

Arts Centre Melbourne

Disability, Equity and Inclusion Plan

Part A 2023 – 2027



Acknowledgement of Country

Arts Centre Melbourne and the Melbourne Arts Precinct sit on a site that has been a gathering place for song, storytelling, community, and culture for First Nations people for millennia.

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the land on which we gather, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung. We also acknowledge the neighbouring Kulin Nation groups, the Boonwurrung and Bunurong people, and pay our respects to elders, past and present.

Both land and sovereignty have never been ceded. It always was and always will be Aboriginal Land.

Alter State Opening Ceremony 2022
Photo: Kate Disher Quill

About Arts Centre Melbourne

Built into the banks of the Birrarung (Yarra River) and extending below the water table, Arts Centre Melbourne was constructed with ingenuity, guts, and sheer determination. This limitless imagination and creativity continue to be reflected in the performances, events, and experiences on and beyond our stages.

We are proudly the home of our Resident Companies – The Australian Ballet, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Theatre Company, and Opera Australia – along with many of our state and national performing arts companies and major festivals. Our ever-evolving program speaks as much to who we are as to who we could be.

We deliver and support technical capability development and training, to provide the Performing Arts sector with more of the skills it needs to flourish.

We support the mental health and wellbeing of our sector through the Arts Wellbeing Collective – a preventative health initiative that promotes positive mental health in the performing arts industry.

We share stories of contemporary Australian performing and visual arts through our custodianship and display of the world-class Australian Performing Arts Collection, Australian Music Vault, and Public Art Collection.

Everyone is welcome here, and we develop programs and projects that enable our visitors and audiences to experience the arts, both as spectator and creator. Our commitment to participation and learning are central to our work, enabling us to inspire a new generation of creatives and makers.

Underpinning everything we do at Arts Centre Melbourne are our five values:

- Equity (Fairness and Justice)
- Leadership (Courage and Conviction)
- Creativity (A Boundless Imagination)
- Care More (A Place for Everybody)
- Community (Working Together)

Welcome to Arts Centre Melbourne: a gathering place to experience the wonder of the performing arts.

Contents

Welcome	5
What is disability?	7
Disability at a glance	9
Disability legislation and policy frameworks	11
Goal 1 – Victorian Disability Act 2006	13
Goal 2 – Victorian Disability Act 2006	14
Goal 3 – Victorian Disability Act 2006	15
Goal 4 – Victorian Disability Act 2006	16
Our disability inclusion roadmap	18
What we’ve achieved since 2020	21
Delivering our Plan alongside Arts Centre Melbourne’s organisational strategy	23
First Nations Culture	24
Equity and Inclusion	25
Gathering Place	26
Sustainable Future	27
Conclusion	29
Accessible formats	29
Contact us	29
Appendix: Strategic context	30
Endnotes	32



Photo: Kate Disher Quill



Welcome

At Arts Centre Melbourne we want everyone to experience the joy and wonder of the performing arts. We commit to making our performances, programs, digital experiences, and venues more accessible. We do this by planning for access up front to address the barriers that many Victorians face.

At its core, access and inclusion means our community feels welcome whenever they come to Arts Centre Melbourne. But, 'welcome' can look and feel different to every individual. Although we've made some good progress to address the barriers faced by our community, there is still a lot we can do to be more inclusive.

Over the last two years, we have learnt and listened to people living with disability. Thanks to their guidance we have made important strides to improve our accessibility and to make the experience for every person coming to Arts Centre Melbourne a better one.

2021 saw the digital launch of Alter State – a major arts and disability festival that we co-founded and co-presented with Arts Access Victoria. In 2022 the first full Alter State festival offered in-person and digital events over a four-week, relaxed program. Artists with disability from across Australia and Aotearoa (New Zealand) were commissioned and presented in a program of performances, talks, and workshops. Audiences were given choices about how they interacted and participated, and space to enjoy each event in a spread-out, slow program. Alter State will continue to be a festival that centres the experience, creativity, and passion of disability-led art and thought leadership.

Alter State, accessible programming, and relaxed performances make up our existing accessible offerings, and we continue to improve on our systems and processes. We are adding new training for our teams in every area of the business; and are listening and learning from people with lived experience. We are finding ways to increase our understanding of our workforce and the barriers they face. We are undertaking the slow work of updating our buildings, with an eye to how they will welcome our community in the future and with a design approach underpinned by the principles of Universal Design.

With the guidance of our Disability, Equity and Inclusion Plan, we commit to putting access and inclusion at the centre of what we do. We are on a journey of improvement inspired by consultation, feedback, and continuous learning. This plan outlines our ambition, goals, and priorities. It guides what we will do to make improvements to the way we work and the experiences we offer.

