

A stylized globe with a cracked, desert-like texture. The globe is composed of several segments in shades of teal and blue, set against a background of red and orange cracked earth. The word "midwest" is written across the center of the globe in a white, cursive font with a cracked texture.

midwest

2017 ACCESS ACTION PLAN

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Statement from the Access Managers

In an increasingly frightening world, we are progressively focused on outcomes instead of the means. *When are we getting this? When will this be done? Why is this not done yet?* We are undone by our fixation on our own individual outcomes and results. This fixation has caused the gap between disabled people and non-disabled people to grow bigger each day.

While we would like to think that the University and the Arts industry are accessible places, it remains a reality that many people are limited in their ability to participate. This is not because of their disability, but because organisations frequently fail to implement access measures for the inclusion of everyone. Whether that be because of limitations in infrastructure and services, or the failure to allocate funds to accessibility.

Inclusion is a never-ending process. We can try to include everyone, but the term 'disabled' means that somewhere along the line, there will be something a disabled person can't do without accessibility measures in place.

But therein lies the choice; what do we do about it? Do we pity people with disabilities, feel sorry for them, or falsely believe that the disability is not there? Or do we ask, understand it, and then try, try, and try to make it better?

As part of Mudfest, we believe the latter. We believe in universal access. And one of the keys in making universal access real is simple: to make it a tangible part of everyone's role, every day. Be it small things, like putting paper towels where everyone can reach, or big stuff, like implementing access and disability into your business plan.

Inclusion is a never-ending process. We can always strive to reach it, but will never do. But it is in the trying that we in fact succeed. It's important to note that we, like many others, don't have all the answers. Instead, we need to come together, to solve it together.

In an increasingly frightening world, it can seem like we are increasingly focused on outcomes instead of the means. But in Mudfest, we want to focus on the means. We want to focus on helping each other, growing together, and supporting each other. If we can do this, then it is in fact, a wonderful time to be alive.

Mary and Russell

*Access Managers
Mudfest, 2017*

Access Goals for Mudfest 2017

1. To create opportunities for people with disability to participate in Mudfest as artists, volunteers, and audience members.
2. To remove physical barriers in accessing Mudfest.
3. To provide comprehensive access training for volunteers and artists involved in producing the festival.

Disability and the Arts Panel

Mudfest and the Access Managers are excited to announce that Mudfest 2017 will feature a panel on Disability and Access in the arts industry.

This panel will feature artists with disabilities and will involve discussion on ways to make the arts industry more accessible for people with disability.

Time and location TBA.

Physical Access Commitments

Mudfest has committed to using Union House at the University of Melbourne as our main venue. This venue was chosen because of its access facilities.

Venues

- Mudfest venues will be wheelchair accessible.
- There will be wheelchair access via the main entrance where possible.
- The main entrances to Mudfest venues will be free of any trip hazards.

Transport and Parking

- There will be public transport close to the event.
- There will be wheelchair spaces at each of the seating areas.
- Where possible, there will be designated accessible parking spaces and these will be clearly advertised to people with access requirements.

Lifts

- Mudfest will ensure all lifts can be used independently by a person on a wheelchair.
- The lifts, where possible, will be large enough to fit a number of people using a wheelchair and will have Braille buttons.
- The lifts will be clearly signposted and easily to find.

Seating areas

- There will be quiet areas in the venues for people to rest.
- In the theatre areas, there will be seats/area with clear sight lines to the performance area that people in wheelchairs can use.
- Where possible, there will be rest seating at a variety of heights throughout the venue, for the enjoyment of participants.
- There will be clear paths to and from the venue, inside and outside.

Toilets/Bathroom

- There will be accessible toilets available close to other toilets, clearly stated.

Food and Beverages

- Patrons with a disability may bring their own food and beverages.
- Patrons with a disability can pre-order meals and drinks from the bar.
- Patrons with a disability can have their food and beverages delivered if they use a wheelchair and cannot access the bar.
- Free water will be available.

Guide and Assistance Dogs

- Guide and assistance animals are welcomed.
- Water will be made available for the guide and assistance animals.
- Where possible, there will be an area for guide and assistance animals to be toileted.
- In seating, there will be space for the guide animal to sit underneath.
- There will be a quiet place for the guide animal to rest.

