

# Informational Accessibility

Informational accessibility is about ensuring that young people with disabilities (YPwD) can easily perceive and present information within your space. By offering diverse and accessible methods for engaging with information, you enable YPwD to achieve the same level of understanding as our peers. This empowerment allows us to make informed decisions about how we can interact with your organisation. At its core, informational accessibility emphasises clear communication and a thoughtful consideration of varying needs regarding time and information processing.

# Topic 1: Establishing Expectations

## What?

Establishing expectations means giving people clear information about what will happen and ensuring that everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.

## Why?

This is important when advertising for situations such as an event, scheduling a meeting, or explaining a task. While everyone benefits from established expectations, it is especially important for many YPwD. This is because having access to comprehensive details allows us to prepare adequately and reduces anxiety about potential challenges.

# Topic 1: Establishing Expectations

## How?

To help establish expectations, people should be provided with information that is detailed, timely and specific:

- Provide information or changes with as much notice as possible.
- Information should be readily available without requiring extra steps to access it.
- Frame expectations for behaviour positively, by stating what you want to see rather than what you don't want to see.
- An access Map is a map of a location which includes extra information about accessibility and what to expect in a particular environment, like this [Perth Zoo Access Map](#).
- An access document provides accessibility information relevant to a particular location or situation like this [access doc for Fringe Festival](#).

# Topic 1: Establishing Expectations

## How?

### Important Information includes:

- Time and place,
- Sensory conditions of the environment, such as noise, smells, and lighting levels,
- Required preparation such as what attendees need to bring or prerequisite skills and/or knowledge,
- Specifics about accessibility and available accommodations your organisation can offer,
- Contact details and feedback revenues.

# Topic 2: Multiple Formats

## What?

Information is not processed the same by everyone. Formats are defined by how they present the same information in various ways, depending on their purpose, intended audience, length, and publisher. Informational accessibility requires offering multiple ways to absorb and comprehend the information you are sharing. Each format may have specific rules and guidelines to follow, such as Easy Read standards or effective formatting for screen readers.

## Why?

Providing information in multiple formats benefits everyone, not just YPwD, as it accommodates diverse learning styles and ensures that individuals retain and understand information. The more flexible your organisation is in offering information, the more freedom it gives us to choose the format that best suits our needs.

# Topic 2: Multiple Formats

## How?

Remember, don't assume who your audience is or what their needs are, instead prepare for what you have been told to accommodate for, this will be by:

- Asking employees or customers to provide their access needs for the tasks they will have to complete.
- Preparing multiple formats in advance to save time and resources, preventing the need to rush accommodations while working with individuals.
- Upskilling staff on the different formats available to present information.

# Topic 3: Auditory Information

## What?

Auditory accessibility involves adapting audio content so that it can be accessed by young people with disabilities regardless of our hearing and audio processing capabilities.

## Why?

It is important to accommodate auditory disabilities, as 24.6% of the Australian population (6,199,200 people) has some form of partial or total hearing loss (ABS, 2019).

Auditory information can be inaccessible to people who are hard of hearing, Deafblind, or D/deaf (capitalizing the 'D' when referring to someone who was deaf pre-language acquisition as a child) if there is no written information that explains what can be heard in speech and non-speech audio. Accommodating auditory disabilities also benefits individuals who are simply in noisy environments, non-native speakers, and those with cognitive differences.

# Topic 3: Auditory Information

## How?

- Sign language interpretation: Australian Sign Language (Auslan) is the official language of the D/deaf and Hard of Hearing community in Australia with its own structure, rules and cultural nuances. [Expression Australia](#) is one service that offers Auslan interpreting through NDIS funding.
- Captions: can be open or closed. Open captions are when captions are a part of the video and closed captions are optional to the viewer. Learn more about captioning from WAI on their website on the [Captions and Subtitles page](#).
- Transcripts: are like captions, but instead of showing text line by line, a transcript is a document that shows all required information at once. Learn [How to Create Transcripts](#) from WAI.
- Other non-traditional formats that convey auditory information include experiential learning, infographics, pictures, and photos.



# Topic 4: Visual Information

## What?

Visual accessibility involves adapting visual content so that it can be accessed by people regardless of their visual processing capabilities.

## Why?

It is important to accommodate for visual disabilities as 5.8% of the Australian population (1,461,600 people) have some form of partial or total vision loss (ABS, 2019).

Without visual adaptations like audio transcripts or tactile information people who have loss of sight, are blind or Deafblind are unable to interact with the community. It also benefits people in low-light environments, increases mobile compatibility, and improves navigation.

# Topic 4: Visual Information

## How?

- Braille: is a form of writing where characters are represented by patterns of raised dots that are felt with the fingertips. The Australian Braille Authority has a [Rules and Guidelines for Formatting Braille](#) page to follow.
- Image descriptions: are a short description of an image. Learn [How to describe images](#) from WAI.
- Other non-traditional formats that convey visual information include group discussions, storytelling, podcasts and other audio, speeches, creative expression, games, and experiential learning.

# Topic 5: Language Use

## What?

Accessible language use refers to using easily comprehensible language and grammar to present information. This is so that people who have difficulty processing information can do so with less obstacles to understanding key points.

## Why?

Language accessibility facilitates better communication while reducing misunderstandings and improving the overall quality of interactions. For the 16.7% of the Australian population (4,208,400 people) who have difficulty learning or understanding things (ABS, 2019), a lack of language accessibility results in social and emotional isolation, as well as barriers to education, employment, and access to services.

# Topic 5: Language Use

## How?

- Easy Read: is a specific style of writing that uses short sentences and simple vocabulary. Each sentence has a picture to reinforce its meaning, and there is a large amount of space between each sentence. The Australian Government has an [Easy Read Style Manual](#) to follow.
- Information Summary: is a shortened version of a long text that includes the main points. Sometimes called Too Long Didn't Read (or TLDR) on social media. Learn how to [Provide a Summary of Long Documents and Media](#) from the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI).
- Other non-traditional formats that convey auditory information include experiential learning, group discussions, storytelling, podcasts and other audio, speeches/presentations, creative expression, games, pictures and photos.

# Self-audit

1. My organisation provides clear and detailed information before any activity or event to all participants and staff.

**Never**      **Rarely**      **Sometimes**      **Often**      **Always**

2. My organisation provides alternative formats and ways to process information.

**Never**      **Rarely**      **Sometimes**      **Often**      **Always**

3. My organisation uses tools and services for people with *auditory* disabilities.

**Never**      **Rarely**      **Sometimes**      **Often**      **Always**

4. My organisation uses tools and services to improve accessibility for people with *visual* disabilities.

**Never**      **Rarely**      **Sometimes**      **Often**      **Always**

5. My organisation uses accessible language to communicate information at our audience's level of understanding.

**Never**      **Rarely**      **Sometimes**      **Often**      **Always**

## Disclaimer & (More About YDAN)

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