We want to be a gathering place that reflects the diversity of the community we serve. We want to enable real change and to offer the best possible access and inclusion in the performing arts. When we start from a place of inclusion we innovate, and the benefit belongs to all.

I am excited to see this plan launch and look forward to being part of this transformation at Arts Centre Melbourne.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Quinlan', written over a light-colored background.

Karen Quinlan
Chief Executive Officer



CAMP Live, Alter State 2022
Photo: Kate Disher Quill

Audience for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*
(The National Theatre, UK). Photo: Jason Lau



What is disability?

Definition of disability

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) establishes a broad definition of disability. This is to protect people from direct and indirect discrimination based on disability.

The DDA's definition of disability includes conditions that are:

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Psychiatric
- Sensory
- Neurological
- Learning-related
- Medical

It includes disability a person has, used to have, may have in the future, is implied to have, or experiences in relation to an associated person (such as a family member or support worker).

A person's disability can be temporary or permanent; visible or invisible. It can be experienced differently throughout their life. For some people, access support needs can increase over time. Others can experience fluctuating or episodic disability. Some conditions and impairments are present from birth. In other cases, people acquire or develop a disability during their lifetime from an accident, condition, illness, or injury. This can be the case particularly for some people with mental health conditions.

Some people have multiple impairments, such as intellectual disability and mental health conditions. Overlapping conditions can lead to different access requirements.

Disability is intersectional. People with disability can be treated unfairly based on other elements of their identity, not just their disability. For example, discrimination can affect women and gender diverse people, children and young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people from culturally diverse backgrounds including those from refugee backgrounds, and members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 "adopts a broad categorisation of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms." Australia's ratification of the Convention is significant for advocacy regarding Universal Design, cultural change, disability dignity and pride, and access to goods and services as a fundamental human right.

The Social Model of Disability

The Social Model of Disability says that a person is disabled by the barriers that society and the environment around them create, rather than by their condition itself. These barriers can be physical, communication-based, institutional, social, and attitudinal. They include prejudice, unconscious and conscious bias, lack of access adjustments, and systemic exclusion. The Social Model was developed by people with disability to highlight and fight discrimination. It centres around the person and emphasises their dignity, independence, and choice.

Arts Centre Melbourne is guided by the Social Model of Disability. We commit to understanding and removing barriers to access. We do this to support the inclusion and participation of everyone in our community.

The language of disability

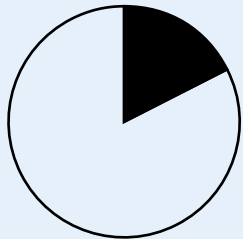
The language of disability changes over time, and between countries – it is constantly evolving and shifting. Individuals also have their own preferences about the language that is either used to describe them or used collectively.

Arts Centre Melbourne uses a combination of:

- People-first language: 'people with disability,' and
- Identity-first language: 'disabled people'

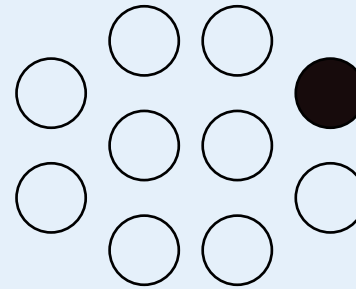
We are guided by the individual and adopt the language they feel most comfortable with.

Disability at a glance

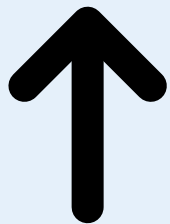


17.7%

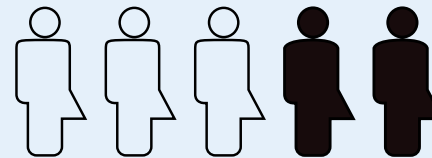
17.7% of Australians are people **with disability**¹



In 2018, **1 in 10 people with disability, aged 15 and over, had experienced discrimination** in the past year because of their disability⁴



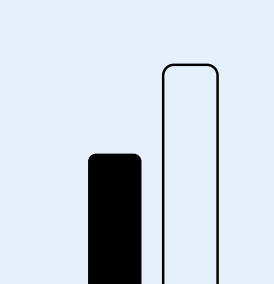
Indigenous Australians experience disability at 1.9 times the rate of non-Indigenous Australians²



More than two in five Australians, aged 16 – 85 years, **have experienced a mental health condition** at some time in their life⁵

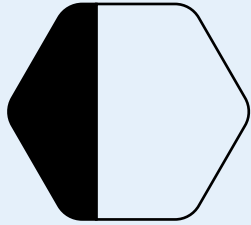


By the age of 65 years and over, **one in two Australians will have been disabled** at some point in their lives³

