identify names during introductions and the course of the meeting.



# Access Requirements

## 1. Venue staff awareness

An accessible venue is not solely concerned with technical specifications; it also includes the ability of the venue's staff to respond equitably and appropriately to the requirements of people with disabilities. When booking a venue enquire whether their staff are familiar with managing accessibility issues.

## 2. Path of travel

Internal access to a venue begins at main public entrances and should extend through a continuous accessible and definable path of travel to all relevant areas of the building including meeting rooms, bathrooms, dining areas and any other part of the building to be used during the course of the function/event.

The path of travel within a building must be unobstructed and able to be utilised by all people. Elements of a continuous accessible and definable path of travel include:

- clear and unobstructed entrances to the building, with no gradient changes and no steps
- a ramp wide enough for use by people in wheelchairs or people with assistance animals such as Guide or Hearing dogs.

The specification of what is considered minimum allowable design of a path of travel is located in Australian Standard 1428.1, which specifies:

"4.4 Continuous accessible path of travel (access way) is an uninterrupted path of travel to or within a building, providing access to all required facilities.

NOTE: For non-ambulatory people, this accessible path does not incorporate any step, stairway, turnstile, revolving door, escalator or other impediment which would prevent it from being safely negotiated by people with disabilities." (AS 1428.1—2001, P. 11)"

A continuous accessible and definable path of travel must extend from local parking, drop-off points and public transport to the accessible entrance. The proximity of parking, drop-off points or public transport is as important as their accessibility. Longer paths of travel will tire or confuse some people with disabilities.

## 3. Car parks

Car parks should contain parking spaces designated for vehicles used by people with disabilities. Designated accessible parking spaces should be well signed and located at the closest point to each accessible entrance.



#### **4. Approaches and entrances**

All public entrances should be accessible to all people and include ramps to ensure access for people with disabilities. Ensure that accessible entrances to the venue have no mats, furniture, revolving doors, artistic fittings or features that obstruct the path of travel.

#### **5. Lifts**

Passenger lifts should serve all people and allow for independent operation by the user. All lifts should have audible signals to indicate that the doors are opening, closing, or that the lift has arrived at a particular floor. Lifts should also have large buttons that have tactile identifiers, buttons at a level that can be reached by a person in a wheelchair, handrails, adequate space for a wheelchair, doors that remain open as long as there is an obstruction and no lip on the lift door/floor to trip on.

#### **6. Ramps**

All ramps should be safe and convenient for all people. Ramps over 1250mm long should have hand-rails and should not be steeper than a 1:14 gradient.

#### **7. Bathroom facilities**

Venues should have unisex accessible bathroom facilities on each floor or elsewhere in the building that are easily and quickly located. There should be clear signage that provides directions to bathroom facilities, including symbols with a raised profile.

Cubicle entry doors should be easy to open (no heavy spring) and the handle should be at an appropriate level. The door should open outwards to ensure there is enough room for the door to close with a wheelchair inside. The cubicles should be fitted with an alarm for assistance. Ensure that there is knee space under the hand-washing basin (700mm).

#### **8. Seating areas**

Seating spaces and seats identified for use by people with disabilities should be as flexible as possible. Remove chairs (if possible) to accommodate wheelchairs and assistance dogs. Ensure aisles provide easy access for wheelchair, walking frame and assistance dog users. Access to the podium should be via a continuous accessible and definable path of travel, which may include the use of ramps or lifts.

#### **9. Ground and floor surfaces**

Ground and floor surfaces should have a non-slip surface to ensure the safety of all people.



## **10. Auditory requirements**

### **10.1 Interpreters and listening systems**

Ensure that a hearing amplification system is available in all places where sound amplification is provided (e.g. microphones) or public announcements are made. Areas where amplification is provided should be identified by the symbol for hearing access. Information should also be provided on the type of amplification and whether it is turned on or off.

If video is used, ensure that the video is captioned for people who have hearing impairments.

