

VENUE ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCE PACK 2024

* ADELAIDE
* FRINGE *
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All In' - Design by Rebecca Davis

Principal Partner



Accessibility Partners



INTRODUCTION

Adelaide Fringe are committed to being the most inclusive festival in the world. We want to empower our venues to welcome audience members to Fringe shows regardless of their ability. The following information has been collated from our Accessibility Partners and collaborators to provide you with knowledge and resources to make your venue more accessible. From things to consider, easy to make changes, and how best to communicate with Fringe-goers with access needs, this document is your go-to resource.



Deaf and disabled people make up 1 in 6 people in Australia, and in South Australia make up more than 20% of the population.

Access is important for social and cultural participation for the whole community, but it is also good business to ensure that disabled people, their friends and family can access your venue – and there are legal responsibilities under things such as the Disability Discrimination Act.

When considering accessibility, it is better to consider access needs;

- **An access need is something a person requires to communicate, learn, or participate in an activity**
- **You don't need to know someone's disability, but you should ask about their access needs**
- **The earlier you do this the better – we recommend starting with your ticketing (FringeTIX is good for this), but make sure you review the information provided and can meet any additional requirements.**

When providing communication & assistance face to face;

- **Ask**
- **Be direct**
- **Speak clearly and don't cover your face**
- **Don't shout**
- **Don't touch (without asking/being asked)**
- **Be respectful**

And most importantly ask the person (not their friend or support worker) "How can I help with your access requirements?"

Whilst most venues will first consider access for audience members, it is important to also consider access for staff members, artists and crew.

Things to initially consider are

- **Digital access (including ticketing)**
- **Venue entry and exit**
- **Access to bars and food**
- **Seating**
- **Bathroom access (an accessible bathroom is only accessible if it is not being used as a storeroom)**
- **Backstage access**
- **Sound, visuals and lighting (including warnings for any unexpected flashing lights or loud noises)**

Also consider communication access – is your text, signage, etc easy to read for someone with a low-moderate level of literacy, are you using alt text and image descriptions in your promotions?

There are also a wide range of services, such as audio description, Auslan interpreting and captioning. Not every event is suitable for every type of access, but none of them will happen unless someone takes responsibility for creating a more accessible environment for the community.

Access2Arts is the state peak body for disability arts. We support d/Deaf and disabled people in South Australia to get involved in the arts as audiences, participants, artists, arts workers and leaders; and Arts and cultural organisations to become more inclusive and accessible.

We are also the primary national provider of Audio Description and training for the arts.

If you need anything from some quick advice to an access audit, staff training or creative access support please reach out via access2arts.org.au.



Planning autism friendly events

The more accessible your event is, the more people that can come and see it. To make your event more inviting, inclusive and accessible for the Autistic community there are two main areas you can focus on:

1. Planning and communication. Providing information about your event in advance and in an accessible way goes a long way to enhance accessibility and inclusion.
2. Create autism friendly environments and use autism friendly practices.

Tips for planning and communication

1. Provide guests with information about your event and venue ahead of time. In addition to information about the venue, facilities, parking and a map of the venue highlighting where everything is, it is helpful to include information such as:
 - **The expected sensory environment – crowd numbers, noise level, bright lights, strong smells, movement etc.**
 - **Where guests can go if they become dysregulated, anxious or need a break (i.e. a quiet room near the performance)**
 - **What they can bring with them including sensory supports, food and drink.**
2. Provide clear, visual information to enhance information processing.
 - **Always use plain English and consider dot points, check lists, or step-by-step guides to provide the information before your event.**

Tips for autism friendly environments and practices

1. Consider the layout and flow of your venue.
 - **Can people select seats that are near an exit or have a wall behind them to reduce sensory input?**
 - **Can people move through without bumping into each other?**
 - **Is there a low-sensory space that is clearly defined and easily accessible for people to retreat to if they become dysregulated or anxious.**
2. Use visual communications so people can refer to them later, and use literal language instead of idioms, sarcasm and metaphors.
3. Understand autism. You can learn about autism by viewing the Spectrum website **www.thespectrum.org.au** or businesses can join the Autism Friendly Charter and staff can undertake the one-hour online training for free. **www.autismfriendlycharter.org.au** Both resources have been developed by Autism SA with input from the Autistic and autism community.
4. Consider the sensory environment – lighting, patterns (i.e. on furniture, the stage set), sounds, smells and the atmosphere.
 - **Avoid bright fluorescent or flickering light. Understand that people may wear sunglasses, hats or hoods to reduce the impact of lighting.**
 - **Limit noises that aren't part of the performance as much as possible**

including air conditioners, clocks, hand dryers and external noises such as construction or traffic.