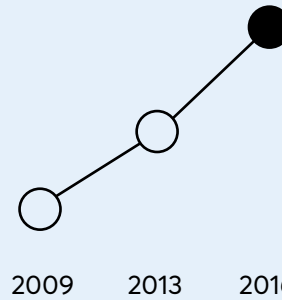


47.8% 80.3%

Just under half (47.8%) of people with disability, aged 15 – 64 years, **are employed, compared with 80.3% of people without disability**⁶



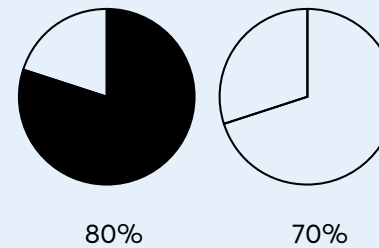
The median gross personal income of a person with disability is less than half that of people without disability⁷



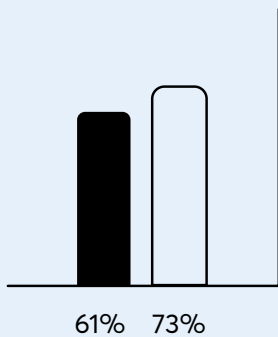
Creative participation by people with disability is also steadily increasing: 35% (2009) to 49% (2013) to 61% (2016)¹⁰



Artists with disability earn 42% less than artists without disability⁸



In 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic, **80% of audiences with disability participated in online arts and culture**, compared with **70% of audiences without disability**¹¹



Attendance at arts events by people with disability is increasing: 61% (2013) to 73% (2016)⁹

Disability legislation and policy frameworks

The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) applies across Australia. Its purpose is to eliminate discrimination against people with disability, as much as possible, in a range of areas. These areas include employment; education; access to premises, groups, and clubs; and the provision of goods (e.g., performances, workshops), facilities (e.g., cafes, backstage areas), and services (e.g., information).

The DDA protects a person with disability against discrimination when:

- They are accompanied by a support worker, carer, or interpreter.
- They are accompanied by an animal trained to support their access needs (e.g., an assistance animal).
- They use equipment, technology, or aids (e.g., hearing aids, communication devices).

The DDA also makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of the disability of their associates. This includes relatives, partners, support workers, business associates, and cultural collaborators.

Our Disability, Equity and Inclusion Plan (the Plan) promotes the rights of people with disability. It aims to enhance their experience of Arts Centre Melbourne as a place of creativity, employment, transformation, and shared experience.



Seeding for Tomorrow, Alter State 2022
Photo: Kate Disher Quill

The Plan encourages equitable and dignified access for all and includes individuals along with their families, friends, support workers, and carers. It also provides a framework to meet Arts Centre Melbourne's legislative requirements under the Victorian Disability Act 2006.

Our Plan aligns with the goals of the Victorian Disability Act 2006, which are:

1. Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with disability
2. Reducing barriers to people with disability obtaining and maintaining employment
3. Reducing barriers to people with disability accessing goods, services, and facilities
4. Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of people with disability

Alongside our Equity & Inclusion Strategy, the Plan underpins our capability to effect change, increases our capacity to be inclusive, and enables the realisation of our goals.

Current Legislation and Strategy

Arts Centre Melbourne complies with, and is guided by, the following disability-related legislation and frameworks:

Federal

- [The Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#)
- [Australia's Disability Strategy \(2021-2031\)](#)

State

- [The Victorian Disability Act 2006](#)
- [Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan \(2022-2026\)](#)
- [The Victorian Autism Plan](#)
- [The Victorian Social Procurement Framework](#)

"Disability is part of being human. Almost everyone will temporarily or permanently experience disability at some point in their life."¹²

– World Health Organisation



Victorian Disability Act 2006

Achieving tangible changes in attitudes and practices which discriminate against people with disability

Arts Centre Melbourne's commitment

We model positive attitudes and allyship, and work towards best practice inclusion.

"It's been fantastic to see the way that Arts Centre Melbourne has really taken on the feedback [from schools] in terms of making programs accessible to students. Beyond general accessibility, all staff we came into contact with, both onsite at our school and at Arts Centre Melbourne, had really taken the time to try and understand what our students might require.

Building that understanding with schools and families is so important, having Arts Centre Melbourne visit the school is important – it's about trying to build that relationship and understanding that the arts are for everyone. It doesn't matter if you have a disability or you don't have a disability, whoever you are, the arts are for you."

