

Our Disability and Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2025

We acknowledge that we work, live and create on the unceded sovereign lands of the Eastern Kulin Nation.

We offer our respects to the Elders of these traditional lands and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People. Always was, always will be Aboriginal Land.

We also acknowledge Elders within the d/Deaf and Disabled community who have advocated, created and provided leadership. Our work is not possible without the work of Elders and leaders in the community.

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Our Disability and Inclusion Action Plan is a document that has been created in collaboration with our community.

It is a plan to make sure Footscray Community Arts integrates accessible ways of working, developing and presenting art.

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Goals

Our vision is that all communities are valued as makers of culture.

Through this plan, our goals are to:

- Support leadership by d/Deaf and Disabled artists and workers.
- Develop a team culture that prioritises access at every level of the organisation.
- Champion human rights by being thoughtful, considered and focused on improving access.
- Ensure access is inclusive across different cultures and communities and with our communities of focus: First Nations, culturally and linguistically diverse, LGBTQIA+ and d/Deaf and Disabled artists.
- Continually review, listen, engage and collaborate with d/Deaf and Disabled artists, workers and audience members.
- Be consistent and considerate in how we work.

About Footscray Community Arts

Footscray Community Arts is an organisation that supports artists to develop and present art.

Established in 1974, we have always centred artists who have been traditionally left out or under-represented in the arts.

Since 1991 we have run ArtLife, a program for Disabled artists. For over 30 years, we have been collaborating with d/Deaf and Disabled communities.

This plan is about the future. It will help us organise ourselves to make sure all aspects of our operations and program are accessible.

Methodology

To make this plan, we engaged over 133 people from our d/Deaf and Disabled community, as well as staff, Board members and other stakeholders.

We did this by:

- Having access audits of how we work by disability-led organisation LOOM Arts Management and Arts Access Victoria.
- Welcoming feedback from community in an Open Day and anonymous survey.
- Having many conversations with d/Deaf and Disabled individuals and getting advice.
- Working with different parts of our team to understand what we can change.

About our Disability Action Plan Working Group

We created a working group with team members from different departments to learn together, collaborate and action accessibility improvements.

Our working group helps us take responsibility to continuously improve as a team.

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Terminology

As an organisation, we now use the term 'd/Deaf and Disabled.'

We are committed to using language that reflects the needs of our communities.

We recognise that people use different terms to describe themselves and that language is important and complex.

In our relationships with individuals, we will always be led by the person and how they want to identify themselves.

We commit to reviewing the language we use and respond to the politics of our communities.

About the Social Model of Disability

The Social Model of Disability shapes our values and frames our understanding and responsibility to access.

The Social Model is a framework for understanding disability.

Its key principle is that a person is disabled by their environment and society.

We will take responsibility and take action to address barriers and meet the access needs of d/Deaf and Disabled staff, artists and art workers, leaders, our audience and community members.

How we make sure this plan delivers on our goals

To ensure we deliver on this plan, we will take the following steps:

- As a team, we will come together to review our progress against our action plan three times a year.
- We will review our plan annually with our Board and staff.
- We will publish our progress on our website each year.
- We will invite, collect and analyse feedback from the community year-round, including an annual open day and survey to find out how we are doing.
- We will continue consulting with d/Deaf and Disabled artists and community members.

What You Told Us:

Quotes and statistics from d/Deaf and Disabled consultation and community feedback.

“Footscray Community Arts became a culturally safe space for me.” (d/Deaf and/or Disabled consultant and artist)

“The culture at Footscray Community Arts in general is accessible.” (d/Deaf and/or Disabled consultant and artist)

“I have an intersecting identity in that I’m queer as well, so I also felt safe as a queer person with Footscray Community Arts team who were warm and welcoming towards me.” (d/Deaf and/or Disabled consultant and artist)

“Accessibility is very present at Footscray Community Arts but in a bounded kind of way. If you're going to make a space completely accessible, you have to be vigilant about that and talk to people with lived experience.” (d/Deaf and/or Disabled consultant and artist)

“If people ask you to do something, try to remember and try not to put the onus on the disabled person.” (d/Deaf and/or Disabled consultant and artist)

