

# Arts House DIAP Year 2 Progress Report

## Culture and Employment

### Recruitment

- Internal Access Advisor was appointed in July 2024 for 1 day a week, with a focus on long lead Disability Inclusion Access Plan (DIAP) initiatives and consultation processes.
- Work is underway to push for Full Time Access Coordinator role across Arts House, Art Play and SIGNAL.
- Processes are being created to make sure recruiting managers are considering access the whole way through. This will include:
  - Creation of job ads
  - Opportunities to discuss contacts
  - Access considerations for interviews
  - Introducing new recruits to our internal Access Working Group
  - Having Plain Language job ads available on the Arts House website.
  - Reduced the number of selection criteria in recruitment processes.
- Processes are being created for Access Advisor to review upcoming job ads and be involved in casual recruitment processes.
- Deaf and Disabled people are a priority for inclusion in job interview panels but this hasn't been actioned.
- A list of networks connected to disability community has been created for the purpose of advertising roles.
- Contractors to be offered the opportunity to discuss their contracts.

### Culture

- Access remains at the forefront of decision making.
- Access is an ongoing agenda item in all team and programming meetings. All staff are encouraged to ask questions and share learnings.
- All advisory groups across 2024 involved representation of Deaf and Disabled people, including:
  - Warehouse Peer Advisory 100%
  - CultureLAB Peer Advisory 20%
  - Access Advisory Group 100%
  - Season Access Consultation Group(s) 100%
- Arts House had knowledge sharing sessions with SIGNAL and ArtPlay in December 2023 and 2024.
- FOH have ensured N95 masks and hand sanitiser are available at all times for public at entry points and signage in venue encourages mask wearing.
- Two HEPA air Purifiers exist permanently at Arts House.

## Learning and Training

- Recordings of previous Access Workshops commissioned by Arts House have been added to our welcome pack for artists.
- New Business Admin employee joined the Access Working Group.
- Business Admin has created a 'Staff Welcome Pack' which includes information on access at Arts House
- Staff are encouraged to consider access training when setting workplace and career development goals.
- Courses focused on disability and access are available for free to staff. These trainings have been collated and circulated to staff and are now linked in the welcome pack that new staff are provided.
- Sighted Guide training took place on September 17 for Arts House, ArtPlay, SIGNAL and YIRRAMBOI staff.
- New workshop on creative access is in development.
- Venue Supervisor Wardens all trained in safety procedures for fire and emergency exits this July 2023. This included protocols for mobility aid users in the event lifts cannot be used. These procedures have yet to be consistently communicated to staff but should be a part of new staff inductions going forward.

## Creative Program

### Programming and Artist Enrichment

- The Warehouse Residency program continues into 2025 – 2026 with a shift to a national callout. Accessible processes for this EOI alongside CultureLAB have continued including:
  - The ability to apply in a range of formats
  - Soft deadlines
  - Separate access budgets maintained.
  - EOI support with Arts Access Victoria
- Artists participating in Arts House programs were invited to attend Fyren d'Evie's creative access workshop online and in person.
- 'Access Requests' language updated in Artist Info sheets. This document now also features a link to a list of 'access prompts' for people to consider when sharing their access requests.
- Approximately 30% of Arts House projects in development are led by Disabled artists. 40% of Season 2, 2024 projects were led by Deaf and Disabled artists.
- We continue to offer digital programming including:

- Online digital works, panel discussion, artist talks, written commissions through BLEED, which underwent a website access review.
- Publication of written commissions from the Curatorial Takeover
- Publication of multimedia commissions in partnership with Runway Journal for Counterflows
- Digital version of Conduit Bodies made available during Melbourne Fringe and Alter State.
- TextaQueen's Access & Ethics workshop presented in a hybrid model, with participants online and in venue simultaneously.
- We partnered with other organisations to co-present disability led works and share learnings including by:
  - Co-commissioning works through The Warehouse Residency in partnership with Arts Centre Melbourne, Alter State.
  - Continuing partnerships with Melbourne Fringe Radical Access.
  - Participating in Alter State's Partners and Alliance Industry Networking sessions, and evaluation sessions.
  - Extending the Warehouse residency continent-wide. This will allow for new potential collaborations.

