



# ArtPlay Disability Inclusion Action Plan

2023-2025

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## **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**

Our Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) is available in alternative formats on our website, and includes PDF, Word, Easy English and Plain English.

There is also an introduction in Auslan.

Website: [melbourne.vic.gov.au/artplay](http://melbourne.vic.gov.au/artplay)

## **Introduction**

As a key program of the City of Melbourne, ArtPlay is committed to a future where our diverse communities of children and families can be celebrated as creative citizens of Melbourne. We also acknowledge that many people face a range of (often intersecting) barriers to inclusion and participation in the life of the city.

“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.

This Disability and Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) has been developed to address and monitor identified barriers for d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people to fully participate in the activities, operations and management of ArtPlay.

“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 demonstrate the commitment of City of Melbourne to the inclusion of d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people
- To ensure that ArtPlay commits to actions to reduce barriers faced by d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent children, carers, parents and artists who engage, participate and work with ArtPlay
- To ensure Disability Access measures are matched with budget commitments by City of Melbourne
- 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, dispossession and marginalization of Aboriginal children and caregivers has led to greater and more widespread barriers being faced by d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people from Aboriginal communities.
- d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent children are marginalized in the schooling system and socially isolated.
- d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent parents are marginalized from accessing community and social supports to encourage their children to engage in cultural life.
- d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent creatives and arts workers are marginalized in the arts, with few pathways to professional recognition or development.
- These social barriers are compounded by cultural and linguistic differences, socio-economic status, LGBTIQ+ status, and other factors.

We know that the relevance and strength of our work relies upon the diversity of people involved in participating in, conceiving and making it. This DIAP is an expression of our intentions at this time.

We hope to see the ambitions contained within the plan grow over the coming years, in step with the goals, needs and ideas of people who are d/Deaf, Disabled and/or Neuro-divergent. We view our DIAP as a living, working document and we are excited to imagine the new possibilities for our programs that will come with its realisation, and evolution.

## Terminology

This action plan is based on the social model of disability, (explained below) and uses the term 'd/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people' to centre the marginalising impacts of the social barriers that this plan addresses.

These are described as:

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

We acknowledge that identity and language may vary between and within d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities, and is a deeply personal and political issue. Many people who experience Disabling social barriers may prefer to be identified by 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, and the current use is guided by d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent advisors, and may change, pending later advice from d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent advisors.

## Social Model of Disability

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

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

“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, and 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 and offers people with disability more independence, choice and control.”

## Framework

This DIAP has been created following the City of Melbourne Values and the social model of disability principles as found in the 38<sup>th</sup> section of the 2006 Victoria Disability Act and 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. These actions as set out below have been developed in consultation with Arts Access Victoria, focus groups with d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent people and parents of d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent children. Consultation included interviews with organisations working with d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent children and their parents.

## Who we are

Sitting within the Creative City Branch, the ArtPlay program partners with artists and arts and non-arts organisations. We develop, produce, and deliver innovative, participatory and multi-art-form programs and experiences with, by and for children and families. The program is delivered from our dedicated Council venue based on the land of the Kulin Nations; alongside online and “at home” creative offerings.

The ArtPlay program offers both public and targeted experiences for participants aged 0 – 13 years and their families. We offer learning opportunities for both emerging and established artists. The program consists of curated events, workshops and performances as well as projects drawn from the ArtPlay New Ideas Lab (which supports development and presentation of new work).

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 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. Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practice which discriminate against persons with a disability

## **Budget commitment**

Access is built into each ArtPlay project as well as the overall budget. If funds need to be raised for a specific project this becomes an action in the DIAP. Building-specific costs will be sought annually via 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 who represent different skills across Management, Creative and Production, and champion access within their respective areas. This group meets quarterly to ensure the DIAP strategies and goals are actioned 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 has been written in consultation and collaboration with Arts Access Victoria and the ArtPlay Disability and Inclusion Advisory Group who have each evaluated and input into this plan over three meetings in 2022. Members of the Advisory Group can maintain other intersections with the ArtPlay programs, enabling their input to be deep and multi-faceted and enabling the consultation and collaboration to be meaningful.

Arts Access Victoria engaged this Group who consisted of persons both familiar with and not familiar with the ArtPlay program. Arts Access Victoria also facilitated the consultation meetings.

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 annually 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

The ArtPlay Access and Inclusion Working group will work in partnership with the ArtPlay Disability and Inclusion Advisory Group to achieve and monitor implementation.

An annual progress report will be published on the ArtPlay website, and available by request in alternative formats.

The DIAP will be thoroughly reviewed and re-written at least every five years, following appropriate consultation processes 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 to ensure our continued improvement.

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](mailto:artplayaccess@melbourne.vic.gov.au) outlining your feedback

Emailing [artplayaccess@melbourne.vic.gov.au](mailto: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](mailto: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 which includes: specific implementation details including suggestions from DIAP advisors, names and roles of staff responsible for specific actions, budget allocations and 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

1. Develop relationships with relevant organisations (e.g. Deaf Children Australia, Downs Syndrome Victoria, Statewide Vision Resource centre) and ensure they are sharing information about ArtPlay programs

#### **Goal 2: ArtPlay proactively engages with and is accountable to d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities**

Actions in 2023-2027

1. Monitor and review the implementation of this plan through quarterly meetings of the Disability Inclusion Working Group and annual meetings of the Disability Inclusion Advisory Group
2. Consult and request feedback on access services and inclusion from d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities to strengthen relationships

