

Accessibility in Public Events



This information has been prepared by Equal Access to provide guidance on access requirements to all parties involved in the festival and event industry.

According to a 2009 survey by the Australian Bureau of Statistics there are four million people in Australia with a disability, which equates to 18.5% of the population.

It is clear from recent complaints made to the Australian Human Rights Commission that accessible features in events continue to be misunderstood and overlooked. Failure to successfully plan for the needs of people with disability presents a significant risk to event organisers if not carefully considered at all stages of an event. There is however little guidance material available to provide advice on how these risks can be reduced and how compliance with applicable legislative requirements can be achieved.

On the 1 May 2011 the *Commonwealth Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards 2010* (Premises Standards) were introduced and adopted into the Building Code of Australia as well as state based legislation, including the Victorian building regulations.

The objectives of the Premises Standards are to ensure that *'dignified, equitable, cost-effective and reasonably achievable access to buildings, and facilities and services within buildings, is provided for people with a disability'*.



If an event organiser fails to acknowledge accessibility as a critical component of their event plan it will present a major risk to the organisation

The Premises Standards applies to new buildings and existing buildings being altered and sets out clear parameters for access requirements. However, as access is improved within the built environment it is also reasonable for members of the community to expect that good access is provided to events, festivals and temporary structures (such as marquees, event tents, exhibition spaces etc).



under the *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. A person with a disability could make a complaint to the Human Rights Commission under Section 23 *Access to Premises*, or Section 24 *Goods, services and facilities*. There have already been a number of such complaints made to the Commission which have been resolved through a conciliation process.

It is therefore important for all parties involved in events to consider accessibility in the early stages of event planning. This will not only reduce risk but increase the potential for increased attendance rates and the overall success of an event.



Access Considerations:

When preparing an event plan, the following must be considered to provide equitable and dignified access:

- Choosing the right venue
- Providing information about the event
- Travelling to the event
- Arriving at the event
- Entering the event
- Moving around the event
- Accessing goods and services within the event
- Using facilities within the event
- Obtaining further assistance
- Emergency management

Where to get help:

Equal Access are perfectly positioned to assist with providing access advice for festivals and events. We are one of Australia's leading Accredited Disability Access Consultancies and are registered with the Association of Consultants in Access Australia. For a number of years we have provided a specialist consulting service to enhance the built environment and to provide **'Equal Access'** for members of the community with disability.

Equal Access has also prepared an Event Access Checklist.

For further information or to obtain a copy of the checklist, please contact:

Phone: 1300 994 890 or 03 9001 5805

Email: office@equalaccess.com.au

Web: disabilityaccessconsultants.com.au

