

There are many resources available to help you improve your access. These include organisations that can offer advice, equipment that you can use and funding that may be available. The following section outlines these resources.

### Disability awareness training

Disability awareness training (DAT) is an excellent starting point for addressing and improving all areas of access throughout an organisation. This training can promote a positive change in the attitudes of employers, staff and the general public towards the access rights and specific services required by people with a disability. Information, training and education about people with a disability is the key to understanding the difficulties and issues encountered and experienced by these people as consumers of the arts.

The arts industry has responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) to provide venues and services that are accessible to people with a disability. DAT assists management, programmers and staff to respond appropriately to the needs of consumers with a disability in the light of the legislative framework.

DAT can cover customer service, venue access, disability awareness, adaptive technology, the implications of the DDA, adapting art forms and experiencing disability and can be tailored to an organisation's specific requirements.

Disability Awareness Training is available from most of the State and Territory arts and disability organisations listed in appendix 3. Disability-specific awareness training is available from organisations such as the Australian Quadriplegic Association and the state Royal Blind Societies.

### Arts and Disability organisations

See the listing of useful arts and disability organisations in appendix 3.

### Sign interpreted performances

Sign interpreted performances are those in which a specially trained sign interpreter translates the spoken or sung elements of a performance into sign language. The interpreters are professionals whose services are paid for by the organisation as an audience service.

Sign interpreters should have a copy of the script well in advance of the performance and should be able to meet the cast, designer and director in rehearsal to discuss any questions they may have.

The Australian Theatre of the Deaf, based in Sydney, provides advanced training for those interested in professional sign interpretation and can recommend interpreters to arts organisations. State associations of the deaf may provide these services outside New South Wales.

### The Entertainment Access Service (EASE)

EASE is part of Victoria's Arts Access (contact details in Appendix 3). It includes a low cost ticket and specialised seating service and an information network providing details on access events and other arts-related matters to its subscribers.

EASE is an excellent outlet for information about your exhibitions, performances, events and other news. It has a large subscriber database of people you may not otherwise reach. EASE sends updates every four weeks to its subscribers, who include people with disabilities and major organisations. It offers services throughout Victoria.

EASE offers its subscribers lower cost tickets but also allows subscribers to book tickets with the service via phone, fax, telephone typewriter (TTY), e-mail or in person. EASE then handles the booking process, obtaining tickets through the appropriate agency and sending them to subscribers. Generally decisions about programming are consumer-driven. EASE attempts to provide tickets for popular mainstream events such as musical theatre, movies, ballet, opera and concerts. For smaller events EASE follows up specific requests by subscribers.

A recent survey found that EASE was reaching people who otherwise simply wouldn't have heard about arts events. The EASE service continues to develop and the demand for accessible, affordable seating is on the increase. In 1995 a total of 18,848 tickets were sold/distributed via EASE, as opposed to 15,180 in 1994 - a 24 per cent increase. EASE is providing a new and loyal audience for the arts. While there are similar individual pilot programs in Brisbane and Adelaide, EASE is unique in this country.

### The Australian Caption Centre

With the increased use of film, video and multi-media across artforms the provision of captions is a further means of making the arts more accessible for people with a disability.

The Australian Caption Centre is a non-profit organisation that produces captions for television, video and commercials. Its ultimate aim is to make sure that all TV programs and videos in Australia are available with captions.

### Audio description

Audio description is the process of making the visual images of theatre, exhibitions and other artforms accessible for people who are blind or have a sight disability. It takes the form of commentary and narration, which guides the listener through the program with concise, objective descriptions of new scenes, settings, costumes, body language and 'sight gags' placed between dialogue and song.

Audio describers are trained to notice the visual world with a heightened sense of acuity and to express the images verbally.

A patron receives the audio description through an unobtrusive earpiece and, in cases of live description, a receiver.

See appendix 3 for two organisations who offer audio description.