– Schools Program consultation

"Felt completely relaxed and at home, our daughter was free to crawl wherever she liked and explore at her leisure – even during the show we had multiple staff tell us she was totally ok to roam around."

– Audience member, Alter State 2022

"Alter State was a catalyst for increasing skills in the team – and knowledge sharing about things happening in [the] access space. It helped us in becoming more aware of some of the hurdles people with disability face in venues like ours."

– Team member, Alter State 2022



Victorian Disability Act 2006

Reducing barriers to people with disability obtaining and maintaining employment

Arts Centre Melbourne's commitment

We work towards reducing barriers to the employment and retention of people with disability across our organisation.

"My passion for the performing arts and music began as a child when I attended [events] at Arts Centre Melbourne with my parents. I performed in school plays and later studied a Diploma of Theatre Arts. I now perform with theatre ensembles for people with and without disabilities and I am a member of Arts Access Victoria, the peak body for arts and disability in Victoria.

In 2012 I represented Australia at Unlimited, the ground-breaking international disability arts festival in London. It was on my return that I started working at Arts Centre Melbourne in Visitor Services. This was the most amazing opportunity for me. As part of Arts Access Victoria's 'Pathways Program' I undertook an introduction, then an interview. I was successful! How awesome! I started my dream job in April 2013!

Why my 'dream job?' I want to be able to assist visitors to Arts Centre Melbourne to have the best experience possible, leading to wonderful memories, as I did. I was born with a hearing impairment and later diagnosed with Autism, and I wear a Bone Anchored Hearing Aid.

Structure, guidelines, and familiarity with my surroundings are important to me. Being a Visitor Experience team member gives me this. The guidelines begin when I receive my roster via email. I know when and where I am working, and I can plan ahead. On arriving for work, I change into my uniform and my shift begins. I am a team member.

I have gained confidence and regularly 'think on my feet'. I believe my work environment is one of equality, respect and caring and I have a true sense of belonging. Arts Centre Melbourne, its staff and visitors have been and remain a vital part of my life."

– Arts Centre Melbourne employee



Victorian Disability Act 2006

Reducing barriers to people with disability accessing goods, services, and facilities

Arts Centre Melbourne's commitment

People with disability have access to Arts Centre Melbourne information, services, and facilities.

"I watched online with another person also watching via Facebook and a third friend of ours went in person. It was great, as we could all access as we wished."

– Audience member, Alter State 2022

"It's the first performance I've ever attended that was designed around the needs of the audience rather than the audience having to fit into the space."

– Audience member, Alter State 2022

"I was a bit nervous before about how my daughter would go but the space beforehand was calm, clear, and peaceful... It was such a great experience that the whole family loved."

– Audience member, Alter State 2022





Victorian Disability Act 2006

Promoting inclusion and participation in the community of people with disability

Arts Centre Melbourne's commitment

Our organisational values and our plan for disability equity underpin our capability to effect change and increase our capacity to be inclusive.

"[My highlight was] being able to connect in person with Disabled artist friends/community after such a long time. It has impacted my soul and my feeling of belonging like nothing else in the past year [...] being invited to somewhere knowing that it is disability led, that is aiming for cultural safety, and is of high artistic quality."

– Audience member, Alter State 2022

"I felt very safe, comfortable, and warmly welcomed. I was well received by everyone for my event, and I really appreciate it. It makes me want to do it again next year."

– Presenting artist, Alter State 2022

"My son is on the more severe end of the Autism Spectrum, and at times can become quite agitated, especially during traditional theatrical experiences. Not only does Arts Centre Melbourne's Relaxed Performance initiative mean that people like my son are included in the arts, it means he can form meaningful connection to creativity which transcends his disability."

– Audience Member, Relaxed Performance Program

"We need a space for disabled artists to come together, not only to make art about disability but to be present, to be visible, to represent."

Carly Findlay – Writer, Speaker & Appearance Activist

Meremere, Alter State 2022
Photo: Kate Disher Quill



Our disability inclusion roadmap

Arts Centre Melbourne is committed to being a gathering place for our community, and this cannot be achieved without putting equity and inclusion at the heart of our strategy. While we undertake the complex process of reimagining our physical environment, we also seek to introduce continuous improvement in the accessibility of our offerings, processes, and communications.

Arts Centre Melbourne's Disability, Equity and Inclusion Plan outlines our commitment to disability inclusion. It signals our resolve and ambition to keep raising the bar for accessibility.

Our Disability, Equity and Inclusion Plan has two parts:

Part A (Foundation)

This document builds upon, and updates sections of our Disability, Equity and Inclusion Plan Part A 2020 – 2022. These updates realign our commitments to fit new organisational priorities and recent State and Federal strategies.