Actions in 2023

1. Engage a DIAP implementation coordinator to ensure monitoring and to bring capability and capacity to the ArtPlay team

Actions in 2025

1. Investigate how to obtain feedback from d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent children

## **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

1. Ensure Accessible documents in word and PDF are available for download on the ArtPlay website – e.g. FAQ, DIAP, EOI processes
2. Develop and implement Access keys for the ArtPlay program in consultation with an Access consultant
3. Consistently use visual rating symbols and access symbols on all online and print materials promoting events

Actions in 2024

1. Develop dedicated access pages on website with clear information about accessible content including relaxed performances

Actions in 2026

1. Prioritise representations of people who are d/Deaf, Disabled and or Neuro-divergent from our program in promotional imagery

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

Actions in 2023 and ongoing

1. Continue to include closed captions and descriptive transcripts (for low vision) on all videos that ArtPlay produces

Actions in 2024

2. Access Audit of current ArtPlay website
3. Implement image descriptions and alt text on website and social media and ensure consistency
4. Develop multiple accessible versions of program information (e.g. easy English, illustrations, audio descriptions, Auslan videos)

Actions in 2027

5. 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

1. Continue to feature full building scan (virtual tour) on website for people to plan their visit to ArtPlay and for artists and contractors to view the building remotely

2. Improve process for d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities to communicate their access needs to ArtPlay before attending an event

Actions in 2024

1. Make sensory maps and relaxed guides available online so that people can plan their visit to ArtPlay beforehand
2. Communicate to our participants which events are relaxed experiences on the website event listings

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

Actions in 2023

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

Actions in 2024

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

Actions in 2025

1. Improve signage and visibility around venue entrance by establishing appropriate standards, analysing current signage to include Braille and tactile signs
2. Develop videos for the website that demonstrate the journey to the ArtPlay venue including accessible entries, pathways and public transport options.

## **Goal 3: ArtPlay provides detailed access information at the venue**

Actions in 2024

1. Ensure access information, relaxed guides and sensory maps are available on arrival in a range of formats to assist people to navigate their way around the premises and to participate in the program

## **Goal 4: ArtPlay staff are able to welcome and support d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities**

Actions in 2023-2027

1. Develop annual training schedule for staff to continuously improve capacity. Actions in 2023
2. Ensure there is a clearly indicated process for participants onsite to give information about access needs to staff and that staff are able to follow up on them

Actions in 2025

1. Schedule regular Auslan practice among staff

## **Area 4: Being included in ArtPlay Activities**

### **Goal 1: ArtPlay provides a range of accessible equipment and facilities for inclusion of d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities**

Actions in 2023 and ongoing

1. Ensure there are access questions on all feedback forms

2. Ensure feedback and requests from d/Deaf Disabled Neurodivergent communities are followed up and inform the provision of appropriate access equipment

Actions in 2024

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

Actions in 2025

1. Continue working with building access specialist Architecture and Access to implement recommendations from 2019 audit on ArtPlay venue
2. Conduct an audit on accessible equipment that is required for participants and audience members

Actions in 2026 and 2027

1. Implement recommendations from accessible equipment audit

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

Actions in 2023

1. Monitor and check what practices are occurring in current programming, and which events are relaxed experiences

Actions in 2025

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

Actions in 2026

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

Actions in 2027

1. Implement pilot of program led by d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent artists

## **Goal 3: ArtPlay staff, artists and contractors are able to include d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities in activities**

Actions in 2023-7

1. Regularly engage with the arts and disability sector (local, national and international) to research and consider new approaches to access and inclusion within programming

Actions in 2023

1. Make Access Project Consultation, led by contracted experts with lived experience, available for all New Ideas Lab projects

Actions in 2026

1. Investigate cognitive age question for programming

Actions in 2027

1. Investigate, develop and monitor 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

1. Have DIAP easily available on ArtPlay website in a range of formats (including Easy English, Audio descriptions and Auslan video)
2. 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

1. Create Auslan videos for New Ideas Lab Expressions of Interest
2. Develop alternative methods of applying for artist opportunities including Expression of Interest
3. Explicitly state in all Expression of Interest opportunities and job applications that d/Deaf, Disabled, LGBTIQ+, First Nations and CALD applicants are encouraged to apply
4. Review current process for job positions and engagement opportunities by expanding options for advertising through Disability Employment Agency, disability arts networks and through other appropriate networks

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

Actions in 2025

1. Conduct an audit on accessible equipment that is required for artists, contractors, and staff
2. Work with People and Culture (City of Melbourne's Human Resources Branch) to investigate and develop standard for appropriate support for d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent staff or contractors

Actions in 2026 and 2027

1. Work with People and Culture and external consultant to implement appropriate support for d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent staff or contractors
2. Implement recommendations from accessible equipment audit

## **Evaluation Framework**

The actions of this plan will be monitored at quarterly meetings of the Access and Inclusion Working Group, who will check that feedback on each action is being gathered and note any immediate feedback from d/Deaf, Disabled and Neurodivergent communities. Feedback is gathered through staff perception checks, patron perception checks, Artists' perceptions checks, and event surveys. The advisory group will also monitor the implementation of any actions.

The Actions will be evaluated annually by the Disability and Inclusion Advisory Group. Annual evaluation will assemble notes from the Access and Inclusion Working Group, the results of annual surveys and other

feedback and consider the actions in relation to each goal. The Disability and Inclusion Advisory Group will consider:

- Are the actions achieving the goal?
- Do the actions need to be modified?