

Mount Alexander Shire Council

Accessible Events Guide



Mount Alexander Shire Council is committed to ensuring that all residents and visitors are able to fully participate in community life based on the principles of universal access and social inclusion.

Approximately 20% of the Australian population identify as having a disability. In Mount Alexander this equates to more than 3,700 people!

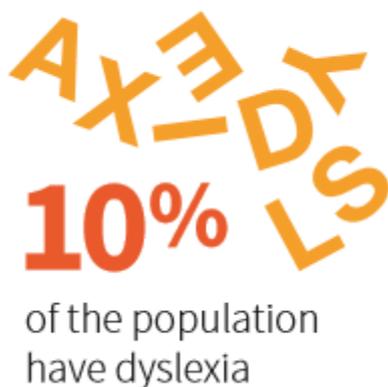
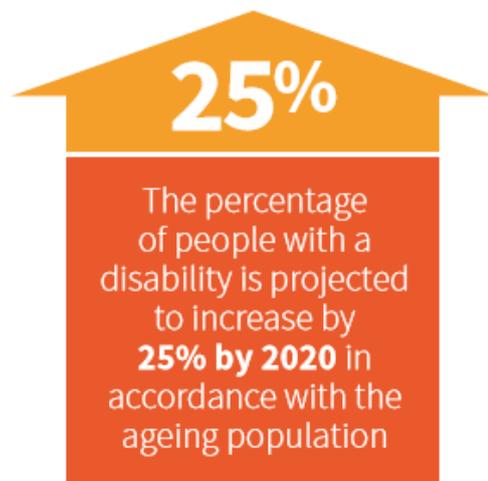
The Shire's Accessible Events Guide is designed to assist event managers and committees plan and run successful and accessible events. This Guide should be used in conjunction with current laws, regulations and codes of practice.



Did you know..



1 in 6 Australians are affected by hearing loss



44% (7.3M) of Australians experience difficulty using many of the printed materials encountered in daily life. Examples include menus, information booklets, forms, timetables and guides.

What is an accessible event?

An accessible event is welcoming and inclusive for all people, regardless of their level of ability. It is an event which is run equitably and is accessible for all community members.

Improving the accessibility of local events benefits everyone, especially people with disability and their carers, parents with prams, people with English as a second language, older residents and performers or staff carrying heavy equipment.

Good access will make your event safer, more efficient and will attract a diverse range of people.

Make sure you don't discriminate

It is against the law to discriminate against a person with disability under the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 and Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Disability discrimination is when a person with disability is not given the same opportunity and choice as someone without disability.

You need to make reasonable adjustments for people with disability to have these same opportunities and choice. You have a legal responsibility to prevent discrimination and remove any barriers to participation.

'Reasonable adjustments' are defined as changes to the environment that allow persons with disability to access services, programs, facilities and events in a safe and fair manner. Examples of reasonable adjustments are included in this guide and will help to ensure your event is accessible for people with disability.

Early Planning

If you think about access in the early stages of your planning, your event will run more efficiently and be more cost effective. Invite people with a disability to assist in the planning of your event.

Working with other people and organisations, sharing information, knowledge and resources can all help to minimise the cost of planning and running an accessible event.

Portable Access Equipment Available for Loan

The Shire has a range of portable equipment available for use at local events. There are four portable ramps, two portable hearing loops and a large range of temporary events signage available for loan.

Please see the attached flyer for more details.

If you require more information, please contact the Shire's Events Officer on 5471 1700.

Accessible Venue Tip Sheet

Below are some tips to ensure your event venue is as accessible as possible:

Designated accessible parking – Approximately 10% of your event parking should be available for people with a disability parking permit. Additional designated accessible parking will also benefit older people and families with prams.

Drop off and pick up points – Providing drop off points close to the event entrance will allow easy access for people with a disability. Ensure the drop off point is near a kerb ramp to allow for safe access to the footpath or event entrance.