“It's important to allow the Deaf artist to focus on their artistic selves, and not do the extra labour to advocate.” (d/Deaf and/or Disabled consultant and artist)

“The DIAP needs to be a living and breathing thing, so that Footscray Community Arts can look at it regularly and change standards/implement changes to make their Community Centre accessible for every single person.” (d/Deaf and/or Disabled consultant and artist)

“We liked the Feedback day / open forum you held. The idea was good with lots of staff on hand to talk to obviously you were looking for feedback which is always good to see. My feedback about the day is very positive and I would hope you may consider running one or two again next year, it is always good to talk directly to staff give and receive some feedback.” (Community Feedback Day participant)

“The opportunity to give feedback is just great.” (Community Feedback Day participant)

What do you think Footscray Community Arts does well in terms of accessibility?

“It feels safe to me because artists from my communities are in the program often.” (Survey response)

“They are an inclusive space” (Survey response)

“There are lots of different kinds of events, and, they have free ones, so I feel I can always find something to attend throughout the year.” (Survey response)

“Having representation of artists with disabilities” (Survey response)

“Staff are welcoming” (Survey response)

“Asking the disabled community” (Survey response)

“People smile and say hello and know my name” (Community Feedback Day participant)

“Opportunity to make friends and art. Feel good about coming here” (Community Feedback Day participant)

“In depth support for artists” (Community Feedback Day participant)

“Community connection” (Community Feedback Day participant)

What do you think Footscray Community Arts could improve in terms of accessibility?

“Disability leadership” (Survey response)

“More information – information is number one barrier to me engaging with any public event or program.” (Survey response)

“It would be good if more information was provided upfront, on the website” (Survey response)

“Sensory notes on events in terms of lights and sound. Descriptions of events could be more detailed so it's clear what will be involved.” (Survey response)

“More links with multicultural communities. Awareness of this place is low in multicultural communities.” (Community Feedback Day participant)

“Prioritise disabled/D/deaf arts workers.” (Survey response)

“That all parts of its business, art delivery and culture is inclusive of people with disability and their intersectionality lens.” (Survey response)

“Keep in contact with Disabled artists and listen to our feedback.” (Survey response)

“Include intersectionality approach and gender equality.” (Community Feedback Day participant)

“Finding out what was on was hard” (audience member/visitor)

“Share the responsibility of access across the whole organisation, not just the ArtLife program.” (Community member)

“Make it more accessible to go for excursions – need accessible van.” (Community Feedback Day participant)

“More exhibitions and networking between artists” (Community Feedback Day participant)

The accessibility aspects of Footscray Community Arts, **attending an exhibition opening rated the highest**, while ease of **navigating the precinct (physical access) rated the lowest**. (Survey results)

Survey Responses

- 52% of respondents identified as a person with disability.
- 39% of respondents identified as Disabled.
- 55% of respondents identified as LGBTQIA+
- 16% of respondents identified as culturally and linguistically diverse.
- 59% of respondents live in Melbourne’s west.
- 13% of respondents are working in Melbourne’s west.

Our Action Areas

The following themes came out of the feedback we received from our communities. These have been turned into action areas.

LEADERSHIP

COMMUNICATION

CREATIVITY

EXPERIENCE

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LEADERSHIP

We are committed to ensuring there is d/Deaf and Disabled leadership across our organisation.

We will do this by

- ✓ Provide training to all staff about disability and access.
- ✓ Ensuring all parts of Footscray Community Arts is accessible, culturally safe and well-equipped to support the leadership of d/Deaf and Disabled artists and arts workers.
- ✓ Review and update all policies and procedures to embed accessibility.
- ✓ Improve HR processes to integrate accessibility within our culture and way of working.

COMMUNICATION

We will ensure strong communication and collaboration is embedded in how we work.

We will do this by

- ✓ Developing consistently strong forms of communication for audiences and artists we work with.
- ✓ Invest in and build our relationships with d/Deaf and Disabled Communities.
- ✓ Work with d/Deaf and Disabled consultants to evaluate our communication strategies.

CREATIVITY

We will provide a space for d/Deaf and Disabled artists to be their full artistic selves and create ambitious work. We will ensure our internal processes are accessible and provide tailored and appropriate support for artists.