This document:

- Sets the scene for disability access and inclusion – disability definitions, the legislative and policy context, and the value of a planned approach framed by the four goals in the Victorian Disability Act 2006.
- Presents high level statements of intent to improve access across our organisation, in line with strategic priorities.



Part A was originally created following consultations exploring the role Arts Centre Melbourne plays in the community. An extensive consultation period with Government, industry, community, and partners in 2020 was followed by a wide-ranging equity and inclusion review. This review had 465 contributors across our internal and external networks.

Part B (Roadmap)

Part B of our Disability, Equity and Inclusion Plan is currently being developed, and is expected to be released in 2024.

Building on Part A, it will:

- Establish short- and medium-term goals, with priorities that are informed by research and identified by our disability community.
- Establish key milestones and a timeline for review, measurement, and reporting.
- Create an internal action group.

Strategically, Part B will outline steps to:

- Position disability access and inclusion as central to our business planning.
- Strengthen our partnership with Arts Access Victoria, Victoria's lead arts and disability organisation and peak body, and other peak bodies with which the Plan intersects.
- Encourage collaboration, partnerships, and resource sharing across the Melbourne Arts Precinct to further access and inclusion.

Responding to the consultation with the disability community, we can expect to:

- Advocate for the ongoing creation of online and hybrid (live and digital) performances, forums, and events, to increase accessibility, geographical reach, and audience engagement.
- Focus on creating employment opportunities and pathways for people living with disability (as artists, suppliers, trainees, employees, advisors, etc.).

Access and inclusion are powerful ways to tell unique stories and connect people with each other. Our challenge is to invent, provoke and reflect lived experience of disability on our stages and in our exhibition spaces, in our leadership, and in the experiences we provide.

Ultimately our Disability, Equity and Inclusion Plan will make disability inclusion part of 'business as usual' at Arts Centre Melbourne. Disability inclusion will be a lens through which we plan, present, engage and lead.

Inclusion is everyone's responsibility, and we all have a role to play.

CAMP Live, Alter State 2022
Photo: Kate Disher Quill



Alter State Opening Ceremony 2022
Photo: Kate Disher Quill



What we've achieved since 2020

Since the release of our last plan, Arts Centre Melbourne has had some wonderful opportunities to engage with, and learn from, the disability community.

Alter State

Alter State is a major arts and disability festival that was co-founded and presented by Arts Centre Melbourne and Arts Access Victoria. Alter State's Digital Launch occurred online in 2021 during a COVID-19 lockdown in Melbourne. It presented a range of free performances, talks, and workshops. There was a combination of 'live' and on-demand digital content.

The first full Alter State festival was held in 2022, offering both online and in-person performances, talks, and workshops. All events were free or low cost. The program was slow (spread out over four weeks) and relaxed, with options for all ages and interests.

Lived experience is embedded into the heart of Alter State. The [Alter State Principles](#) are:

- Equity
- Disability identity and pride
- Disability consciousness
- Crip time
- Aesthetics of access
- Reduced barriers, and
- Accountability

Alter State employs artists, suppliers, and advocates from the disability community. It highlights the quality of disability-led art and embodies best practice in inclusion.

Learning and development

Alongside the 2022 festival, our staff had the opportunity to hear directly from artists living with disability. The Lunchbox Learning Series was curated by Alter State Creative Lead (and Arts Access Victoria CEO) Caroline Bowditch. It brought together a wide variety of artists to talk about their practice, and to share their ideas for increasing access at Arts Centre Melbourne. Recordings of these sessions are available on-demand to our employees.

Arts Centre Melbourne has also invested in a program of learning for our staff. AMAZE, Break A Finger, Vision Australia, and Arts Access Victoria delivered training sessions to frontline and event delivery teams. In late 2022, a Disability Awareness Module was rolled out across the organisation as part of our mandatory compliance training program. This training is a key element in our onboarding process, building literacy in access and inclusion, and ensuring we are living our values.

Employee groups

In September 2022, two employee reference groups were formed. They are the GLADA (Gender, LGBTQIA+, Age and Disability Access) Employee Reference Group and the Racial Equity Network. These groups bring employees together from across Arts Centre Melbourne to further discussions and drive action in the areas of equity and inclusion. They will be an important source of feedback and consultation going forward and will help to drive effective change.

Our buildings

Construction has begun on our Theatres Building and its surrounds as part of the wider Melbourne Arts Precinct Transformation. We seek consultation on each design phase with Victoria's diverse communities and our own employees. Changes have been, and continue to be made, to ensure we can welcome all Victorians.

