

# DANCE FOR ALL

This resource has been developed by DANZ in partnership with Arts Access Aotearoa and Touch Compass Dance Company. It supports our vision to 'make dance visible' in Aotearoa New Zealand, by providing services to the dance sector in all its diversity.

The objective of this lift-out is to highlight some of the important things to make dance accessible for all, to serve as a starting point from which plans and policies can be developed to effect changes to ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate, enjoy and benefit from dance.

## DID YOU KNOW?



**24%**

1.1 million people in New Zealand live with a disability.



**9%**

380,000 people are Deaf or hearing impaired.



**4%**

168,000 people are blind or have low vision.



**14%**

632,000 people have a physical impairment.



**5%**

242,000 people have a psychiatric or psychological impairment.



**20,000**

people in New Zealand use New Zealand Sign Language.

*\*Census and Disability Survey 2013, Stats NZ (these figures are estimates)*

## INCREASING ACCESS TO DANCE

"One little word when it comes to the arts is so valuable and important to me: access." Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Nui Te Korero May 2018.

What is meant by words such as arts access, accessibility and being accessible? Why does it matter and what can companies, venues, artists and producers do to be more accessible?

There are many people who face barriers to access, not only as audience members and museum or gallery visitors, but also as artists creating, performing and exhibiting. This includes people with physical, sensory or intellectual impairments; and people with lived experience of mental ill-health.

Access to the arts matters because everyone has the right to enjoy what the arts can offer.

So, what can *you* do to ensure more people can experience your dance workshop, class or production?

Firstly, read this lift-out. Then check out the Arts Access Aotearoa website, get in touch with us and join the Arts For All Network. There are five regional networks, who meet throughout the year. Meetings are free to attend and they're a great way to get together with others seeking to make the arts accessible.

Since 2011, Arts Access Aotearoa has seen significant progress and increased opportunities for disabled people to engage in the arts. We recorded 65 accessible services at arts and cultural events around New Zealand in 2017, including 16 audio described events, 20 sign interpreted events, and 10 relaxed performances.

In 2017, the Royal New Zealand Ballet audio described the first-ever ballet in New Zealand. And this year, the Auckland Arts Festival offered accessible services for 14 events, including a touch tour and an audio described performance of the English National Ballet's production of Akram Khan's *Giselle*. Importantly, it also reduced the cost of tickets for disabled people (and their carers/companions) to \$20.

Auckland Arts Festival's commitment to being accessible earned it the Arts Access Creative New Zealand Arts For All Award 2018. Could this be you next year?

**Richard Bengé**

Executive Director, Arts Access Aotearoa

ONE LITTLE WORD WHEN IT  
COMES TO THE ARTS IS SO  
VALUABLE AND IMPORTANT  
TO ME: ACCESS.

RT HON JACINDA ARDERN

# BEING ACCESSIBLE

There are many ways that artists, arts organisations and venues can be accessible to disabled people. This includes providing access to employment; ensuring representation in governance and decision-making; programming work by disabled artists; programming arts activities involving disabled people as participants; providing physical access to art spaces; and marketing arts events to disabled audiences. Above all it's about involving all sections of the community on an equitable basis at all levels of an organisation

## UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Universal design, or 'inclusive design', is about designing products and services that can be used by everyone without needing to be adapted. Most people are familiar with ramps and accessible toilets, but universal design goes much further where everyone's needs take equal precedent.

Universal design is also applied to websites and other electronic communications, which offer a range of integrated channels and formats to communicate the same information. In the arts, universal design features include accessible parking and venues; touch tours; audio description; sign language tours and interpretation; information in a range of alternative formats; and captioning.



AUDIO DESCRIBER NICOLA OWEN

## DEVELOPING AN ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

An accessibility policy is a public statement of your organisation's commitment to accessibility. It will also help your whole organisation and the disabled community see that your commitment is long-term.

It should be endorsed by your board and senior management and publicised internally and externally so that everyone knows what you hope to achieve.

## DEVELOPING AN ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLAN

The best action plans are the ones that involve all team members in identifying and removing access barriers.

Your action plan details the practical ways you can implement the objectives outlined in your accessibility policy. An effective action plan should:

- Eliminate discrimination in an active way.
- Improve services and enhance organisational image.
- Allow for planned and managed change.
- Open up new markets and attract new audiences.

## WHERE TO START

The best place to start is talking with disabled people. Engaging effectively with disabled people will give you insights into the experiences they've had; what events they would like to attend; and some of the issues they face in accessing your venue or event.

Here are some of the things disabled people's organisations and groups might help you with:

- Finding out what their members are interested in.
- Understanding the issues and offering expertise to help address them.
- Providing suggestions about how to improve access: for example, some groups might provide training for your staff or invite you to meetings with members to talk about what you hope to achieve.
- Providing or training volunteers for events.
- Making joint submissions or funding applications.
- Marketing your events to their members.
- Helping you to gather feedback.