We will do this by

- ✓ Improving our project management workflows to embed access at every stage of a project with tangible actions.
- ✓ Adjust our internal collaboration processes to be artist-led.

EXPERIENCE

We will develop a cohesive and consistent approach to delivering accessible experiences for visitors and industry.

We will do this by

- ✓ Research and implement precinct-wide upgrades to improve the physical accessibility of our venues.
- ✓ Ensure our marketing and online experience embeds accessibility across all channels and includes targets to engage with d/Deaf and Disabled communities.

Key Action List: This is how Footscray Community Arts will organise ourselves to make sure all aspects of our operations and program are accessible.

Goal:

Leadership: We are committed to ensuring there is d/Deaf and Disabled leadership across our organisation.

ACTION AREA	Action Owner/ Lead	Working Group	Feedback identified in DIAP consultation	Key Action	Sub action	Timeframe
Leadership	Co-CEOs		Prioritise d/Deaf and Disabled leadership across the organisation.	Invest in leadership and representation of d/Deaf and Disabled staff at all levels of organisation.		
Leadership	Artistic Director				Establish goal of 20% of paid artists to identify as d/Deaf and Disabled.	Develop strategy 2023- 2025
Leadership	Co-CEOs				Scope and undertake business case for dedicated Access Officer role.	Undertake business case by July 2024 for Board discussion.
Leadership	Co-CEOs				Establish goal of 20% of core and casual staff to identify as d/Deaf and Disabled.	Develop strategy 2023- 2025
Leadership	Co-CEOs				Establish goal for representation of d/Deaf and Disabled staff in management/leadership positions.	Develop strategy 2023- 2025
Leadership	Executive Director	Cross-Department Working Group	Reduce barriers to d/Deaf and Disabled people obtaining and maintaining leadership opportunities and employment.	Ensure access is embedded in all policies and procedures are reviewed with DIAP lens applied as per the review cycle.		
Leadership	Executive Director				Support employment of people with access requirements by embedding reasonable adjustment to policies and procedures to support Employment Assistant Funding.	Establish workflow for Employment Assistant Funding applications by July 2023. Include Employment Assistant Funding process in recruitment strategy and Employee Lifecycle policy by October 2023 onwards. Review
Leadership	Co-CEOs				Develop formal procedures for communicating and providing access requirements in staff and board meetings.	Formal procedure approved by October 2023. Implemented across all organisation meetings from November 2023 onwards.
Leadership	Finance Manager	support from ED			Develop procurement policy that provides guidelines on fees for consultants.	Development of policy completed by December 2023. Implemented from January 2024 onwards.
Leadership	Venue Hire Coordinator				Establish minimum requirements for external venue hire events in terms of accessibility and include in venue hire policy to advocate for accessible events.	Included in venue hire packages and hires policy by November 2023. Implemented across all external hires from January 2024 onwards.
Leadership	Management Team		Reduce barriers to d/Deaf and Disabled people obtaining and maintaining artistic opportunities.	Review and improve all existing HR processes and norms to embed access.		

Leadership	Co-CEOs				Establish safe, robust and regular mechanisms for managers to have conversations and check in about access needs with their teams.	All staff training about cultural safety and access needs to be included in training schedule.
Leadership	Executive Director				Revise recruitment and on-boarding policy and induction checklist to better support staff with access requirements, including access to the Employment Assistant Fund. Include goals and quotas and reporting on number of d/Deaf and Disabled applicants.	Revise by August 2023. Recruitment and onboarding training for managers included in training schedule.
Leadership	ArtLife Manager	Cross-Department Working Group			Develop a year-round training schedule that address whole of organisation and specific team requirements.	Training schedule finalised for 2023 by July 2023. Year round training schedules to be finalised by March of each year ongoing.
Leadership	ArtLife Program & Inclusion Coordinator				Have access as a standing agenda item for all staff, team and board meetings. Create more definition and support for staff to have conversations about access and how it relates to their work.	By June 2023 onwards.
Leadership	ArtLife Program & Inclusion Coordinator	In collaboration with Management Team			Review and update of Employee Handbook and Induction Checklist. Consider incorporation of ArtLife Team induction information across whole of business.	Completed by July 2023. Annually reviewed.

