ArtPlay Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Plain English

2023-2025

Contents

Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land. ArtPlay is on the lands of the Bunurong Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples of the Kulin Nation. We pay respect to their Elders past and present. Their sovereignty was never ceded, and this always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

Alternative Formats

This plan is available in alternative formats on our website. There are PDF, Word, Easy English and Plain English versions.

There is also an introduction in Auslan.

Website: melbourne.vic.gov.au/artplay

Introduction

ArtPlay is a key program of the City of Melbourne. ArtPlay wants to create a future where we celebrate diverse communities of children and families. We want to include all children and families as creative citizens of Melbourne.

ArtPlay acknowledges that many people face barriers to taking part in the life of the city. We understand that some children and families face intersecting barriers to inclusion. ArtPlay wants to address these barriers, in our activities, operations and management.

This plan is looking at barriers faced by d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people who may visit, work for, or take part in ArtPlay.

We have developed this Disability and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) to act and track our progress. We want to make sure that Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people can be fully included in every part of ArtPlay.

"If we get to kids early around their comfortability with disability and their comfortability with themselves, they just grow up to be completely easy with themselves in the world," ArtPlay DIAP advisor.

"Creative work and creative space can be a really important, transformative space to allow children and young people to think about the difference that they're bringing and the disability that they might be experiencing as a positive, as something that gives them a unique perspective that provides creative thinking and a creative space," ArtPlay DIAP advisor.

Purpose of this plan

- To show that the City of Melbourne is committed to the inclusion of d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people

- To ensure that ArtPlay commits to actions to reduce barriers to visiting, working at, and taking part in ArtPlay. We focus on barriers for d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent children, carers, parents, and artists

- To ensure that the City of Melbourne matches the budget commitments to Disability Access measures

- To develop a model of best practice for inclusion of d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people

- To ensure ArtPlay is accountable and responsive to d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities

Why we need a Disability Inclusion and Action Plan

- Indigenous sovereignty was never ceded. However, Aboriginal children and caregivers face many barriers because of dispossession and marginalisation. d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people in Aboriginal communities face more barriers, more often.

- The schooling system often excludes or isolates d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent children.

- d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent parents face barriers to community and social supports. This makes it harder for their children to take part in cultural life.

- d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent creatives and arts workers are marginalised in the arts. They have less pathways to professional recognition or development.

- d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people face many social barriers. These social barriers increase if d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people have a different culture or language. They increase if d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people are LGBTIQA+ or if they have economic barriers as well.

We know that our work is stronger and more relevant if we involve more diverse people in participating, conceiving, and creating it.

This DIAP is an expression of our intentions currently.

ArtPlay hopes that the ambitions contained within the plan grow over the coming years. We hope these ambitions are in step with the goals, needs and ideas of people who are d/Deaf, Disabled and/or Neurodivergent.

We view our DIAP as a living, working document. Artplay is excited to imagine the new possibilities for our programs that will come with its realisation, and evolution.

Language

ArtPlay has based this action plan on the social model of disability. (We explain this below). We also use the words below to describe the barriers that d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people experience.

- Ableism: barriers, beliefs, and discrimination against Disabled people

- Audism: barriers, beliefs, and discrimination against Deaf and hard of hearing people

This plan uses the term 'd/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people'. In this plan we use words that focus on the barriers that d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people face. We understand that there is not a word or description that suits everyone. Identity language is a very personal and political issue. d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities use different words to describe their experiences.

Many people who experience Disabling social barriers, may prefer some of the terms below:

- Disabled people: identity first language, uses capital letter for identity titles.

- Person With a Disability (PWD): person-first language.

- Deaf: Deaf people who identify as culturally Deaf and part of Deaf communities.

- d/Deaf: people who are hard of hearing as well as Deaf identifying people.

- Neurodivergent: some Neurodivergent people do not identify as Disabled, while many do. For the purposes of this plan the term 'Disabled' includes neurodivergent people.

