



This guide is designed to help sport and recreation providers offer better opportunities for people with a disability. People with a disability were consulted in the development of the guide. The layout and design is an example of best practice in being accessible to a wide range of people.

**The guide:**

- is written in easy English
- uses 12 point font – the minimum for people with a vision impairment
- is available on request in alternative formats, for example large print or Braille
- uses symbols and pictures.

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# About disability



## Disability or not?

“I never thought of myself as being different, or disadvantaged. I'm just me – the way I am. The circumstances of my life put me in a wheelchair – but it has been my own efforts that have taken me around the world, and to the successes I have had.”

*Louise Sauvage, champion wheelchair athlete who was born with a severe spinal disability. She has won nine gold medals and two silver over the last three Paralympic Games.*

Having a disability can include many things such as:

- loss of physical or mental functions
- loss of a part of the body
- having an infectious disease or illness
- a condition which means a person learns differently from other people
- any condition which affects a person's thoughts and processes.<sup>1</sup>

When you think about this range, it is likely that some of your existing members, staff or volunteers, have a disability.

# Why involve people with a disability in your sport?

## 1. It's good business

Attracting and supporting people with a disability in your sport is good business.

### Increase participation

People with a disability make up 19 per cent of the population of NSW, yet represent two per cent of participation in sport. Attracting people with a disability as members, volunteers, coaches etc, may also have 'spill-over' effects by bringing in other participants. In all communities, people with a disability are workers, parents, partners, siblings. Their extended network can add to your membership.



### Reinvigorate your organisation

People with a disability may have skills and experience that can be of great value to your organisation. Involving people with a disability can refocus members and staff, invigorating their commitment to and enthusiasm for the organisation.

### Fulfill legal obligations

Under the *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992*, it is unlawful to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their disability. By including people with a disability in your organisation, you reduce the likelihood of a complaint under the Act.

"It's time to take disability off the charity agenda and put it on the business agenda" says Suzanne Colbert, CEO of Employees Making a Difference.

## 2. Sport benefits people with a disability<sup>2</sup>

Sport and recreation brings enjoyment and benefits to anyone who takes part – and people with a disability are no exception.

Sport and recreation can provide:

- adventure and challenge
- companionship
- control over lifestyle
- freedom
- friendships
- hope and enthusiasm
- improved self image
- independence
- social opportunities.

# How to involve people with a disability



There are a number of steps you can take to get people with a disability to participate in your sport or recreation activity, competition, club or facility.

1. Gain support from within
2. Gather information and talk to others
3. Form an action team
4. Conduct an accessibility audit
5. Develop a disability action plan
6. Explore opportunities for financial assistance
7. Train staff and volunteers
8. Promote your activities
9. Evaluate, improve and grow.

Each is explained in more detail on the following pages.

## 1. Gain support from within

Just like any new initiative, having the support of management and key decision-makers is imperative to success. Involving people with a disability should be set as a high priority, with committee members and/or the board taking ownership of the process.

Approach the inclusion of people with a disability with a positive and "can do" attitude. Expect some set-backs and plan for how you will approach them.

Educate your staff, volunteers and management and speak to other sports about their experiences.



### The Softball NSW experience

Troy Baverstock, Development Manager

“Ask most people the first thing that comes into their head when they hear the word disability. More than likely they’ll say a wheelchair. But disability is just as varied as ability. Opening our doors to people of all abilities proved to be a challenging and rewarding experience for all our staff.”

#### Coaching and equipment modifications often need only be minor.

“In our sport we bought some modified softballs (called incredi-balls), \$70 for a dozen. All the other equipment is the same. We just mark the field differently to stop collisions – it’s about minor changes to the way we coach.”

#### A great idea

The Disability Education Program assists sport and physical activity providers to include people with a disability. Run by NSW Sport and Recreation, all sessions are tailored to suit the needs of volunteers, board members and administrators.

See page 24 for contacts.

## 2. Gather information and talk to others

Before you begin, gather as much information as you can.