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Goal: Communication: We will ensure strong communication and collaboration is embedded in how we work.						
ACTION AREA	Action Owner/ Lead	Working Group	Feedback identified in DIAP consultation	Key Action	Sub action	Timeframe
Communication	Marketing & Engagement		Improve consistency communication on our online platforms and onsite activations	Adjust our internal processes to pivot around artist and audience journey's with Footscray Community Arts.		
Communication	Marketing & Engagement				Audit existing gaps/issues about audience journey experience to Footscray Community Arts.	Audit completed by December 2023
Communication	Marketing & Engagement	Assemble cross department team			Audit existing gaps/ issues about online user experience.	Audit completed by December 2023
Communication	Marketing & Engagement				Create a video artist/ audience journey maps as a team, then, make action plan, then execute and add maintain consistency between web, on-site and Front of House staff information about access.	Video completed by June 2024, implement communication action plan July 2024 - 2025
Communication	Front of House				Develop a venue and front of house access handbook for any audience and visitor enquires.	Implemented by December 2023, annually reviewed and updated.
Communication	Reception				Develop a Reception communication plan that ensures consistent support and communication is available.	Implemented by December 2023, annually reviewed and updated.
Communication	Executive Director		Dependence on ArtLife d/Deaf and Disabled community as consultants and advisors, need to invest in broader relationships.	Invest in and build relationships with the d/Deaf and Disabled Communities.		
Communication	Industry Development Manager	In collaboration with ArtLife Program and Inclusion Coordinator			Establish relationships with d/Deaf and Disabled artists to develop a network of advisors and collaborators for paid consultancy.	Strategy sessions with existing d/Deaf and Disabled networks and advisors by Dec 2023. Implement strategy 2024-2025.
Communication	Co-CEOs	Cross-Department Working Group			Design and implement an annual strategy for gathering feedback from d/Deaf and Disabled communities. Establish formal process of receiving and responding to feedback.	Strategy sessions with existing d/Deaf and Disabled networks and advisors by Dec 2023. Implement feedback strategy 2024-2025, including community feedback days and accessibility survey. Receiving and responding to feedback workflow finalised by August 2023.

Goal: Creativity: We will provide a space for d/Deaf and Disabled artists to be their full artistic selves and create ambitious work. We will ensure our internal processes are accessible and provide tailored and appropriate support for artists.						
ACTION AREA	Action Owner/ Lead	Working Group	Feedback identified in DIAP consultation	Key Action	Sub action	Timeframe
Creativity	Artistic Director		Create a culturally safe environment to support d/Deaf and Disabled artists to be their full artistic selves. Address the barrier advocacy labour.	Improve our producing workflow to embed access at every step of a project.		
Creativity	Producer	Cross-Department Working Group			Update the existing producing workflow- embed accessibility at all stages of a project lifecycle. Establish a minimum access framework for projects to be approved.	Producers' workflow finalised by July 2023, implementation of approving projects with minimum access framework from July 2023 onwards. Artistic Director responsible to review pre-approved projects with access.
Creativity	Senior Producer	Cross-Department Working Group			Establish a framework and practical guide for producers to appropriately budget for access. Create an access budget protocol for all projects in programming and event experience. Establish a minimum budget requirement for project to be approved.	Research and seek paid advice from d/Deaf and Disabled consultants and Disability led art organisations by July 2023. Implement budget protocol and approval process across whole organisation from July 2023 onwards. Artistic Director responsible to review pre-approved projects with access budget framework.
Creativity	Front of House	In collaboration with Cultural Facilities Team			Improve existing Activation Sheet with access information and protocol and deliver accompanying casual staff training in d/Deaf and Disability awareness.	Activation Sheet updated by August 2023. Annual casual staff training in d/Deaf and Disability awareness implemented from August 2023 onwards.
Creativity	Production Manager	In collaboration with Cultural Facilities Team			Improve existing Production Sheet with access information and protocol and deliver accompanying casual staff training in d/Deaf and Disability awareness.	Production Sheet updated by August 2023. Annual casual staff training in d/Deaf and Disability awareness implemented from August 2023 onwards.
Creativity	Senior Producer	In collaboration with Front of House / Cultural Facilities Team			Programming team develop a standardised plan about accessibility across all programming, inclusive of exhibitions.	Access audit of current programming complete by December 2023, actions implemented from Jan 2024 onwards.
Creativity	Producer	Cross-Department Working Group			Develop standardised artist fees, framework for artwork sales and insurance of artworks.	Framework to be implemented by October 2023.
Creativity	Marketing Campaign Coordinator	In collaboration with Program Team			Establish an introduction pack for new contractors that includes key access information about how we work.	Induction plan to be implemented by October 2023.

