Brisbane Festival Disability Inclusion Action Plan

2023 – 2025

BRISBANE FESTIVAL

Queensland Government

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Brisbane Festival is an initiative of the Queensland Government and Brisbane City Council

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Acknowledgement of Country

Brisbane Festival expresses its respect for and acknowledgement of the Brisbane Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners of country, including the custodial neighbouring communities on whose land works are created, performed and celebrated by Brisbane Festival.

The Brisbane Festival Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) sets out our commitment to reconciliation. This Disability and Inclusion Action Plan should be read within the context of the RAP.

Acknowledgements

Brisbane Festival would like to acknowledge the assistance and input of the many contributors to the creation of this document. These contributors include members of the disability community, employees of Brisbane Festival, and employees of Access and Inclusion Partner, CPL – Choice, Passion, Life.

Alternative formats

This document is available in the following alternative formats:

- Easy English
- Black and white

If you require this document in a different format, please contact Brisbane Festival *brisbanefestival@brisbanefestival.com.au*

Executive’s Message

On behalf of Brisbane Festival, we are thrilled to unveil Brisbane Festival's inaugural Disability Inclusion Plan, a significant milestone in our commitment to fostering an inclusive and accessible celebration of arts and culture. This transformative plan embodies our dedication to ensuring that people with disabilities have equal access to and participation in all aspects of the festival. By embracing diversity and removing barriers, we aim to create an environment where everyone can fully engage, appreciate, and celebrate the arts.

This Plan is a strategic roadmap that outlines specific actions and measures to enhance accessibility and inclusivity for individuals with disabilities. It serves as a guiding framework to identify, address, and eliminate barriers that may hinder participation and enjoyment of our events and activities.

At Brisbane Festival, we firmly believe that accessibility should be a fundamental aspect of our programming and our operations. We recognise that disability encompasses a vast range of abilities, and our Disability Inclusion Action Plan addresses various dimensions of accessibility, including physical, sensory, cognitive, and communication barriers. This plan also acknowledges that people with disability are not just part of our audience, but artists, performers, and producers whose skills, stories and perspectives hold value.

By implementing a Disability Inclusion Action Plan, we actively promote social inclusion, challenge societal stereotypes, and create opportunities for people to be fully integrated into the cultural fabric of our festival. But more than anything, we believe the commitments outlined in this plan will enrich the overall festival experience for everyone. By designing accessible venues, providing alternative formats for information, offering sensory-friendly performances, and fostering a culture of respect and understanding, we create an environment that is welcoming to individuals with disabilities and their families, as well as to all festival-goers. We believe that true inclusivity benefits the entire community and strengthens the transformative power of the arts.

As we embark on this journey towards greater accessibility, Brisbane Festival invites all stakeholders, including artists, performers, volunteers, patrons, and the broader public, to join us in embracing a culture of disability inclusion. Together, let us celebrate the diversity of our community, amplify the voices and talents of people with disabilities, and build a festival that truly reflects the vibrant spirit of Brisbane.

Charlie Cush
CEO
Brisbane Festival

Louise Bezzina
Artistic Director
Brisbane Festival

Introduction

Brisbane Festival is committed to being a leader in access and inclusion for people with disability. In developing this plan we aspire to influence and/or deliver outcomes to a range of important stakeholders, including:

- Those who attend Brisbane Festival events, whether ticketed or free, in-person or virtual
- Those who perform or showcase works at Brisbane Festival, both individuals and companies, and the broader arts community
- Our workforce of paid employees, contractors and volunteers
- Our sponsors, corporate partners, vendors and suppliers, including venues where Brisbane Festival events are held
- Our Government partners and stakeholders

To do this, we have developed four areas of focus, each with a set of actions for implementation over the life of this plan.

- Access and inclusion – We will identify and reduce barriers for people with disability in accessing Brisbane Festival's physical and digital spaces
- Economic participation and employment – Through practices that acknowledge and directly address barriers to inclusion, we will provide the conditions for people with disability to economically participate in the festival
- Engagement and participation – We will work directly with the disability community, inviting their engagement and harnessing their feedback and expertise to maximise the outcomes and impact of its access and inclusion efforts
- Sector and community development – Brisbane Festival will be a role model for the adoption of accessible and inclusive practices for arts and events in Queensland. Through a commitment to continuous learning, we will build confidence and capability and use this to influence those around us to create a legacy of access and inclusion that extends beyond the festival and towards the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games

Access and Inclusion

Goal: Identify and reduce barriers for people with disability in accessing Brisbane Festival's physical and digital spaces.

Action	Mechanism	Role	Timeline
Over the course of the strategic plan, increase the proportion of Brisbane Festival productions and performances offering accessibility features to meet the needs of people with differentiated communication or sensory requirements.	• All Brisbane Festival-produced in-theatre shows to have a minimum of one show per season with Auslan interpretation • Minimum two Audio Described performances across the Brisbane Festival-produced program per year	Artistic Director Production	Ongoing Annually during program development
Review ticketing and booking processes for Festival events and venues to support people with disability to have their access needs met in a streamlined/frictionless way.	• Detailed access information included on all web interfaces • Undertake advocacy with venue ticketing agencies/providers to enhance ticketing systems to enable equitable bookings for people with disabilities	Head of Business Systems and Operations Producers Ticketing Executive Marketing Manager	Review in October 2023, implement improvements by May 2024
Continuously review and improve upon access provisions for patrons with a physical disability, including venue access and seating, signage and wayfinding.	• For Brisbane Festival-controlled sites, review as part of Event Management Plans (EMP) • For existing venues, undertake advocacy to ensure accessible wayfinding (e.g. visual contract), and adequate accessible seating • Engage people with lived experience to audit festival annually and document to support continuous improvement	Technical Director	Ongoing, reviewed in June annually as part of Event Management Plans