We note that terminology for d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people often changes. d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent advisors decided on the language used in this plan.

This language may change, pending later advice from d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent advisors.

Social Model of Disability

The social model of disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by people with disability.

This explanation is from the [Australian Federation of Disability Organisations](#):

The social model of disability says that people are disabled by barriers in society, or people's attitudes.

The medical model of disability says people are disabled by their impairments or differences. The medical model looks at what is 'wrong' with the person, not what the person needs.

The social model helps us recognise barriers that make life harder for people with disability. Removing these barriers creates equality between disabled and non-disabled people. Removing barriers offers people with disability more independence, choice, and control.

Framework

This DIAP has been created following the City of Melbourne Values. It follows the social model of disability principles. These are in the 38th section of the 2006 Victoria Disability Act. This plan follows the Inclusive Victoria (State Disability Plan 2022-2026). It is informed by the UN conventions on both People with Disability and the Statement of Child Rights and Child Safety.

We developed the actions in this plan by consulting with:

- Arts Access Victoria,

- d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent artists

- parents of d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent children

- organisations working with d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent children and their parents

Who we are

ArtPlay is part of the Creative City Branch of the City of Melbourne. ArtPlay creates programs and experiences with, by and for children aged 0 – 13 years and their families.

ArtPlay programs are delivered from our dedicated Council venue based on the land of the Kulin Nations. We also provide online and "at home" creative offerings.

The ArtPlay program offers both public and targeted experiences for participants. Our program consists of curated events, workshops, and performances. They are innovative, participatory, and multi-art-form. We develop and deliver our program as partners with artists, arts, and non-arts organisations.

We offer learning opportunities for both emerging and established artists. We have a New Ideas Lab, which supports development and presentation of new work. We include new works as part of our program.

ArtPlay is a key program for the City of Melbourne and follows Council's commitment to diversity and inclusion. City of Melbourne is an equal opportunity employer. It is committed to providing a safe working environment and embracing diversity.

Who is this plan for?

- Members of the public who live, visit, or work in City of Melbourne
- Children who engage with ArtPlay
- Carers and parents of children who engage with ArtPlay
- Creatives who work with ArtPlay
- Staff and contractors who work with ArtPlay
- Managers and leaders in City of Melbourne
- d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities and advocates

City of Melbourne Values

- Integrity – Be honest and reliable, have integrity
- Courage – Speak up, have courage, make things happen
- Accountability – Act with accountability, be responsible for what you do and how you do it
- Respect – Be inclusive, stay open, value every voice, establish respect and collaborate
- Excellence – Display excellence, work with energy and passion achieving the best results

Victorian Disability Act (2006, updated 2022)

1. Inclusive Victoria: state disability plan (2022–2026)
2. Reducing barriers to persons with a disability accessing goods, services, and facilities;
3. Reducing barriers to persons with a disability obtaining and maintaining employment;
4. Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of persons with a disability;
5. Changing attitudes and practice which discriminate against persons with a disability. Ensuring these changes are tangible.

Budget commitment

The ArtPlay budget has access built in for each project, as well as for the whole organisation. This plan includes actions for raising funds for specific projects that need extra funds. Each year, ArtPlay will seek building-specific costs. We will do this through the City of Melbourne's Disability Discrimination Act capital works budget.

Access and Inclusion Working Group

The implementation of the ArtPlay DIAP is a whole team approach. The DIAP will be maintained by the ArtPlay Access and Inclusion Working Group. This group has different skills across Management, Creative and Production. It meets each 3 months to check the ensure the DIAP strategies and goals happen and updated according to the timeline.