If sign language or other interpreter services are required, it is advisable to book them at least three weeks in advance. Ensure that there is adequate lighting for the interpreter to be clearly seen.

As a courtesy, presenters should be made aware that people with hearing impairments are in the audience. Presenters should be asked to speak clearly and at a reasonable pace – not too fast or too slow. Use a roving microphone for question and answer time, ensures that the people within the hearing loop can hear.

There are many types of hearing amplification and there are no specific recommendations as to which is to be used in any given situation. The function/event organiser must provide hearing amplification if the facility does not provided them.

Organisations that can identify and supply the correct equipment and/or interpreters can be located in the Referral Guide in Appendix 1 of this handbook.

### **10.2 Background sound levels**

Consider the acoustics of any room used. If possible, have quiet spaces for small-group discussions to assist people with hearing impairments. Ensure that background sound levels are kept to a minimum as they are distracting and affect the use of hearing aids and other hearing amplification systems. Background sound levels have an effect on the quality of any sound recordings of the function/event for people who are vision impaired.

### **10.3 Public address systems**

Ensure that public address systems are clear and serve all people. The hearing amplification system and visual communication system must be compatible with and supplement public address systems.

## **11. Controls**

All people should be able to access and use any controls such as door handles, power switches, card slots, key pads and buttons. Ensure that door handles are at a level usable by people in wheelchairs. It is preferable that the handle be lever type. Check that buttons to call lifts and the location of power points and light switches are at a height that can be reached by a person in a wheelchair.



## **12. Furniture and fittings**

All people should be able to access and use built-in furniture and fittings. Things to check are:

- reception desks and counters – can people reach them if seated?
- if telephones are provided:
  - is there at least one accessible to people using wheelchairs?
  - are there volume controls on telephones available for people with hearing impairments and/or a TTY system available?
- drinking fountains should be at a height usable by people in wheelchairs
- vending machines (including automatic teller machines) should be clearly signed with alternate methods of operation for people who have vision impairment. They should also be installed to allow people to use them from a seated position
- work, reading and writing surfaces should be available to people with disabilities, such as to allow a wheelchair under them
- glass partitions should have opaque strips so that people do not inadvertently walk into them.

## **13. Symbols and signs**

Signage should be clear and comply with accessible standards. Ensure that the path of travel has its main features well signed. Colour contrasted and clear signage is essential for people with low vision, while tactile and Braille information will assist people who are vision impaired.

## **14. Warnings and alarms**

All warning and alarm systems within a facility should be checked for effectiveness for all people. For example, check whether the warning or alarm has an alternate system such as flashing lights or personal vibration pagers for people who have hearing impairments.

## **15. Lighting**

Lighting should be adequate for all people who use the venue. People with low vision need adequate lighting to assist with mobility. The conference facility should not have flickering lights in the path of travel.

## **16. Emergency exits**

In an emergency all people should be provided with an independent and dignified means of exiting from premises to a place of safety. The facility's management practices concerning the exit path for people with disabilities, are a vital part of achieving protection. When booking a venue ask to see the policies and procedures related to emergency evacuation.

## **17. Use of chemicals and materials**

Increasing numbers of people are affected by sensitivity to chemicals used in the building, maintenance and operation of premises. This can mean that premises are effectively inaccessible to people with chemical sensitivity.



Venue operators can be asked:

- do you use building, cleaning and maintenance chemicals and materials in accordance with relevant environmental and occupational health and safety regulations and established standards?
- do you provide adequate ventilation?
- do you minimise the use of air fresheners and pesticides?

This list is not exhaustive, but it is sufficient to inform the management of the function/event facility of your concern for people who are sensitive to chemicals.

## **18. Support for delegates**

### **18.1 Breaks**

Allow adequate breaks, as continence is an issue for some people.