## Equipment

### Adaptive Vision Technology

- Tactual or tactile diagrams and maps are diagrams or maps on which the detail has been 'raised' to allow tactile reading with the hands for people who are blind or have a vision disability. The written text is either 'raised' or translated into Braille.
- Picture Braille is a computer program used to produce embossed Braille diagrams and graphs.
- Raised large print diagrams are tactile diagrams with large raised print labels rather than Braille for non-Braille readers.
- Bold print diagrams are simplified diagrams produced with large print labels.
- Speech synthesiser software is software that enables a person who cannot read the screen to hear what is written on the screen.

### Adaptive Hearing Devices

An increasing number of organisations have installed listening systems to assist people with hearing loss. There are four main systems:

#### FM system

A radio system using a designated FM radio frequency to carry a signal to receivers or devices used by listeners within a limited range. Used on guided tours, the guide wears a transmitter with a microphone and the person with hearing loss wears a receiver attached to a headphone, earpiece or induction plate.

#### Hardwire system

The listener is directly connected to the sound source. A socket is positioned in a designated seat or in the wall or floor to take a plug-in device with headphones or earpieces provided by the organisation or the person with a hearing loss.

#### Infrared system

Sound signals are transmitted using invisible infrared light rays. Listeners use cordless receivers provided by the organisation or by themselves to listen.

**The Audio induction loop**

A microphone or sound source is connected to an amplifier's audio input. The signal is then fed into a wire, which is placed around the perimeter of the seating area. A listener within the loop-enriched area picks up the signal through a hearing aid equipped with a telecoil or by using a receiver. Portable loops are also available.

Other adaptive hearing devices include:

**Captions**

Captions are text displayed on televisions, videos and cinema screens to help people who are unable to hear the soundtrack. Those who have English as a second language and senior citizens may also benefit from captioning.

**TTY telephone typewriter**

This allows telephone communication between two people who are deaf, or a person who is deaf and a person who is not. By using a typewriter keyboard two people type messages to each other over the telephone line on a small digital display. By installing a TTY you could increase access and facilitate bookings.

**TTY relay service**

This is a third party relay system where an operator uses two telephones, one standard and one connected to a TTY machine. The operator relays a call between a person who is deaf using a TTY and a person who is not deaf using an audio telephone.

**Modified pay phones**

These include features such as touch-pad dialing, extended phone cords, hearing aid couplers, visual displays and hands-free dialing. Pay phones that only accept credit cards have volume control. Phone cabinets can be widened and phones lowered for access for a person in a wheelchair or using a walking frame.

## **Adaptive Mobility Technology**

The Yellow Pages directory is full of lift manufacturers that cater for people with disabilities. There are many brand names, often for the same generic product.

### **Stair chairs**

For people unable to climb stairs. A person sits in the stair chair and the chair is moved along a rail from one level to another. Stair chairs generally require no renovations and install directly onto the staircase.

### **Vertical or inclined wheelchair lifts or stair climbers**

There are a variety of platforms available to accommodate a wheelchair. A fold-down seat for people not in wheelchairs but who may have difficulty climbing stairs can be included, which then caters for most mobility disabilities. There are interior and exterior versions. This type of product is widely used by the arts industry where lifts are not available.

### **Platform lift**

A space saving alternative to ramps or elevators, often suitable for heritage buildings. Suitable for interior and exterior use. These vary from simple platforms to small vertical, enclosed individual lifts. Porch lifts are similar to platform lifts.

### **Ramp**

While a permanent ramp system is better, temporary ramps can be easily constructed or hired. You can get advice from organisations such as the Australian Quadriplegic Association or Paraquad in each State and Territory.

## Funding

There are a variety of avenues to explore when seeking funding to make your venue and programs accessible to people with disabilities.

As for any submission, it is important to contact the funding body first to determine their particular guidelines and closing dates. Try to find out as much as possible about the organisation, particularly their aims and objectives, the criteria they use for funding and any new funding programs they may be implementing.