Consultation

Behind the scenes, we're engaging disability advocates and organisations to assess and advise on our internal and external systems, communications, and digital presence on an ongoing basis.

We are proud of the advances we've made in accessibility, but there is still much more to do. We believe in continuous learning and improvement, and in listening to the voices, concerns, and triumphs of the people that we serve.

Audience for *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*
(The National Theatre, UK). Photo: Jason Lau



Delivering our Plan alongside Arts Centre Melbourne's organisational strategy

Our Disability, Equity and Inclusion Plan (DEIP) supports our statutory purpose to enrich the lives of all Victorians, and our responsibility to welcome and engage all Victorians.

COVID-19 caused extensive lockdowns in Victoria, and we are not yet clear of its ongoing effects. Like many arts organisations and practitioners across the world, the pandemic led Arts Centre Melbourne to rethink how we operate. We have thought deeply about our purpose, our vision, and our ambition. We have consulted with our team and the wider community and cultural sector. We have examined what we can, and what we need, to be.

Four priorities have emerged from this exploration:

- First Nations Culture
- Equity and Inclusion
- Gathering Place
- Sustainable Future

These four strategic priorities underpin our DEIP.

First Nations Culture

First Nations culture and work with First Nations people will be elevated and guided by the principle of “nothing about us without us.”

- We are committed to building our relationships with First Nations peoples and have welcomed a First Nations Executive Director to lead this work. This Executive Director will oversee our equity and inclusion activities.
- We align the priorities and actions outlined in our Disability, Equity and Inclusion Plan with the priorities and actions outlined in Arts Centre Melbourne’s Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP).
- We work alongside First Nations peoples and support their self-representation and self-determination, in line with Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022 – 2026.
- We embed systemic and structural change that will provide ongoing opportunities for First Nations employment and communities, including those with lived experience of disability.
- We support and uphold Alter State’s priority focus on facilitating and promoting platforms for First Nations artists and First Nations-led companies from both Australia and Aotearoa (New Zealand).



Equity and Inclusion

We will reflect the vibrant diversity of the people of our state.

- We provide equitable access to employment opportunities through our recruitment and selection processes, including reasonable adjustments.
 - We foster a culture of belonging, connection, and engagement for our team. This is supported by our feedback and recognition mechanisms, and internal community platforms. Our communications are warm, direct, and authentic.
 - We promote awareness of Disability Pride Month and other disability-related calendar celebrations. We do this in conjunction with the communication and promotion of our Disability, Equity and Inclusion Plan.
 - We strive to empower positive change. We will shape an inclusive future together that addresses attitudes, understanding, employment, and facilities.
- We are committed to equity, inclusion, and diversity. We have created six dedicated roles in this area:
 - Two senior roles:
Associate Director, Cultural Equity and Inclusion, and Director of Organisational Development and Inclusion; and
 - Four support roles:
Inclusion Coordinator (two positions)
Partner, Cultural Equity and Inclusion, and Solutions Coordinator, Cultural Equity and Inclusion
 - We nurture a culture of openness and inclusivity. We provide equitable and dignified experiences for all team members.
 - We commit to honouring the lived experience of our team members. We support two Employee Groups: the GLADA (Gender, LGBTQIA+, Age and Disability Access) Employee Reference Group, and the Racial Equity Network.
 - We commit to continuous learning by providing ongoing learning and development opportunities for all team members.
 - Access and inclusion are critical to how we operate and are included in our organisational strategy.

Gathering Place

We will bring people together for experiences that inspire them.

- We are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion in performance, both live and digital.
- We endeavour to create an environment that is inclusive. We do this to meet the needs and expectations of all of our team, artists, presenters, and audiences, with and without access requirements.
- We strive to welcome all visitors with dignity and support. We understand that it's important that our communities feel safe and welcome at Arts Centre Melbourne.
- We prioritise collaborative and inclusive approaches in an effort to reduce barriers to engagement for diverse artists, presenters, and audiences.
- We co-create and co-present the disability-led Alter State festival with Arts Access Victoria. This festival celebrates disability-led artistic expression and disability pride and increases disability awareness. It also supports the disability arts communities of Australia and Aotearoa (New Zealand) through commissions, presentation, and industry outreach.
- Our Arts Wellbeing Collective (AWC) plays a vital role in increasing awareness of mental health and wellbeing in the performing arts. Their work reduces bias and stereotypes and normalises the need to take care of ourselves.
- The AWC has brought together a diverse group of talented and insightful performing arts workers with lived experience of mental distress to be their inaugural Lived Experience Advisory Group.
- We caption all ACM-produced digital content and, wherever possible, provide Auslan interpreted, and audio described versions.
- We consult with internal and external communities. This ensures we bring everyone along on our transformation journey.
- We strive to create sector development opportunities that are community- and disability-led. They will support community inclusion.