Access Service Commitments

Communications and Marketing

- The Mudfest website will be as accessible as possible (e.g. screen reader friendly, WCAG compliant, large print).
- Access information will be made available in a range of formats (e.g. large print, audio, online).
- All images or video clips uploaded to the website will be captioned.
- Access Symbols will be used on programs and venue maps.
- Mudfest will advertise that it accepts Companion Cards.
- Mudfest will include disability networks in our promotion marketing databases so as to reach out to people with disability.

Ticketing and Bookings

- Access information will be made readily and easily available on the website.
- A person with a disability will be given the opportunity to register their access needs when booking their tickets.
- The Mudfest box office will be in a wheelchair accessible location.
- The Mudfest box office will accept Companion Cards and will ensure that carers are seated with the person whom they are providing care.
- Box office and usher staff will be made aware of the location of wheelchair seating spaces, accessible routes between venues, locations of lifts and accessible restrooms.
- One person with basic Auslan training will be in the box office at all times.

Auslan Interpreting

- Mudfest will provide Auslan interpreted performances.
- Seating areas with the best sight line to the interpreters will be set aside and allocated to people who are Deaf.
- Auslan interpreted performances will be promoted to members of the Deaf community.

Closed Captioning

For people who are Deaf, hard of hearing or who speak English as a second language.

- Closed captioning will be provided on all films and on selected images and performances.
- Seating areas with the best sight line to the captions will be set aside and allocated to people who are Deaf, hard of hearing or who speak English as a second language.
- Close captioned films and performances will be promoted to members of the communities who would best benefit from them.

Audio Descriptions

For people who are blind, or have low-vision.

- Mudfest will provide audio descriptions of performances and exhibitions.
- Audio descriptions will be promoted to members of the communities who would best benefit from them.

Touch/Tactile Touring

For people who are blind, or have low-vision.

- Mudfest will offer touch/tactile tours of exhibitions and performances throughout the festival.
- Touch/tactile tours will be promoted to members of the communities who would best benefit from them.

Relaxed Performances

For people who on the autism spectrum or who have sensory or communication disorders

- Mudfest will hold relaxed performances.
- Relaxed performances will be promoted to members of the communities who would best benefit from them.

Highly Visual Performances

- Mudfest will promote highly visual performances to people who are Deaf, hard of hearing or who speak English as a second language.

Content Notes and Warnings

- Mudfest will provide content warnings on material that deals with content that is potentially harmful for people suffering from mental illness such as mentions of suicide, anxiety, depression,

death, eating disorders, blood, racism, sexism, homophobia and any performances that include use of dark/small spaces, graphic imagery, nudity or strobe lighting.

- Content notes will be provided for performances that include audience participation or content that is unsafe for children.

Volunteers and Artists

Volunteer Training

- Access training is included as part of volunteer's induction.
- Volunteers are made aware of why language is important when talking about disability.
- Volunteers are provided with information on the social model of disability and 'people first' concept.
- Volunteers are provided with useful resources and places to go for further information.

Disability Awareness

- Volunteers are taught to always verbally introduce themselves and are taught how to approach someone with a disability to enquire about their access requirements.

Auslan training

- Volunteers are taken through an Auslan training session and taught basic phrases relevant to the work they will be undergoing at the festival.

Venue access training

- Volunteers are briefed on the locations of wheelchair seating spaces and suitable seats for people with mobility disabilities, sight disabilities and hearing disabilities.
- Volunteers are briefed on locations of accessible bathrooms, elevators and emergency exits.
- Volunteers are informed of the points of contact if they receive any questions relating to access or services for people with a disability.
- Volunteers are made aware of accessible paths of travel around the venue

Artist Training

- Access training is included as part of artist's induction.
- Artists are made aware of ways that their works can be made more accessible to people with disability (Auslan interpretation, audio description, tactile tours, closed captioning, content warnings).
- Artists are made aware of why language is important when talking about disability.
- Artists are provided with information on the social model of disability and 'people first' concept.
- Artists are provided with useful resources and places to go for further information.