### **18.2 Recording of information**

Even if minutes are taken, people attending meetings often wish to keep their own record of significant points. For people with high support needs, a note taker may be required. People with vision impairments may wish to record the meeting. If so, permission to record should be sought from other people attending.

### **18.3 Assistance dogs**

Ensure that there are appropriate areas available near the venue for toileting of assistance dogs and that there is water available for them throughout the day.

## **19. Conference materials in alternate formats**

On request, written materials should be made available in alternate formats such as large print, audiotape, Braille, on disk, etc. Tactile formats for graphs, subtitled videotapes and voice-to-text live captioning may also be required. Materials should be supplied in simple English or pictorial English for people with intellectual disabilities.

## **20. Meals and breakout areas**

Make sure that the breakout areas and places for meals are large enough to allow for the movement of all delegates and still be logically laid out to be definable for people who have vision impairment. If you are having lunch as part of the function/event avoid a buffet style for delegates who have vision or mobility impairments. A sit down meal, served to the table, is preferable.



## References

### **Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)**

#### **Australian Standards**

1428 Design for access and mobility

Part 1: General requirements for access — New building work

Part 2: Enhanced and additional requirements — Buildings and facilities

Part 3: Requirements for children and adolescents with physical disabilities

Part 4: Tactile ground surface indicators to direct people with vision impairment.

Online catalogue at: [www.standards.com.au](http://www.standards.com.au). Published by Standards Australia International Ltd GPO Box 5420, Sydney, NSW 2001, Australia

#### **Australian Human Rights Commission**

Disability Standards and Guidelines

<http://www.hreoc.gov.au/disability%5Frights/standards/standards.html>



## APPENDIX 1

# Referral Guide

### Organisations providing services and/or advice to people with disabilities\*

Name and address of organisation	Contact details
Access Arts Inc. Level 1 Stores Building, Brisbane Powerhouse 119 Lamington Street, New Farm PO Box 1034 New Farm QLD 4005	(07) 3358 6200 <a href="http://www.accessarts.org.au">http://www.accessarts.org.au</a>
Access Recreation Shop 5 & 6, Mackie Court 48 Gladstone Rd PO Box 1146 Rockhampton QLD 4700	(07) 4922 7151 <a href="http://www.accessrec.org.au">http://www.accessrec.org.au</a>
Amputees and Families Support Group of Qld. PO Box 848 Springwood QLD 4127	(07) 3290 4293 <a href="http://www.afsg.org.au">http://www.afsg.org.au</a>
Anti Discrimination Commission Queensland Level 17, 53 Albert Street, Brisbane 4000 PO Box 15565, City East QLD 4002	1300 130 670 toll free 1300 130 680 TTY <a href="http://www.adcq.qld.gov.au">http://www.adcq.qld.gov.au</a>
Arthritis Queensland Cartwright St, Windsor PO Box 2121 Windsor QLD 4030	(07) 3857 4200 1800 011 041 toll free <a href="http://www.arthritis.org.au">http://www.arthritis.org.au</a>
ASDOGS (NQ) Inc. Association of Australian Assistance Dogs PO Box 2052 Mareeba QLD 4880	(07) 4092 1816 email: <a href="mailto:emeraldend@austarnet.com.au">emeraldend@austarnet.com.au</a> <a href="http://www.asdogsnq.org/">http://www.asdogsnq.org/</a>
Australian Communication Exchange 295 Logan Rd PO Box 473 Stones Corner QLD 4120	(07) 3815 7600 Voice (07) 3815 7602 TTY <a href="http://www.aceinfo.net.au">http://www.aceinfo.net.au</a>
Better Hearing Australia Brisbane 21 Vulture St PO Box 5334 West End QLD 4101	(07) 3844 5065 voice and TTY email: <a href="mailto:info@bhabrisbane.org.au">info@bhabrisbane.org.au</a> <a href="http://www.bhabrisbane.org.au">http://www.bhabrisbane.org.au</a>
Cerebral Palsy League 55 Oxlade Drive, New Farm PO Box 386 Fortitude Valley QLD 4006	(07) 3358 8011d <a href="http://www.cplqld.org.au">http://www.cplqld.org.au</a>
Cootharinga Society of NQ (Rehabilitation Technology Service) 20 Keane St, Currajong QLD 4812 PO Box 792 Castletown, Hyde Park QLD 4812	(07) 4759 2000 <a href="http://www.cootharinga.org.au">http://www.cootharinga.org.au</a>
Council on the Ageing Level 5, 199 George St GPO Box 21 Brisbane QLD 4001	(07) 3316 2999 1300 738 348 toll free <a href="http://www.cotaq.org.au">http://www.cotaq.org.au</a>