Visit [www.artsaccess.org.nz](http://www.artsaccess.org.nz) for a list of useful organisations.



TOUCH COMPASS DANCE COMPANY'S SOMATECHNICS

# INCREASING ACCESS FOR AUDIENCES

## COMMUNICATIONS

Providing a range of communication channels is important to reach all your audiences. Online channels should never be used at the expense of more traditional methods. Some people, including mental health consumers on benefits, and disabled and older people, don't have access to appropriate technology, or may not feel comfortable using the internet or social media. The accessibility of online social marketing platforms cannot be guaranteed but where you do have control – websites, email newsletters and other electronic media – pay attention to accessibility.

Always factor disabled audiences into your marketing strategy. In defining the purpose of your event, include at least one measurable goal relating to accessibility.

WHEN YOU'RE INCLUDING DISABILITY ORGANISATIONS IN YOUR COMMUNICATIONS, REMEMBER THAT MANY DISABLED PEOPLE ARE NOT CONNECTED TO THESE ORGANISATIONS. THAT'S WHY PROVIDING ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION THROUGH OTHER CHANNELS IS ALSO IMPORTANT. ALLOW PLENTY OF TIME TO MARKET YOUR EVENT. MANY DISABLED PEOPLE HAVE TO MAKE PLANS WELL AHEAD OF THE EVENT IN ORDER TO ATTEND.

A quantitative survey of disabled people conducted by Arts Access Aotearoa provides a snapshot of general barriers preventing people from accessing the arts. The most common barriers for people interested in the arts (i.e. those who attend regularly once or twice a month, and those who would like to attend more but attend irregularly) are:

**73%** cost of tickets, including for companions

**63%** transport to venue and/or parking

**24%** inaccessible marketing and advertising

**18%** inability to access the venue

**15%** inaccessible programme or event: for example, not being able to see or hear the arts event

**14%** venue staff attitudes

## REMOVING THE BARRIERS

Making venues physically accessible can be a longer-term project. However, you will make an immediate difference if people are open and helpful, and do their best to find accessible options. Disabled people often comment that attitude makes a huge difference. Disability responsiveness training to ensure that inclusion is a culture can go a long way towards making disabled people feel welcome and respected. Removing the barriers to improve access to your dance events benefits not only disabled people but also other audience members.

### RELAXED PERFORMANCES

Provided as a free event or at reduced ticket prices, relaxed performances can be a great way to welcome disabled people and their families. In these performances, the sound and lighting should be toned down. More crucially, however, there's a relaxed approach to noise and movement, and a supportive environment.

### VENUE ACCESS

Making your venue or the venue you're using accessible means thinking about the layout, obstacles and facilities in a different way. It's sometimes impossible to move bolted-down seats but you can control how you allocate those seats; where you display your signs; and how you escort people inside. Providing a concise, easy-to-follow fact sheet that details where your event is, how to get there and where its entry points are is a valuable resource for everyone.

### SIGN INTERPRETATION OF LIVE PERFORMANCE

There are various approaches and styles, depending on the artform, the actual work and the venue. For a theatre performance, consider whether it's best to use the conventional approach with the interpreter at the side of the stage, or to integrate the interpreter into the action on the stage.

### AUDIO DESCRIPTION AND TOUCH TOURS

Audio description is a narrated commentary for blind and vision impaired patrons that provides descriptions of the visual elements. An audio described performance usually includes a touch tour before the performance. For theatre, opera and musicals, patrons can explore the set and costumes, and possibly meet the director and cast to help them match the characters' voices with their names. For performances incorporating dance or circus, patrons can gain an appreciation of the different props, moves or poses.

# INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN INCLUSIVE DANCE

## PRESENTING INCLUSIVE PERFORMANCE

It is vital for dance practitioners and presenters to ensure there is 'access for all' for their performance work and that venues are accessible for the audience and the performers. Allow plenty of time in the lead-up to a show when offering inclusive performance opportunities (touch tour, signed or audio describe performance) to promote to the audience that you are offering these services. Finding champions for the group you are promoting to can be a great help in promotion of these opportunities through their networks. Below are some tips to assist in the presentation of inclusive performance.

### PLANNING AN ACCESSIBLE SHOW

Factoring access into your budget and planning documents from the outset will enhance your ability to make your show accessible and attractive to the widest possible audience.

Early planning for access means you have time to seek additional funding – either through the traditional method of funding applications or through a crowdfunding site.

If you have disabled people in your cast and crew, you need to book accessible venues for interviews, auditions and performances, and have a system for asking about and meeting their access requirements.

### PERFORMANCE VENUES

Check with venues about their specific access. Disabled people know from experience that even places that are described as "accessible" can vary greatly in how usable they are. Do some research on their accessibility so you know exactly what you're getting and make sure the information you provide about venue access is accurate.

