Mount Alexander Shire Disability Advocacy Group (MASDAG) Organising accessible events

The Mount Alexander Shire Disability Advocacy Group (MASDAG) provides this information by way of assisting organisers to plan thoughtful, workable events which are accessible to people of all ages and abilities.

Accessibility is about designing and managing your project or event, so that everyone can participate, be they artist, performers, staff, volunteers or audiences.

Disclaimer
The information contained in this publication is intended as a guide only and should not be substituted for appropriate legislation or professional advice.

Governance
We recommend that there be an Access Coordinator in the event planning group and a disability access go-to person at the event on the day. It is helpful that staff and volunteer disability awareness training be part of your event planning; this helps everyone at your event. The National Disability Services website has information on training - see "Disability Aware: An awareness and inclusion program". The Department of Health and Human Services website has additional information and resources.

Advertising and Promotion
State clearly in all promotional material whether the event is accessible to people with disabilities and where to find the accessible building entrances and facilities (such as wheelchair accessible car parking, toilets, etc.).

Include your event Access Coordinator's contact details on all promotional material.

If there are parts of the building or site which are not accessible to people with a disability, identify clearly the access limitations, (for example, there may not be any accessible toilets in the building). That way people with limited mobility, low vision or hearing loss won't waste their time and money travelling to an event they cannot attend or appreciate. If the event is advertised online, some photos or images of the building and site may greatly assist people deciding if they will be able to access the event (for example, it may be easy to see if the building is on a steep or hilly site, or if there are any sealed, formed paths to the building, as opposed to only dirt or gravel paths).

There may be cases where the proposed venue is not accessible to people with disabilities (for example, a building with stepped access, but no ramp provided) and is not suitable for running a public event. In this case, an alternative accessible venue should be sourced.

Registration
Include on the registration form questions about special needs, including hearing, vision, mobility, diet (if food is involved) and other possible needs or assistance requirements.

Advise registrants what assistance you can offer in advance of the event. Be clear about what you cannot offer.

Accept Companion Cards and do not charge admission fees to support workers, personal assistants or carers who are attending the event solely in order to assist the person they are there to support.

Feedback/Evaluation
Any evaluation form should include questions about special needs and access. This feedback then becomes part of future planning and education.

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Additional Resources - Information Training: National Disability Services website: "Disability Aware: An awareness and inclusion program"

Mount Alexander Shire 'Event Application Kit' and Accessible Events Guide'.

Nillumbik Council 'Access Guide for Festivals and Events'. This is a Victorian council and they produce excellent information.

Department of Health and Human Services

'Good Access is Good Business', City of Melbourne, Customer access checklist for festivals and events developed by and copyright Access Audits Australia. Although this is a large document it is excellent.

Mount Alexander Shire Events Officer (03) 5471 1798.

Additional Resources – Mount Alexander Shire Council has portable ramps and hearing loops available for hire or loan to assist making your event more accessible. Please contact the Shire facilities manager on (03) 5471 1700 for more information.

Events Checklist

This list (see over) is intended to assist with planning events. It is not comprehensive but provides enough guidance for thoughtful, accessible planning.

Event Checklist	Yes	No	NA
Is there a site map providing details of all accessible facilities including parking, pick-up/drop-off points, food stalls, toilets and public transport options?			
Is there accessible and clearly marked parking close to the event entrance? Is there a drop off point for people with disabilities?			
Are there clear, unobstructed paths of travel around the event site?			
Are paths of travel level with no steps? (or gentle slopes)			
Are the building entries and internal doors level (with no steps or lips)? Do they have sufficient width for wheelchairs to move through (not less than 850mm minimum clear opening)?			
Are there ramps, including access to the stage/performing area?			
Have wheelchair accessible toilets been provided?			
Where rows of seating are provided, are there spaces for wheelchair with adjacent chair for carer available?			
Is there a rest area and re-charge point (for wheelchairs) with suitable protection from the elements?			
Are there services such as registration, food, water and public telephones at wheelchair height?			
If the event is run during the evening, has appropriate lighting been provided on walkways and at toilets?			
Is there signage including large print and tactile surfaces that is easy to locate?			
Does promotional material note the event is accessible, or any areas where it is not?			
Has a pre-event check been done to ensure that loose items (such as signs, bins, furniture, etc) do not obstruct pedestrian paths?			

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A Guide to Organising Accessible Events