Deaf Services Queensland 915 Ipswich Rd PO Box Moorooka QLD 4105	(07) 3892 8500 (07) 3892 8501 TTY <a href="http://deafservicesqld.org.au">http://deafservicesqld.org.au</a>
Endeavour House 50 Southgate Ave, Cannon Hill PO Box 3555 Tingalpa DC QLD 4173	(07) 3908 7100  <a href="http://www.endeavour.com.au">http://www.endeavour.com.au</a>
Guide Dogs Queensland PO Box 50 Bald Hills QLD 4036	1800 810 122 <a href="http://www.guidedogsqld.com.au">http://www.guidedogsqld.com.au</a>
Australian Human Rights Commission GPO Box 5218 Sydney NSW 2001	1300 369 711 toll free 1800 620 241 TTY <a href="http://www.hreoc.gov.au">http://www.hreoc.gov.au</a>
Inclusion Works Shop 1 River Quays Building 7 Tomlins St, South Townsville QLD 4810	(07) 4721 5033 <a href="http://www.inclusionworks.org.au">http://www.inclusionworks.org.au</a>
Independent Advocacy in the Tropics 238 Charters towers Rd PO Box 3037 Hermit Park, Townsville QLD 4812	(07) 4725 2505 1800 887 678 toll free <a href="http://www.independentadvocacy.org.au">http://www.independentadvocacy.org.au</a>
LifeTec Queensland Level 1, Reading, Newmarket Cnr Newmarket & Enoggera Rds, Enoggera PO Box 3241 New Farm QLD 4051	(07) 3552 9000 1300 885 886  <a href="http://www.lifetec.org.au">http://www.lifetec.org.au</a>
Mackay Advocacy Suite 5 City Court Professional Centre PO Box 174 Mackay QLD 4740	(07) 4957 8710 <a href="http://www.mackayadvocacy.com.au">http://www.mackayadvocacy.com.au</a>
Multiple Sclerosis Queensland 286 Gladstone Rd, Dutton Park 4102 Locked Bag 370 Coorparoo DC 4151	(07) 3840 0888 1800 287 367 toll free <a href="http://www.msqld.org/">http://www.msqld.org/</a>
Muscular Dystrophy Queensland Unit 13, 191 Hedley Ave, Hendra Locked Bag 3000 Eagle Farm BC QLD 4009	(07) 3607 1800 1800 676 364 toll free <a href="http://www.mdqld.org.au">http://www.mdqld.org.au</a>
North Western Advocacy 23 Miles St PO Box 766 Mt. Isa QLD 4825	(07) 4749 0022 <a href="http://www.mountisa.biz">http://www.mountisa.biz</a>
Parent to Parent Association of Qld. Inc. PO Box 434 Yandina QLD 4561	(07) 5472 7072 1800 777 723 toll free <a href="http://www.parent2parentqld.org.au">http://www.parent2parentqld.org.au</a>
Queensland Alliance of Mental Illness and Psychiatric Disability Groups Inc. Level 6, 67 St Paul's Terrace PO Box 919 Spring Hill QLD 4004	(07) 3832 2600 <a href="http://www.qldalliance.org.au">http://www.qldalliance.org.au</a>
Queensland Blind Association Inc. White Cane House, 26 Warwick St PO Box 444 Annerley QLD 4103	(07) 3848 8888 1800 753 253 toll free <a href="http://www.qba.asn.au">http://www.qba.asn.au</a>