When programming festivals, think about the time it might take to move between the locations. Make sure you leave enough time for people who might move slowly to get to the places they need to be. If there are parts of your festival/venue that simply can't be made accessible, let people know well in advance so they can decide whether or not to buy a ticket.

## TEACHING INCLUSIVE DANCE

Inclusive dance, integrated dance, mixed ability and disability-dance are all terms used to describe dance that represents a diverse audience, participants and artists. Teaching inclusive dance requires some considerations and tools to support access for all. The traditional model of transmission teaching, where participants follow the teacher's movement, needs to be supplemented with a range of possibilities for fulfilling movement tasks. It challenges us to think about the fundamental principles that drive our practice and to reinterpret them in multiple ways for teaching a diverse class. Organisations such as Touch Compass and Jolt offer tutor training in inclusive dance and Alito Alessi offers a four-week intensive training course in different countries around the world called the DanceAbility method. Here are some tips and ideas to include in your teaching practice.

### CONDUCTING A CLASS

- Acknowledge everyone on arrival to class.
- Start and end with a circle to connect the group.
- Find the 'greatest common denominator' and start with what everyone can do and raise the bar from there.
- Offer alternative options or adaptations to exercises. Improvisation can be more inclusive than transmission teaching.
- Use props to assist movement, but check they are appropriate and safe for the group.
- Set boundaries and parameters when touch or contact improvisation is being used to ensure everyone feels safe.
- Don't push someone in a wheelchair without permission. Encourage participants and tutors to dance and support motion from the front so you can gauge the participants' response if they are non-verbal.
- Celebrate everyone's diverse movement responses.
- Use inclusive language (see back of this lift-out).
- Demonstrate with a range of participants in the class where there is a mix of abilities.
- Use descriptive language and imagery for students who need alternative ways into an exercise.

### PREPARATION AND SUPPORT MECHANISMS

- Check class or workshop space and toilet facilities are fully accessible.
- Allow plenty of time for participants to get to class. Mobility taxis can take more time, assign a support tutor to look out for late arrivals.
- When starting a new class find out as much information about the participants as possible to enable delivery of material that is relevant and inclusive.
- Create a buddy system for participants to support each other during class and in breaks.
- Have support tutors when working with large diverse groups.
- Encourage carers and parents to join in where suitable.
- When teaching people with sight impairments find out where the best place is for the teacher to stand to enable them to fully access the class.
- Be aware of any health and safety issues that need to be raised with the group.



THIS IS LONG-TERM STUFF. ONE-OFF THINGS DON'T REALLY CHANGE PEOPLE'S LIVES.

CHANGES HAVE TO BECOME THE NORM RATHER THAN THE EXCEPTION.

LYN COTTON, JOLT DANCE COMPANY

Access means making sure your dance activities and performance can be enjoyed by disabled people. Physical access is the most obvious way of improving access but it's also about people's attitudes and actions, ticketing processes, marketing practice and cost.

Research and anecdotal evidence suggest that providing access and marketing arts activities and events to disabled people will build audiences and visitors. The 2018 Auckland Arts Festival provided 14 accessible events. These attracted more than 425 disabled and deaf patrons, along with friends and family, compared to 47 attendees at its accessible events in 2017.

There are a lot of things you can do to make your organisation and dance events more accessible. Start with a vision of what you want to achieve over the next one to five years and then do some planning on how you're going to get there.

## USE OF LANGUAGE

Person-first language focuses on individuals and not a disability. The term 'person with a disability' affirms the individual and does not define people by their physical impairments. This is about describing disabled people in a way that values them for who they are, rather than identifying them by what they cannot do.

The New Zealand Disability Strategy and the Office for Disability Issues use the term 'disabled people', a reference to people who have been disabled by society. Many disabled people see their disability as an important and positive part of their identity. 'Disabled person', therefore, can be a political statement. For Deaf people, the term 'Deaf' (with a capital D) refers more to a Deaf culture and belonging to a community rather than to their hearing status.

There is no consensus on terms: be flexible and transparent about the language used and why. Respect the choices of individuals on how they wish to be addressed and don't assume it's the same for everyone.

The following is a list of currently acceptable/not acceptable language.