TOP TIP

The Shire has a library of temporary directional event signs that you can borrow to use at your event. Contact the Shire's Events Officer on 5471 1700 for more information.

Accessible entry – Clearly mark steps and, if you have the option, choose a wide doorway with a door that is easy to open. Use clear signage to show where the accessible entrance is located. If the venue does not have a permanent accessible entrance you can borrow a portable ramp from the Shire.

Clear entrance – Keep the event entrance free of barriers that impede access to the entrance itself, such as signage or other obstacles.

Clear paths of travel – Where possible, all walkways should be at least 1.2m wide. Keep aisles and open spaces free from obstacles.

Mark tripping hazards or changes in gradient – Marking hazards will reduce risk and create a much safer environment.

Plenty of seating – Provide lots of seating throughout your event and include seating with armrests to allow people to stand up easily

Accessible toilets – Where possible, provide an accessible toilet and do not place obstacles in the room. Pathways to the toilets should be clear, well-lit and clearly signed. If you are unable to provide an accessible toilet then provide information on where the nearest accessible toilet is.

Counter access – Provide a clear path to all counters and, if possible, a low service counter with a seat.

Stage or platform access – Determine whether you need to provide access to the stage or platform at your event. If you do and there is no permanent access then ensure a portable ramp is available.

Assistance animals – Ensure there are facilities available for assistance animals and that all event staff and volunteers are aware that assistance animals cannot be denied entry to the event.

Rest and recharge area – Provide a quiet area with seating, shade, free water, a power point for recharging wheelchair and scooter batteries, and room for prams and wheelchairs.

Inclusive Event Communication Tip Sheet

Below are some tips that can assist you to make your event communication accessible and inclusive:

Alternative formats – Use plain English on printed material and ensure it is available in large print.

Contact info – Make your contact details available for people to seek more information. Include various methods of contact such as text, phone call and email.

TOP TIP

Providing written communication in lower case rather than all capitals makes reading easier for people who rely on word recognition or have learning difficulties

Signage – Provide clear directional signage that promotes the alternative formats or accessible features provided at your event. All signage should have a good colour contrast.

Open captions – Include open captions on any audio-visual material and ensure these can be viewed from wheelchair height.

Clearly identify hazards – The presence of hazards such as strobe lighting, flashing lights or loud noises and sound effects should be detailed in promotional material and at the venue.

Information areas – Provide an information area that is accessible and staffed by people who can assist people with a disability to communicate and understand information.

Auslan interpreter – If your event has speeches or a performance then book an Auslan interpreter. If you require assistance, please contact the Shire's Disability Inclusion Officer on 5471 7100.

Promote your accessible features – Promoting accessible features early on in advertising material will allow more people to learn about your event. People with disability can be loyal supporters of events and businesses who cater to their needs.

 **TOP TIP**

Matte lamination does not reflect as much light as gloss lamination and will allow people to read your signage easier

Non-verbal communication – Be aware of electronic and non-electronic communication aids including tablets, picture communication boards and the National Relay Service.

Companion cards – Ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of companion cards and that they are accepted at your event.

Website access – Ensure your website has screen reader capabilities, clear layout and the ability to increase font size without losing content.

Mobility maps – Maps are a great way of letting people know where your event’s accessible areas and facilities are.

Alternative emergency warning signals – Providing portable emergency signage or flashing lights in the case of an emergency allows more people to be aware.

Glossary of Terms:

AUSLAN or Australian Sign Language

Auslan is the Australian sign language for people who are deaf. It is made of visual gestures using the hands, body, face and head. Many people who have been deaf since birth use Auslan as their native language. Auslan interpreters translate English into Auslan for deaf people and Auslan into English for hearing people. Including an Auslan interpreter at your event will provide equal access for the Deaf community.

For more information, including how to book an Auslan interpreter for your event, please call Auslan Services on 1300 287 526, text 0409 143 980 or visit www.auslanservices.com



The Auslan symbol indicates that Auslan interpreting is provided.