Queensland Braille Writing Association 507 Ipswich Road PO Box 610 Annerley QLD 4103	(07) 3848 5257 <a href="http://www.e-bility.com">http://www.e-bility.com</a>
Queensland Narrating Service 20 Kent St, Woolloongabba 4102 PO Box 6135 Fairfield Gardens QLD 4103	(07) 3895 8555 <a href="http://www.qns.net.au">http://www.qns.net.au</a>
Queensland Parents for People with a Disability 2/70 Flanders St PO Box 466 Salisbury QLD 4107	(07) 3875 2101 1800 805 184
Queensland Talking Book Service State Library Queensland Cultural Centre, Stanley Place PO Box 3488 South Brisbane QLD 4101	(07) 3840 7666 <a href="http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/">http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/info/</a>
Queenslanders with Disability Network Reply Paid Suite 11, 7 O'Connell Tce Bowen Hills QLD 4006	(07) 3252 8566 1300 363 783 toll free <a href="http://www.qdn.org.au">http://www.qdn.org.au</a>
Retinitis Pigmentosa Association of Queensland 141 Queen St, Brisbane Qld 4000	(07) 3229 0482
SPELD QLD Inc. (Specific Learning Disabilities Assoc.) Queen Alexandra Home, Annexe Level 1 347 Old Cleveland Rd PO Box 1238 Coorparoo QLD 4151	(07) 3394 2566 1800 671 114 toll free <a href="http://www.speld.org.au">http://www.speld.org.au</a>
Spina Bifida Hydrocephalus Qld 21 Tillot St, Dutton Park PO Box 8022 Woolloongabba QLD 4102	(07) 3844 4600 Brisbane (07) 4723 4980 Townsville <a href="http://www.spinabifida.org">http://www.spinabifida.org</a>
Spinal Injuries Association Inc. 109 Logan Rd, Woolloongabba PO Box 5651 West End QLD 4101	(07) 3391 2044 Brisbane (07) 4755 1755 Townsville <a href="http://www.spinal.com.au">http://www.spinal.com.au</a>
Vision Australia, Brisbane Kent St Woolloongabba PO Box 6091 Fairfield Gardens QLD 4103	1300 847 466 (ask for Brisbane) <a href="http://www.visionaustralia.org">http://www.visionaustralia.org</a>

\* Contact details are correct at time of publishing.



## APPENDIX 2

# Checklist – Access Requirements

(Note: functions/events include meetings, workshops, celebrations, conferences, etc.)

### Prior to booking venue

- Consider, identify and document all needs and requirements of attendees (including people with disabilities).

### Select appropriate Venue

- Confirm venue management and its staff are familiar with managing accessibility issues.
- Confirm availability of necessary equipment - if not, can management source for you?

### Inspect venue

- Ensure main entrances to venue are accessible to all attendees, such as:
  - ✓ suitable ramps for wheelchairs
  - ✓ hand rails
  - ✓ clear entrances
  - ✓ appropriate signage and lighting
- Ensure path of travel within the building is unobstructed and appropriately signed.
- Ensure all facilities are accessible and appropriate for the identified needs of attendees, such as:
  - ✓ bathrooms
  - ✓ door handles
  - ✓ telephones
  - ✓ passenger lifts
  - ✓ floor surfaces
  - ✓ table height
  - ✓ seating areas/room for wheelchairs, assistance dogs, etc
  - ✓ lighting
  - ✓ sound/video/alarm equipment
  - ✓ drinking fountains
  - ✓ emergency exits

### Car parking

- Car parks should have designated bays for vehicles used by people with disabilities. These should be:
  - ✓ well signed
  - ✓ located at the closest point to each accessible entrance.