Sustainable Future

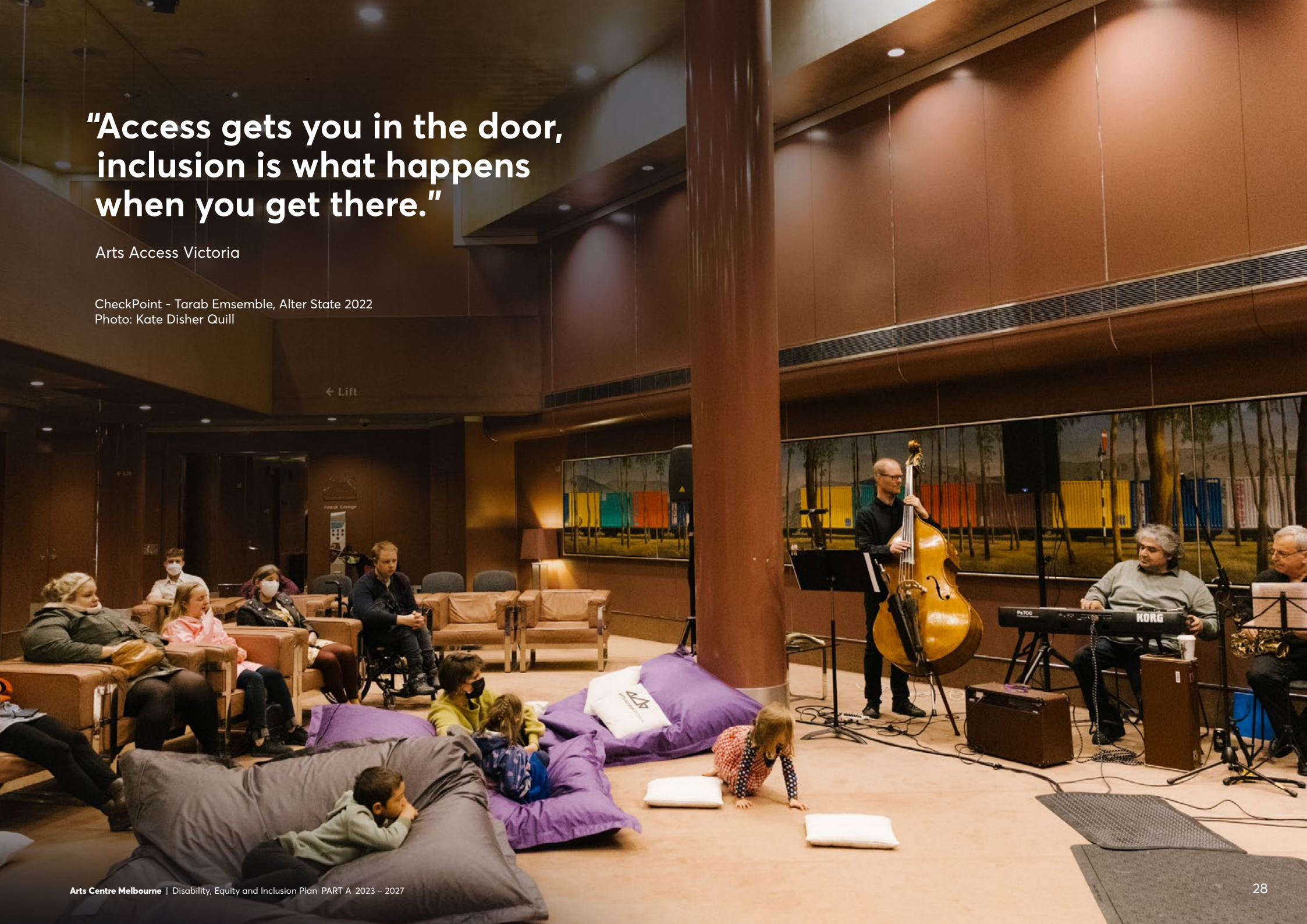
We will adapt to build a sustainable future for Arts Centre Melbourne and the Victorian arts sector.