This group includes:

- Creative Producer (Signal)

- Venue and Production Manager (ArtPlay and Signal)

- Front of House Coordinator (ArtPlay and Signal)

- Operations Coordinator (ArtPlay and Signal)

- Program Manager (ArtPlay and Signal)

- Disability Action Plan Implementation Coordinator (ArtPlay and Signal)

Consultation, Collaboration and Review

This DIAP was written through consultation and collaboration. ArtPlay worked with Arts Access Victoria and the ArtPlay Disability and Inclusion Advisory Group. Arts Access Victoria engaged the advisory group and facilitated the consultation meetings. The group was a mixture of people who were familiar and not familiar with the ArtPlay program.

The advisory group had other intersections with the ArtPlay programs (as parents or creatives). The advisory group gave input and feedback into this plan over three meetings in 2022. They provided deep and multi-faceted input to a meaningful collaboration.

The ArtPlay Disability and Inclusion Advisory Group:

Annick Akanni (she/her) is a hard of hearing visual and textile artist and early childhood educator, who has facilitated workshops at ArtPlay

Janice Florence (she/her) is a wheelchair user, dancer, choreographer, Manager Consultation and Training with Arts Access Victoria and Creative Director with Weave Movement Theatre

Jax Brown (they/them) is a queer, trans wheelchair user, writer, performer, advocate, and educator

Jo Dunbar (she/her) is a Deaf choreographer, director, facilitator and Deaf/Disability access and inclusion consultant

Leith Thomas (he/him) is a parent to two autistic children, a creative sector strategist at Future Tense, and a sound artist who has facilitated workshops at ArtPlay

Liz Wright (she/her) is manager of community inclusion and Women's Empowerment at Women with Disabilities Victoria

ArtPlay also engaged and sought feedback from Nilgun Guven from Vitae Veritas.

This DIAP will be reviewed each year by the ArtPlay Disability and Inclusion Advisory Group with City of Melbourne's ArtPlay Access and Inclusion Working group, Creative City Director and Senior Policy Officer Access and Inclusion.

Evaluation

Two groups will work together to check that the actions of this plan take place, and to note their impact.

The groups are:

- The ArtPlay Access and Inclusion Working group
- the ArtPlay Disability and Inclusion Advisory Group

The ArtPlay website will publish a progress report each year. It will be available by request in alternative formats.

The DIAP will be thoroughly reviewed and re-written at least every five years. Reviewing process will follow consultation with the disability community and other relevant stakeholders.

ArtPlay values community feedback on our progress in meeting the goals and actions outlined in our DIAP. We encourage individuals and organisations to share their thoughts and experiences.

You can give your feedback in the following ways:

Completing an anonymous online survey - [ArtPlay Accessibility Survey](#)

Leaving a voicemail on the phone

Emailing artplayaccess@melbourne.vic.gov.au outlining your feedback

Emailing artplayaccess@melbourne.vic.gov.au and asking for an ArtPlay staff member to call you back to hear your feedback

When giving your feedback, please let us know if you would like an ArtPlay staff member to respond.

ArtPlay will review all feedback at weekly staff meetings and respond to it as needed. ArtPlay will collate and review all feedback and responses at quarterly DIAP working group meetings. The advisory group will be able to view this information at the annual review.

Phone: (03) 9658 7880

Email: artplayaccess@melbourne.vic.gov.au

National Relay Service

Call the NRS help desk: 1800 555 660

Go to the NRS website: https://www.accesshub.gov.au/about-the-nrs

Organisation of this Plan

This plan is organised in the following way:

- 5 areas of engagement (Areas)
- 14 Goals organised according to each relevant Area
- 52 Priority Actions linked to Goals
- Evaluation Framework

Please note that there is also a separate internal operational timeline plan.

This includes specific implementation details including:

- Suggestions from DIAP advisors,
- Names and roles of staff responsible for specific actions,
- Budget allocations
- Evaluation and monitoring of each action.