- **Sudden loud noises can cause physical pain in some people, or the anticipation of a sudden loud noise can cause anxiety.**
- **Limit smells by ensuring food is served away from the event, select venues that don't have a permanent source of a strong smell and provide warning if strong smells will be present.**

Generally low lighting (but bright enough to see), low sound, calming colours and tones and a clear organised space create a more accessible environment.

For more information or support contact Autism SA on 1300 288 476, email mypathways@autismsa.org.au or visit www.autismsa.org.au



Make your Fringe show accessible for the Deaf community!

Many Australians, and businesses are not aware of the mental workload and challenges deaf and hard of hearing people undertake when communicating with their work colleagues, service providers, retail outlets, friends or family. The Deaf community loves to share in experiences including the arts, sports, and comedy – and appreciate when artists take steps to invite them to take part in these experiences. Deaf Connect are proud to be on board as an official Accessibility Partner of the Adelaide Fringe Festival, providing Auslan (Australian Sign Language) interpreting for shows so that everyone can experience the magic of Fringe!

How you can welcome the Deaf community:

- **Ensure your venue is well lit so that attendees can see Auslan being used.**
- **When you are communicating with Deaf or hard of hearing guests, ensure you are approaching from the front, and make sure your lips are visible if they are lip reading.**
- **Be guided by your Deaf guests on how to communicate – some attendees will have an interpreter, some may want to write notes, or have other ways of communicating.**
- **Nominate a place where interpreters can stand that is visible to the audience – stage left, stage right, or somewhere else that is easily visible alongside the performance.**

- **Consider Deafness Awareness Training for your venue so that they are aware of how to respectfully and inclusively interact with Deaf people.**

For more information visit deafconnect.org.au

Guide Dogs.

For people living with low vision or blindness, large scale events can present a variety of challenges.

People living with vision impairment are not all the same. Most people will have some useful functional vision and will use it to their best advantage. You can help them enjoy a performance by ensuring you cater to their specific needs rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

The most important thing is communication. Don't be afraid to ask about their vision, as this is the only way you can provide the best experience for them. For example, for some people, things may be blurry unless they are quite close to the action, whereas those who have lost their peripheral vision may find it easier to be towards the back. If they are too close to the stage, they won't be able to take in the whole scene. Others will have lost one-half of their visual field due to a head injury or a stroke. If they have lost the left side of their visual field. In that case, it will be easier for them if they are positioned towards the left, as they will be able to use the intact right visual field to enjoy the show without maintaining awkward head and neck positions. Those with central vision loss may find it easier to be to the sides, as they will be using their peripheral vision to view the show from "the corners of their eyes." If you ask them how their functional vision helps them, you can seat them somewhere they can use it comfortably to its best effect.

How can you make Fringe more accessible:

- **Provide an audio-described show.**
- **Ensure entrances and exits are well-lit.**
- **Remove or minimise obstacles: objects or cables in walkways, items hanging overhead, etc.**
- **Provide good signage to bathrooms.**
- **Not everyone uses a long cane or a guide dog, so look out for any guests who appear to be struggling.**
- **Approach them from the front, and don't touch them without asking first as this can startle the person and make them anxious if they are not expecting it.**

- **Introduce yourself and explain your role so that they know you are part of the organisation.**
- **Ask them if they need help and if they do, ask what kind of help they require, as this will depend on their level of vision.**
- **Don't be frightened to ask the person about their level of vision, as this will help you and them to accommodate their needs.**
- **Consider Human Guide Training to support guests with vision loss!**

For more information visit [**sant.guidedogs.com.au**](http://sant.guidedogs.com.au)



Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

Some disabilities, conditions or chronic illnesses are not immediately obvious to others. For some people, this can make it hard to understand and believe that someone, with a “non-visible” condition genuinely needs support. Some people question whether you have a disability because you don't ‘look like you have a disability’.

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower is here every day of the year to support people living with non-visible disabilities in their communities by raising awareness, training businesses and sharing stories to help create a more inclusive, understanding society.

For more information visit [**hdsunflower.com/au**](http://hdsunflower.com/au)