Goal: Experience: We will develop a cohesive and consistent approach to delivering accessible experiences for visitors and industry.						
ACTION AREA	Action Owner/ Lead	Working Group	Feedback identified in DIAP consultation	Key Action	Sub action	Timeframe
Experience	Venue Operations Manager		Improve accessibility of physical spaces and infrastructure.	Execute precinct-wide upgrades to physical infrastructure to support accessible experiences.		
Experience	Facilities & Resources Manager				Redesign of reception desk, bar, bar tables and associated infrastructure to meet diverse access requirements.	Access consultants and advisors to review design brief and seek building quote by Dec 2023. Seek funding for infrastructure from Jan 2024 onwards.
Experience	Facilities & Resources Manager				Install tactile surface indicators within the building	Paid d/Deaf and Disabled access consultants and advisors to review design brief and seek installation quote by Dec 2023. Seek funding for installation from Jan 2024 onwards.
Experience	Facilities & Resources Manager	In collaboration with ArtLife Manager			Advocate to install auto doors where possible.	Paid d/Deaf and Disabled access consultants and advisors to review design brief and seek installation quote by Dec 2023. Seek funding for installation from Jan 2024 onwards.
Experience	Venue Operations Manager				Review toilet facilities and placement across precinct. Develop specific recommendations to include in precinct plan and advocate to council.	Paid d/Deaf and Disabled access consultants and advisors to review design brief and recommendations. Recommendations
Experience	Executive Director	In collaboration with ArtLife and Marketing Manager			Raise funds to purchase accessible van.	Funds raised by June 2023.
Experience	Executive Director				Embed access in precinct plan as a standing agenda item on Precinct Plan Project Steering Committee.	June 2023 onwards.
Experience	Production Manager	In collaboration with Marketing Manager + Facilities and IT manager			Engage our hearing aid loop in our Performance Space and increase awareness of this facility within the organisation and general public.	June 2023 onwards.

Experience	Marketing & Engagement		Ensure consistent accessibility on our online platforms and onsite visitor/audience experience.	Ensure our Marketing Strategy includes strategies to embed access across all channels and includes targets to engage with Disabled-led channels and d/Deaf and Disabled networks.		
Experience	Digital Marketing Coordinator	In collab with Marketing Team			Develop website improvement strategy and action plan.	Improvement strategy and action plan completed by Dec 2023 in consultation with d/Deaf and Disabled advisors. Implementation from April 2024 onwards.
Experience	Digital Marketing Coordinator	In collab with Marketing Team			Develop social media improvement strategy and action plan.	Improvement strategy and action plan completed by Dec 2023 in consultation with d/Deaf and Disabled advisors. Implementation from April 2024 onwards.
Experience	Marketing Campaign Coordinator	Front of House/ Marketing Collaborate			Develop minimum requirements for access information for all events. Web, ticketing, on the ground event signage and protocol.	Improvement strategy and action plan completed by Dec 2023 in consultation with d/Deaf and Disabled advisors. Implementation from April 2024 onwards.
Experience	Reception	Collaborate with Front of House/ Marketing			Improve wayfinding information for audience and visitors.	Improvement strategy and action plan completed by Dec 2023 in consultation with d/Deaf and Disabled advisors. Implementation from April onwards.
Experience	Marketing Campaign Coordinator	With Reception			Develop resources for getting to and from Footscray Community Art. e.g. videos and documents detailing transit routes with a focus on access considerations.	Resources developed in consultation with d/Deaf and Disabled advisors. Resources live and public from January 2024 onwards.

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Thank you.

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