Improve accessibility in all marketing and communication, including digital environments.	• Develop and implement an Accessible Marketing Toolkit to provide clarity and guidance on the use of accessibility features (including captions, image descriptions and Easy English) for marketing and communication. The toolkit, inclusive of access provisions for written, audio visual and digital communications (including social media), will reflect an uplift from current practices • Implement a digital accessibility tool on the Brisbane Festival website	Marketing Manager	February 2024 May 2024
Ensure that accessibility is clearly communicated across Brisbane Festival communication channels, particularly in relation to venue and ticketing.	• Develop access and inclusion web page to include detailed information about sites and experiences • Add access provisions to invitations to all Festival special events	Marketing Manager, and Production	Ongoing, reviewed in May annually
Ensure continuous and appropriate provision in budget for access services and tools.	• Review costings and commitments through the annual budget cycle	Chief Executive Officer	Ongoing, reviewed annually

Economic Participation and Employment

Goal: Through practices that acknowledge and directly address barriers to inclusion,
Brisbane Festival will provide the conditions for people with disability to economically participate in the festival.

Action	Mechanism	Role	Timeline
Continue to proactively identify and program Festival-ready works by d/Deaf and disabled artists	• Increase Festival team exposure to new and extant Disability-lead works • Engage with disability arts leaders/bodies • Facilitate engagement sessions for D/deaf and disabled artists to build understanding of programming opportunities and imperatives	Artistic Director Executive Producers	November – April, annually
Maintain association with and support for Undercover Artist Festival as incubator for new and extant works by d/Deaf and disabled artists	• Extend Undercover Artist Festival association to include 2025 and 2027 • Increase Festival team involvement with and attendance at UAF	Artistic Director	2025 and 2027 delivery years
Provide opportunities for artists to articulate their access requirements and provide targeted support to meet these	• Development of access requirements form	Producers	Process developed in June 2023, reviewed annually
Support people with disability to gain and maintain employment with Brisbane Festival	• Work with disability employment specialists to review and update employment practices, including application and interview processes • Record employee access requirements so they can be built into work plans	Chief Executive Officer, Head of Business Systems and Operations	February 2024 Ongoing
Promote opportunities for disability-led businesses to provide products and services to the Festival	• Yet to be scoped, including a range of service providers, arts based and otherwise	Chief Executive Officer, Head of Partnerships, Access Working Group	May 2024

Engagement and Participation

Goal: Brisbane Festival will work directly with the disability community, inviting their engagement and harnessing their feedback and expertise to maximise the outcomes and impact of its access and inclusion efforts.

Action	Mechanism	Role	Timeline
Directly engage people with lived experience of disability to support Brisbane Festival to continuously enhance its access and inclusion activities and provisions.	• Establish an advisory group of community and arts leaders based on the governance structures of the Indigenous Advisory Group to meet quarterly and provide guidance • Engage a person with lived experience of disability to provide access and inclusion support to support planning and execution of Brisbane Festival each year, either in a consulting or employment model • Advocate to Government shareholders for a person with disability to participate in Festival governance structures	Chief Executive Officer Artistic Director	Group established in Q1 2024 November 2023 as part of 2024 budget build. Ongoing
Increase attendance of and engagement with Brisbane Festival by people with lived experience of disability	• Build relationships within the disability community to promote access and inclusions activities so to build patronage • Develop relationships with organisations with specialist skills and experience in disability to provide targeted support to Brisbane Festival, its employees, patrons and artists.	Chief Executive Officer Artistic Director Access Working Group	February 2024

Sector and Community Development

Goal: Brisbane Festival be a role model for the adoption of accessible and inclusive practices for arts and events in Queensland. Through a commitment to continuous learning, we will build confidence and capability within Brisbane Festival, using this to influence those around us to create a legacy of access and inclusion that extends beyond the festival and towards the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Action	Mechanism	Role	Timeline
Create resources and empower Brisbane Festival employees to engage in ongoing learning regarding accessible and inclusive arts practices.	• Build resources and guides, including a glossary of accepted terminology, to build shared understanding and approaches amongst Brisbane Festival employees. Share these resources with Brisbane Festival stakeholders, including patrons, venues, and artists.	Head of Business Systems and Operations, Marketing Manager	February 2024
	• Integrate disability awareness training into induction activities for all new Brisbane Festival employees; and embed through refresher training.	Head of Business Systems and Operations	2023
	• Develop resources to support volunteer workforce.	Head of Business Systems and Operations	2024
Review procurement processes, including contract provisions, to ensure consideration of and support for access and inclusion from Brisbane Festival vendors and partners	• Amend internal partnerships policy documentation to support access and inclusion.	Finance Director, Chief Executive Officer, Head of Business Systems and Operations	Annually in November
Communicate outcomes from the Disability Inclusion Access Plan with all Festival stakeholders	• Publish DIAP on Brisbane Festival website, and share via EDM	Marketing Manager	Post-Festival, October/November Annually

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Get in touch

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