### ✓ OKAY

- disabled person/people/community, disabled or disability community, disability sector, disability organisation
- people without impairments, non-disabled people
- mobility impaired person, physically impaired or physically disabled person
- accessible toilet/parking space
- the person has ... (the impairment)
- blind person/people, vision impaired person, partially sighted person, person with low vision
- Deaf person/people, hearing impaired person, person who is hard of hearing
- the person uses a wheelchair, wheelchair user
- mental health consumer, mental health service user, person with lived experience of mental illness
- impairment
- person with learning disability/intellectual disabilities
- person with Down syndrome

### ⊘ NOT OKAY

- the disabled, handicapped, invalid, abnormal, special/special needs, cripple, deformed, defective
- normal, able-bodied, typical, healthy
- cripple, handicapped
- disabled toilet/parking spaces
- afflicted with, suffers from, victim of ... (the impairment)
- the blind
- the deaf, deaf and dumb, deaf mute
- wheelchair confined/bound, quadriplegic, paraplegic
- patient, mentally ill, mental case, disturbed
- disease, birth defect, affliction
- mongol, spastic, retarded
- mongol, Downs

TOUCH COMPASS DANCE COMPANY, INMOTION MATARIKI 2018

BLIND AND LOW VISION PATRONS ENJOY TOUCH TOUR OF THE GISELLE SET AT AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL 2018

JDK, JUST DANCE CRAZY NZ DANCE WEEK 2018

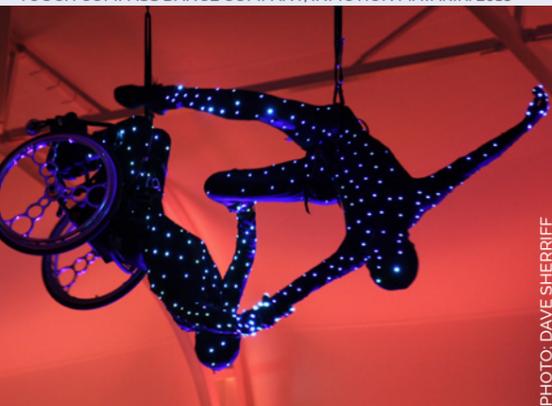


PHOTO: DAVE SHERRIFF



PHOTO: AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL



PHOTO: SEAN AICKIN

### THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW

- Walk around your venue or space as if you have never been to it before. How easy is it to get around? Record your findings.
- Download the Arts For All guide and complete checklists from Arts Access Aotearoa's website.
- Get in touch with local disabled people's organisations and start a dialogue. How could you work together?
- Pass this lift-out on to another staff member to read and set up a meeting to discuss the contents.
- Talk to a colleague in another arts organisation about access and how you might work together to build a new audience.
- Review the language your organisation uses in its print publications, in emails and on its website.
- Go to the TeachSign website and look up New Zealand Sign Language classes. Ask staff if anyone would like to attend. If so, you could apply for funding to cover the course fees.
- Buy a book for all front-of-house staff to record audience feedback and anything they notice about access. What worked? What didn't work?

### THINGS YOU CAN DO OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

- Work with your staff and board to develop an accessibility policy and action plan.
- Build partnerships with disabled people's organisations and develop projects that benefit both parties.
- Make a commitment to ensuring there is at least one disabled member on your board.
- Ensure staff undergo disability responsiveness training.
- Have your venue audited for accessibility. Develop a funding plan and budget to make the required modifications.
- Include disability-related work in your annual programme.
- Include at least one goal in every marketing strategy about marketing the event to disabled people.
- Use international accessibility symbols in all your communications and marketing.
- Ensure your website complies with accessibility standards and get users to test it for usability.
- Develop a system to monitor and evaluate the impact of your organisation's improved accessibility.

Remember the following when including disability responsiveness as an integral part of your organisation's culture:

- It needs to be included in everything you do.
- It will take time, exploration and mistakes along the way to get it right.
- Accessibility is a process, not an outcome. There are, and will always be, ways to improve accessibility – in particular because of the exponential development of technology.

## WHAT NOW?

Taking small steps to increase access has the potential to make a big impact on the lives of disabled people, their family, whānau and social networks. At the same time, you will be building audiences for your work. So where do you go for advice and how much will it cost? How are you going to market your events to your target audience?

These questions and more will be answered by contacting Claire Noble, Access and Participation Advisor Arts Access Aotearoa. Claire facilitates five regional Arts For All Networks across the country in Auckland, Taranaki, Wellington, Canterbury and Otago. She organises two meetings a year in each region and it's a great way to meet like-minded people, hear from disabled members, share ideas and expertise, and promote your accessible events and activities.

Arts Access Aotearoa's website ([www.artsaccess.org.nz](http://www.artsaccess.org.nz)) has a wealth of information in its Arts For All Network section. There are checklists and guidelines; a list of key organisations that can provide accessibility information; a list of funding sources and opportunities; and case studies on a range of topics. ■



DANCERS SAMARA FRASER AND DUNCAN ARMSTRONG ON THE COVER OF ARTS FOR ALL: NGĀ TOI MŌ TE KATOĀ

Arts For All | Ngā toi mō te katoa can be downloaded from <https://artsaccess.org.nz/Publications>

To join the Arts For All Network, contact Claire Noble (T: 04 802 4349 [claire.noble@artsaccess.org.nz](mailto:claire.noble@artsaccess.org.nz))