Finding support from the local community can often be one of the most successful ways to fund a project. Local support can include:

- Limited funding from local governments through cultural/recreation/arts/community services departments.
- Limited funds for community activities from service clubs, such as Lions, Apex or Rotary.
- In-kind support. Businesses or organisations in the local area may support arts activities financially, donate materials, facilities and equipment or supply their services at reduced rates. For example, in-kind support may include providing people to help build ramps.

The following government organisations and departments either directly fund the arts or fund community-based projects that fit their criteria. Before preparing an application for funds, it is recommended you contact the relevant department to discuss your project.

Information on a range of funding programs can also be sourced via Artsinfo, the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts' information service [www.artsinfo.net.au](http://www.artsinfo.net.au); 1800 241 247.



## **Federal Government**

### **Australia Council**

P.O. Box 788  
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012  
Internet: [www.ozco.gov.au](http://www.ozco.gov.au)  
Phone: 02 9950 9000  
Fax: 02 9950 9111

### **Visions Australia**

Department of Communications,  
Information Technology  
and the Arts  
GPO Box 2154  
Canberra, ACT 2601  
Phone: 02 6279 1000

### **Playing Australia**

Department of Communications,  
Information Technology  
and the Arts  
GPO Box 2154, Canberra, ACT 2601  
Phone: 02 6279 1661  
Fax: 02 6279 1697

### **Festivals Australia**

Department of Communications,  
Information Technology  
and the Arts  
GPO Box 2154  
Canberra, ACT 2601  
Phone: 02 6279 1665  
Fax: 02 6279 1697  
Messages: 1800 819 461

### **The Australia Foundation for Culture and Humanities**

33-39 Lonsdale St  
Melbourne, VIC 3000  
Phone: 03 9207 7020  
Fax: 03 9639 4505  
Toll free: 1800 064 201

## State Funding

### State Government Agencies

Building improvements that include accessibility features may be eligible for funding from a capital grants program. It is important to first check with the agency in your State or Territory as to whether such programs are currently available. State and Territory governments each have a body that is responsible for the arts: Arts SA, Arts Victoria, Arts Queensland, Arts WA, Arts Tasmania, Northern Territory Department of Arts and Museums, artsACT and the New South Wales Ministry for the Arts. Although there are differences among these organisations, in general they oversee the operations of a number of state-owned cultural agencies, provide grants and services to arts organisations, local government and community groups and investigate policy development, research and planning. These bodies are largely responsible for capital works projects.

### Community Support Funds

Community support funds direct a portion of government revenue from gaming machines in hotels/casinos to programs and projects that will benefit the community. These funds are available in Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia.

Every State and Territory has bodies such as an Arts Council, government and community-based ethnic affairs and multicultural organisations with arts components and Departments of Health and Sport and Recreation (or equivalent), all of which may have relevant funding available.

### Philanthropic Trusts

The following are some key trusts with a record of funding art in the community. For detailed information and a more comprehensive list of trusts and foundations, refer to The Australian Directory of Philanthropy.



**Philanthropy Australia**

Level 10, 530 Collins St  
Melbourne, VIC 3000  
Phone: 03 9620 0200  
Fax: 03 9620 0199

**The Jack Brockhoff Foundation**

Suite 3, 476 Canterbury Rd  
Forest Hill, VIC 3131  
Phone: 03 9877 9700

**ANZ Trustees**

21/530 Collins St  
Melbourne, VIC 3000  
Phone: 03 9273 2701

**The Myer Foundation**

Level 45, 55 Collins St  
Melbourne, VIC 3000  
Phone: 03 9207 3040

**The Lance Reichstein  
Charitable Foundation**

Level 5, 165 Flinders Lane  
Melbourne, VIC 3000  
Phone: 03 9650 4400

**The R E Ross Trust**

Level 7, 24 Albert Rd  
South Melbourne, VIC 3205  
Phone: 03 9690 6255