The actions and goals of this plan are arranged according to 5 Areas of Engagement:

- 1. Connecting with ArtPlay (2 goals)
- 2. Engaging with ArtPlay Online (2 goals)
- 3. Getting to and being at ArtPlay (4 goals)
- 4. Being included at ArtPlay (3 goals)
- 5. Working with ArtPlay (3 goals)

Areas, Goals and Actions

Area 1: Connecting with ArtPlay

Goal 1: ArtPlay is well known among d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities

Actions in 2023 and ongoing

- Develop relationships with relevant organisations. e.g., Deaf Children Australia, Downs Syndrome Victoria, Statewide Vision Resource centre. Ensure they are sharing information about ArtPlay programs

Goal 2: ArtPlay is proactive in engaging with d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities. ArtPlay is accountable to d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities.

Actions in 2023-2027

- Monitor and review the implementation of this plan. The Disability Inclusion Working Group will meet 4 times a year. The Disability Inclusion Advisory Group will meet 1 time a year
- Consult d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities. Request feedback on access services and inclusion.

- Engage a DIAP implementation coordinator. They will help track the plan and bring capability and capacity to the ArtPlay team

Actions in 2025

- Investigate how d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent children can give feedback to ArtPlay.

Area 2: Engaging with ArtPlay Online

Goal 1: d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent children (and their guardians/carers) engage with ArtPlay online

Actions in 2023 and ongoing

- Ensure Accessible documents in word and PDF are available for download on the ArtPlay website – e.g., FAQ, DIAP, EOI processes

- Develop and put in place Access keys for the ArtPlay program in consultation with Access consultant

- Use visual rating symbols and access symbols on event promotions. Make sure this is consistent on all online and print materials

Actions in 2024

- Develop dedicated access pages on website. Ensure these have clear information and accessible content including relaxed performances.

Actions in 2026

- Make our promotional imagery more inclusive. Show more people who are d/Deaf, Disabled and or Neurodivergent.

Goal 2: The ArtPlay website will embed best practice for accessibility

Actions in 2023 and ongoing

- Continue the following on all videos Art Play produces:
- closed captions
- and descriptive transcripts (for low vision)

Actions in 2024

- Access Audit of current ArtPlay website

- Embed image descriptions and alt text. Make sure this is consistent on our website and social media.

Actions in 2024

- Develop accessible versions of program information. (e.g., easy English, illustrations, audio descriptions, Auslan videos)

Actions in 2027

- Develop guide for graphic designers that promotes accessible approaches

Area 3: Getting to and being at ArtPlay

Goal 1: ArtPlay provides detailed access information on website and to visitors before events

Actions in 2023 and ongoing

- Continue to feature full building scan (virtual tour) on website. This will help people to plan their visit to ArtPlay and for artists and contractors to view the building online.
- Improve communication process for d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities. Support them to communicate their access needs to ArtPlay before attending an event.

Actions in 2024

- Make sensory maps and relaxed guides available online so that people can plan their visit to ArtPlay beforehand
- Use the website event listings to give information about relaxed events. State which events are relaxed.

Goal 2: ArtPlay provides accessible wayfinding and signage on pathways to the venue

Actions in 2023

- Ensure Companion and Carer Card information is clearly shared in a range of formats

Actions in 2024

- Audit venue signage, approach and entrance for accessibility analysing current signage and wayfinding

Actions in 2025

- Improve signage and visibility around venue entrance. Establish appropriate standards and analyse current signage to include Braille and tactile signs
- Develop videos for the website to show the journey to the ArtPlay venue. Videos will include accessible entries, pathways, and public transport options.

Goal 3: ArtPlay provides detailed access information at the venue

- Ensure access information, relaxed guides and sensory maps are available on arrival in a range of formats. These are to assist people to navigate their way around the premises and to take part in ArtPlay programs.

Goal 4: ArtPlay staff can welcome and support d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities

Actions in 2023-2027

- Develop annual training schedule for staff to be always improving capacity.

Actions in 2023

- Make sure on-site participants can communicate information about access needs to staff. This needs a clear, well indicated process for communication from participants. Staff need to have the ability to follow up on access requests and queries.