## Consultation and Audience Services

- We have continued to engage external consultation on the access services for each season. These meetings have involved the creative and marketing teams:
  - Access audience services and engagement strategies were modified based on feedback.
  - Artists were provided with consultant feedback
  - The number of audience access services have increased over Season 1 & Season 2, 2024.
- We have reviewed the consultation process and implemented the following changes:
  - Meeting duration extended to allow time for fuller depth of discussion.
  - The process was brought forward by a few weeks to increase lead-times on all aspects of the process.
- Arts House has received advice on COVID safety from Access Advisor, community and season access consultants. We have responded as follows:
  - Arts House has purchased two HEPA air filters that can be used both day-to-day and for events. We trialled using them for the Disabled and Sexy and Specials!
  - Currently any additional non-mandated COVID Safety measures are to be implemented upon request of the artist (such as TextaQueen's workshop which was hybrid and mask-mandatory for in-person attendees)

- Access Guides have been updated to share more up to date information around scent and COVID-19 safety measures in place for each event.
- Questions are to be asked in surveys to gauge audience interest in COVID safety measures like masked hours.
- Investigating a platform to present digital works without a co-presenter.

## Communication

- DIAP remains on website for anyone to view.
- Resources shared with the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres.
- Working to increase engagement with Deaf and Disabled audiences.
  - Advice on this sought for each new program via Season Access Consultation
  - Exploring the potential of engaging Access Ambassadors to help introduce parts of our program to different parts of the disability community.
  - Trialled community specific community engagement event with Jonothan Craig for Conduit Bodies audio described show.
  - Offering bespoke ticket types for community e.g. Disabled and Sexy tickets for Alter State event
  - Publishing access symbols on foyer posters
- Prioritising accessible communication
  - Alt Text and Image Descriptions used for images. Marketing forms and intro to access documents now feature a simple How-To on writing Image Descriptions and Alt Text.
  - Aiming to present marketing materials in a manner of different formats (audio, visual, tactile...etc) but this is yet to be consistently implemented.
  - Increasing offline marketing via street and building posters, radio advertising, articles in local paper and neighbourhood morning teas.
  - Maintenance of accessibility web page is ongoing and updates have been made. Positive feedback was received in annual survey from season 1 2024.
- Access Guides created for all performances, events and workshops.
  - Access advisor has reviewed template for access guides. Changes were implemented for Season 2, 2024.
  - Access guides are made available ahead of each show roughly 1 week in advance. Digital copies are available on website and sent in pre-show emails. A printed copy is available at Reception desk during each event.
  - The process for creating guides has been reviewed internally and workload has been re-distributed with aim to have them available 2 weeks prior for all events in Season 1 2025

- A meeting info sheet and checklist has been created by Access Advisor to assist all staff in running and setting up meetings in a way that is mindful of some common access considerations.
- Ticketing platform has changed language around the Companion Card to "Disability Companion Card" for clearer communication to general public.

## Venue

### Entry points and Transport

- Accessible Public Transport and parking
  - Public Transport is dependent on state government planning: <https://www.vic.gov.au/trams>
  - Accessible parking bays upgraded - 2 bays Queensberry St and 2 bays Errol St
  - Arts House continues to advocate with council for further improvements.
- Possibility of installing a wheelchair access ramp at Queensberry St entrance has been discussed with CEO and Advisor to CEO. Site visit with Facilities Project Managers; advised it is unlikely we will gain funding and heritage approval for this.
- Independent access to venue has been updated:
  - Automated doors open daily during regular opening hours and events.
  - Video doorbell installed at accessible entrance and connected to FOH mobile phone for out of hours access.
  - Warehouse artists issued with Gallagher app for independent access and disarming via accessible ramp.
  - Options for Errol Street alarm panel installation under investigation
- Ongoing discussions with the advisory group and leadership, including the CoM CEO, focused on making entry points more identifiable and welcoming are underway.

### In-venue Experience and Resources

- Lift is undergoing refurbishment Jan – Feb 2025. Includes access upgrades re: displays, button panel locations and audio announcements.
- Working towards updating stair nosing, signage, tactile floor panels at top of Supper Room stairs and foyer lighting.
- Quiet Space remains available daily during regular opening hours and events. Soft furniture to receive maintenance. One HEPA filter finds its home in Quiet Space except when needed elsewhere for other events.
- Access Key to be outsourced
- Digital offerings remain a priority for those who can't be in the venue

- Hybrid digital/online workshop method trailed for Makeshift Workshop.
  - Watch at home options provided throughout the year through BLEED and Fringe.
- Conversations with service providers are ongoing regarding new ways to deliver Auslan, captions and Audio Description.
- New technology for Assisted listening, Audio Description and self-guided tours, including Auracast, to be investigated in 2025.