- We challenge assumptions and make decisions based on research and feedback.
- We acknowledge that the age of our buildings currently presents access challenges. We seek to respond where we can, to improve the accessibility of our built infrastructure.
- Improving accessibility is core to the Reimagining Arts Centre Melbourne project. We acknowledge we have a greater role to play for artists and visitors with disability.
- Our Theatres Building refurbishment is now underway. It is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform our built environment. We seek to ensure that our infrastructure, facilities, and amenities provide equitable access to people with disability. We do this through community and employee consultations.
- We seek information and feedback from our workforce to help us identify and reduce the barriers they experience.
- We aim to bring together a diverse workforce that reflects the community we serve.
- Where possible, we buy from First Nations businesses, and suppliers that provide inclusive opportunities in line with the Victorian Social Procurement Framework.
- Our Registered Training Organisation will explore opportunities for people with disability to engage in our technical training programs. These programs are a pathway to future employment opportunities.
- We are open to new ways of thinking about our organisation. We know new mindsets and behaviours will emerge that challenge old attitudes.

**"Access gets you in the door,
inclusion is what happens
when you get there."**

Arts Access Victoria

Checkpoint - Tarab Emsemble, Alter State 2022
Photo: Kate Disher Quill



Conclusion

This document (Part A) will guide Arts Centre Melbourne in the development and implementation of our Disability, Equity and Inclusion Plan (DEIP) Part B. DEIP Part B will be our Roadmap, containing measurable short- and medium-term actions.

Arts Centre Melbourne is a large organisation. We have a wide and varied set of internal and external stakeholders, each of whom has their own priorities and requirements. We aim to find a way forward that unites us all in increasing access on as many fronts as possible, and as often as we can. It is a changing environment, and there is a lot that we need to learn and do. We work to continuously improve, and advance in our efforts, to be a gathering place where everyone feels like they belong.

Accessible formats

This document is available in the following formats:

- PDF
- Word
- Audio narration
- Easy English

These formats can be accessed on [Arts Centre Melbourne's website](#).

Contact us

For more information, please contact Arts Centre Melbourne.

Email:
feedback@artscentremelbourne.com.au

Phone:
1300 182 183 (Monday – Friday, 9am – 4.30pm)
Our Contact Centre accepts relay service calls.

Mail:
PO Box 7585, Melbourne VIC 3004

Website:
artscentremelbourne.com.au/contact-us

CheckPoint - Tarab Emsemble, Alter State 2022
Photo: Kate Disher Quill



Appendix: Strategic context

Inclusive Victoria: State Disability Plan 2022 – 2026

Inclusive Victoria is Victoria's plan for making things fairer for people with disability. Arts Centre Melbourne's Disability, Equity and Inclusion Plan is informed by the four pillars outlined in Inclusive Victoria:

- Inclusive communities
- Health, housing, and wellbeing
- Fairness and safety
- Opportunity and pride

This State Plan was developed in consultation with people with disability, disabled peoples organisations, self-advocacy groups, peak bodies, advocacy agencies and the Victorian Disability Advisory Council. Its goal is to support and drive meaningful change.

Victorian Disability Act 2006

The Victorian Disability Act ensures a person with disability cannot be discriminated against or treated unfairly because of their disability. It came into effect in 2007 and sets out principles for people with disability and for service providers. An amendment in 2017 made provision for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (the Charter) is a Victorian law that sets out the protected rights of all people in Victoria, as well as the corresponding obligations of the Victorian Government.

The Charter requires all public authorities, including Victorian state and local government departments and agencies, and people delivering services on behalf of the Victorian Government to:

- Give proper consideration to human rights before making a decision.
- Act compatibly with human rights.

Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person, in many areas of public life, including employment, getting or using services, and accessing public places, because of their disability.

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 – 2031

Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 – 2031 sets out a plan for continuing to improve the lives of people with disability in Australia. It builds on the National Disability Strategy 2010 – 2020 and the reforms it introduced to better support and include people with disability.

The Strategy's vision is for an inclusive Australian society that ensures people with disability can fulfill their potential, as equal members of the community. It is guided by eight principles, including respect for an individual's dignity and autonomy, and full and effective participation and inclusion in society.

Right to Opportunity: National Disability Strategy Beyond 2020 Consultation Report

The Right to Opportunity report was put together in 2019 as the previous National Disability Strategy came to an end. It presents insights into the issues faced by people with disability in Australia and summarises feedback from people with disability, their families and carers, and other stakeholders such as disability advocates, service providers, and academics. Feedback was gathered through community workshops, public surveys, in-depth discussions, an online forum, and targeted consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

More than 80% of survey respondents agreed with the statement, "people without disability are unsure how to act toward people with disability". This highlights the need to improve understanding of disability in our communities and workplaces. Consultations also reinforced the common and important message of "nothing about us without us."

Endnotes

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Audience at Asia TOPA watching MSO perform Studio Ghibli scores at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl 2020. Photo: Mark Gambino.