Actions in 2025

- Schedule regular Auslan practice among staff

Area 4: Being included in ArtPlay Activities

Goal 1: ArtPlay provides a range of accessible equipment and facilities to make sure programs include d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities.

Actions in 2023 and ongoing

- Ensure there are access questions on all feedback forms

- Ensure ArtPlay follows up feedback and requests from d/Deaf Disabled communities. Ensure feedback informs the provision of appropriate access equipment.

Actions in 2024

- Ensure there is a relaxed/quiet space with adequate signage at all relaxed performance events

Actions in 2025

- Continue working with building access specialist Architecture and Access. This is to put in place recommendations from 2019 audit on ArtPlay venue.

- Conduct an audit on accessible equipment that is required for participants and audience members

Actions in 2026 and 2027

- Implement recommendations from accessible equipment audit

Goal 2: ArtPlay staff, artists and contractors embed inclusive approaches in program development and delivery

Actions in 2023

- Monitor and check what practices are occurring in current programming. Check which events are relaxed experiences.

Actions in 2025

- Increase the number and diversity of programming by d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent artists

Actions in 2026

- Investigate and develop pilot program led by d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent artist

Actions in 2027

- Trial a pilot program led by d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent artist or artists

Goal 3: ArtPlay includes d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities in activities. ArtPlay staff, artists and contractors all have the capacity to do this.

Actions in 2023-7

- Regularly engage with the arts and disability sector. Engagement should be at local, national, and international levels. Research and consider new approaches to access and inclusion within programming

Actions in 2023

- Make Access Project Consultation available for all New Ideas Lab projects. Ensure contracted experts with lived experience lead the consultation.

- Investigate cognitive age question for programming

- Investigate, develop, and track programming with, for and by d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent children

Area 5: Working with ArtPlay

Goal 1: ArtPlay has a positive reputation among d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities

Actions in 2023

- Have DIAP easily available on ArtPlay website. Ensure the DIAP is in a range of formats (including Easy English, Audio descriptions and Auslan video)

- Undertake social media promotion of DIAP with partner organisations

Goal 2: ArtPlay actively recruits more d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent artists, contractors, and staff

Actions in 2025

- Create Auslan videos for New Ideas Lab Expressions of Interest

- Develop alternative methods of applying for artist opportunities including Expression of Interest

- Have an inclusion statement in all Expression of Interest opportunities and job applications. This should clearly state that d/Deaf, Disabled, LGBTIQA+, First Nations and CALD applicants are encouraged to apply.

- Review current process for job positions and engagement opportunities. Expand advertising through Disability Employment Agency, disability arts networks and other networks.

Goal 3: ArtPlay provides support for d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent artists, contractors, and staff

Actions in 2025

- Conduct an audit on accessible equipment for artists, contractors, and staff. Work with People and Culture (City of Melbourne's Human Resources Branch) to investigate and develop support standards. These should offer for appropriate support for d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent staff or contractors.

Actions in 2026 and 2027

- Put in place appropriate support for d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent staff or contractors. Do this by working with People and Culture and external consultants.

- Implement recommendations from accessible equipment audit

Evaluation Framework

The actions of this plan will be monitored by the Access and Inclusion Working Group. This group will meet every 3 months to do the following:

- Monitor the implementation of any actions in this plan

- Check that feedback is being gathered on each action

- Note any immediate feedback from d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities

ArtPlay gathers feedback through staff perception checks, patron perception checks, Artists' perceptions checks and event surveys.

Each year, the Disability and Inclusion Advisory Group will meet to consider the actions in relation to each goal.

These meetings will gather:

- Notes from the Access and Inclusion Working Group,

- Results of annual surveys

- Other feedback

The Disability and Inclusion Advisory Group will consider:

- Are the actions achieving the goal?

- Do the actions need to be modified?