

CANBERRA THEATRE ACCESS ACTION PLAN



Prepared by

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For

Canberra Theatre Centre

EMA

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1.0 Introduction

The Canberra Theatre Centre has initiated this Action Plan to coordinate a structured strategy to consider and manage the needs of people with disabilities. The Action Plan includes all aspects of the CTC business.

2.0 Management

2.1 Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan could in terms of the Canberra Theatre Centre include more specific objectives and actions to upgrade facilities and services to meet the current requirements for people with disabilities of both staff and patrons.

The vision could include the aspiration for the Canberra Theatre Centre to become one of the leading facilities in Australia in the provision of cultural services, facilitates and opportunities for people with disabilities.

Note: Funding constraints apply and any work will need forward programming so implementation may take time, especially for larger improvements.

2.2 Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan could include strategies for the Canberra Theatre Centre to have a facility and services that meet current DDA requirements as detailed in the Premises Standards. This is important if the measure of success is numbers.

More specific Accessibility Principles for the Canberra theatre Centre could be included.

2.3 Current Disability Policies, Strategies and Programs

- These should be dated especially if hard copies are used to ensure currency of the information.
- There is a detailed Front of House Patron Service Office (FOH PSO) induction process but the process is unclear as to how staff are inducted and made aware of the processes and information that relate to people with disabilities.
- Some wording in the FOH PSO could be clearer and better expressed such as “access for people with disabilities” rather than “disabled access” and including the location of PWD WC facilities in 2.1 and 2.2; and
- Section 7 of the FOH PSO could expand details of access for wheelchair users or reference other material.

2.4 Text

All printed material should be *sans serif*. However it is noted that some text may be serif dependent upon individual design of brochures and printed materials and third party materials cannot be controlled by CTC.

2.5 Use of Plain English

Review and tailor processes to ensure clear plain English information is available to all and presented with a consistent manner.

3.0 Buildings

The objective should be to upgrade the whole facility to current codes/standards as and when work can be programmed and funded.

The major higher priority tasks are:

- Playhouse - backstage.
- Canberra Theatre toilet upgrade.
- Canberra Theatre seating, including lift to centre cross aisle.

Other tasks:

- Administration building.
- Playhouse toilets.
- Playhouse stairs.

Long term, desirable tasks:

- Playhouse lift to second floor.
- Canberra Theatre access to lowest level.
- Administration areas in link.
- Courtyard back stage access.

The process before each item of work should be to undertake a detailed access audit of the area and then implement all work required to bring it up to standards/codes and best practice current at the time of doing the work. The brief for every project shall include detailed requirements for accessibility and designers need to confirm capability in this area.

4.0 Other Issues

4.1 PROCEDURES

4.1.1 Complaints Register

A new policy needs to be assessed after a year of operation. The complaint's register will be useful in assisting this review.

This will provide information and details to help determine priorities and support implementation when work is proposed.

4.1.2 Evacuation Manual

A detailed Emergency Evacuation Management Plan exists and Section 6 details requirements for persons with special needs.

4.1.3 Review and Update

The Action Plan should be reviewed and updated every 5 years to keep it current with organization and accepted requirements.

4.1.4 Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)

The Action Plan should be submitted to the AHRC on completion. This should be in a suitable and readable format.

4.1.5 Publish the Action Plan

Publish the Action Plan on the CTC website in a succinct and readable format.

4.1.6 Reasonable Adjustment of Workplace

Reasonable adjustments to the workplace should be made to suit a staff member with a disability when necessary.

4.1.7 Disability Group Liaison

a Working with Other Access Interest Groups

Working with groups such as Vision Australia, Better Hearing Australia and the ACT Deafness Resource Centre is positive and to be encouraged and expanded.

b Consultation

It would be beneficial to consult with disability groups on the Action Plan.

a. Artists with Disabilities

Inclusion of artists with disabilities should continue to be encouraged by CTC. This could also include the offering of workshops for and by artists with disabilities. This could also work with Disability Arts and similar organizations.

4.1.8 Promotion

a Inclusion

Inclusion of people with disabilities should be promoted in all aspects of the business, marketing and information.

b Promotion

Establish a promotional network with disability groups for the venue, programs and opportunities. This could be addressed through social capital tickets.

4.1.9 Staff

c Staff Training

There appears to be no mention of staff training to enable effective management of working with people with disabilities, the DDA or disability awareness. This is particularly important when managing tour groups and special performances. There may be some benefit in a survey of staff regarding attitudes to people with disabilities.

This area could be improved with annual or bi-annual training as in the fire and evacuation training currently in place. This would be very useful, especially when considering the high volume of casual employees in the FOH area.

b. Equal Opportunity Employer

CTC is an equal opportunity employer and continuation of existing policies should be maintained

4.1.10 Technical

a Demographics

There currently appears to be little statistical information available of the demographics of the audience to determine patronage by people with disabilities. This could provide useful information and influence priorities for work.

b Technology

Keep abreast of latest technological developments in relation to the provision of cultural services for people with disabilities and implement that suitable to enhance the experience of patrons and ease the workload of staff.

5.0 Operational Issues

5.1.1 Roles and Responsibilities

Every manager and employee is responsible for ensuring that there is no discrimination based on disability.

The management group is responsible for reporting on any equity matters.

The Director, Administrative managers, and section supervisors are responsible for advising contractors of CTC equity related policies and procedures and ensure the relevant clauses are included in contracts.

5.1.2 Privacy

Staff are not required to disclose their disability unless they are seeking accommodation or environmental adjustments.

CTC observes confidentiality in matters relating to disability.

Claims of discrimination on the grounds of a disability will be investigated, respecting people's privacy and information will only be given on a need to know basis.

5.1.3 Reasonable Allowance

Tasks will consider a reasonable allowance to suit a person's disability. Each situation will be considered on its own merits.

NOTE: It is not unlawful to discriminate against a person with a disability if the adjustment would impose unjustifiable hardship on CTC.

NOTE: Australian Human Rights Commission information paper on Employment and the DDA Part 1; particularly "*What are an employer's obligations under the DDA.*"

5.1.4 Complaints

All employees are expected to comply with CTC policies and refrain from engaging in any harassing behaviour.

Any employee, contractor or visitor who believes they have been unfairly treated on the grounds of a disability is encouraged to discuss the matter with the management group.

Appropriate action may follow the outcome including disciplinary action.

5.1.5 Monitor

Monitor all programs and activities to ensure continuous improvement and implementation of change to provide the best outcome.

5.1.6 Funding

Identify potential funding sources to assist in implementation of any aspect of the Action Plan.

6.0 Implementation

The first phase is to implement policies and process; the second involves changes to the buildings; and final phase is to embrace employment and performance opportunities.

It is noted that physical changes will require forward budget and programming and will be subject to financial and administrative approvals.

A report against the implementation of this Action Plan will occur annually in the CTC Annual Report.

The Action Plan will be updated in 5 years.