Braille

Braille is a tactile form of reading and writing used by people who are blind or vision impaired. Braille letters do not resemble printed letter – each letter is represented by either a single raised dot or a combination of raised dots.

Providing written information in alternative formats, such as braille, is an easy and inexpensive way to increase your event's accessibility.

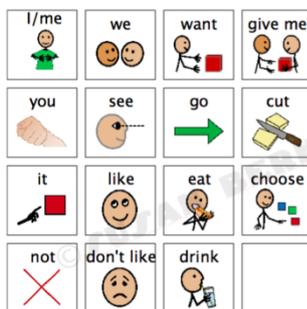
For more information please visit www.visionaustralia.org.au or contact the Bendigo office directly on 5445 5700.

Captioning

Captioning is the text version of speech and other sounds, and is presented as text on a screen. Captioning assists the hearing impaired and deaf communities, but is also useful when information is displayed in screens in loud areas.

Communication board

A communication board is a tool that is used by people with speech or learning difficulties, and can also be useful for those who speak a language other than English. Communication boards have a series of pictures and letters that allow people to point to in order to show what they need. They are particularly useful if your event has an information desk or ticket counter.



Companion Cards

Companion Cards are a tool to assist organisations that charge an admission or participation fee to comply with existing anti-discrimination legislation. They are issued to people with a significant permanent disability, who can demonstrate that they are unable to access community activities and events without attendant care support.

Companion Cards contain a photograph of the cardholder and can be presented when booking or purchasing a ticket at events and venues. Participating organisations will issue the cardholder with a second ticket for their companion at no charge.



Hearing loop or Audio induction loop

Hearing loops assist people with a hearing impairment to hear more clearly. One in six Australians are either deaf or have a hearing impairment. A hearing loop uses a microphone to produce a magnetic, wireless signal which transmits to hearing aids that have been switched to the 'T' setting, or a receiver that is connected to a set of headphones.

Hearing loops can be used to enhance one-to-one communication, or to enable groups to hear with clarity in larger areas.

The Shire has two portable hearing loops which are available to hire free of charge.

Please contact the Shire's Events Officer on 5471 1700 or see the flyer attached for more information.

Telephone Typewriter (TTY)

A telephone typewriter has a keyboard and a screen which is either built into a telephone, or connected to one. A person who is deaf or who has a speech impediment can use the machine to communicate with another person who also has a TTY by typing the message and reading the reply. TTY users can call people who don't have a TTY by using the National Relay Service (NRS).

National Relay Service (NRS)

The National Relay Service is a free service that allows a person who is deaf or has a hearing or speech impairment to send or receive messages from ordinary voice telephones.

PORTABLE ACCESS EQUIPMENT LOAN



Mount Alexander Shire Council has four portable ramps and two portable hearing loops available for public loan.

The portable access equipment is available **FREE OF CHARGE** for community groups or organisations to use at local events and facilities.

Portable ramps

Portable ramps allow people who use a mobility aid to gain easy entry to buildings which have one or two steps. Ramps can be borrowed to assist people with limited mobility or those who use:

- » Wheelchairs
- » Scooters
- » Crutches, walking frames or sticks
- » Prams and strollers.

Portable access equipment available for loan includes two small and two large ramps:

	SMALL	LARGE
Length	122cm (4ft)	152cm (5ft)
Width	75cm	75cm
Max height	30cm	33cm
Load capacity	272kg	272kg
Weight of ramp	11kg	13kg

Hearing loops

A hearing loop allows people with a hearing impairment to take part in meetings or events.

The portable hearing loops can connect to a T-switch on a hearing aid or cochlear implant, or can be used with the provided headphones for amplification.

The portable access equipment can be hired FREE OF CHARGE from:

Castlemaine Visitor Information Centre
44 Mostyn Street
Castlemaine
Telephone (03) 5471 1795