Most importantly, get ideas and learn from other organisations who provide services to people with a disability.

There are peak organisations who can offer assistance, as well as many clubs and groups that are doing an excellent job of attracting people with a disability to their sport.

Try contacting:

- People with a disability in the local area
- Local disability organisations
- NSW Sport and Recreation
- Australian Sports Commission
- Peak bodies
- Best practice clubs, organisations or facilities including:
  - Sutherland TAFE (Loftus campus)
  - Little Athletics NSW
  - Softball NSW
  - Tennis NSW
  - Basketball NSW.

See page 24 for contact details.





## Communicating effectively with people with a disability

Communication is always a two-way process, regardless of a person's ability. Both people have to understand what's being communicated if it's to be effective. You might try a combination of these communication methods:

- Write your message down on paper
- Use an action instead of speech
- Ask the person to repeat what you've said in their own words
- Use an interpreter and speak directly to the person not the interpreter
- Use common expressions such as 'see you later' or 'did you hear about that'
- Try to stay at eye level with whoever you're talking too. It might mean moving out from behind a front counter to greet a person in a wheelchair
- Remember personal space. It's a good idea not to lean on a wheelchair or grab hold of a person's walking aid.

Sometimes there may be specific communication factors to remember for people with a particular disability.

For example, not putting your hand in front of your mouth when speaking to a person with a hearing impairment who is lip-reading.

*Media guidelines*, produced by the Disability Council of NSW, includes information on effective communication techniques. See page 24 for contact details.



### 3. Form an action team

With the support of your management, committee or board, form an action team.

The team's purpose is to attract people with a disability to your sport or venue.

#### **Forming an action team will:**

- share the workload
- bring a variety of ideas and expertise to the process
- facilitate broad support of the initiative.

Ideally, you may be in a position to assign a specific project worker or coordinator.

#### **Your action team should consist of:**

- staff
- members
- management
- people with a disability
- representatives from a local disability group.

Why not advertise within your organisation for the action team? Remember the broad definition of disability outlined on page 3. There are likely to be people already in your organisation with interest, passion and expertise – because they have a disability themselves, or have a relative or friend with a disability.

You could also speak to a local TAFE or university regarding work experience students who might be able to assist.

Always communicate the action team's activities and meeting times in newsletters, notice boards and any other communication channels, so that ideas and input can be read by everyone.

## 4. Conduct an accessibility audit

Is your organisation accessible to people with a disability?

While accessibility is largely about the suitability of the physical and structural environment, it's not only about doors, toilets and car spaces. It's also about positive behaviours and attitudes.

### Access audit

An access audit will highlight all the areas your organisation needs to address.

This includes physical, environmental and attitudinal barriers.

Pages 16 to 22 provide you with an access audit your organisation can use straight away.

Qualified access auditors can also be employed if your organisation requires a more detailed audit. See page 24 for contact details for the Association of Consultants in Access.

### Before you start the audit

Select at least two suitable members from your committee to conduct the audit, including a person with a disability and someone with a good understanding of access issues.

Set aside a specific date and time for the audit. Organise all the resources and equipment you need (eg. camera, tape measure).

Our audit has been developed with reference to Australian Standard 1428.1 Design for Access and Mobility.



## 5. Develop a disability action plan

### Little Athletics NSW Disability Action Plan

“In 2001 we realised our approach to including people with a disability was informal and reactive. We knew we needed a better approach if our sport was going to grow.

After a lot of hard work, planning and asking people with a disability what they wanted from our sport, we released our Disability Action Plan in October 2003. Our plan means that LAANSW are now committed to a more strategic approach. We have set realistic goals and timeframes to achieving our aim of including people with a disability”.

*Darren Wensor, Projects Officer,  
Little Athletics NSW*

Developing a disability action plan for your sport is one of the most important and valuable tools for change. It will highlight your strengths and weaknesses in delivering quality services and programs for people with a disability. It will set clear strategies and timeframes to overcome barriers. Most importantly, your disability

action plan will evolve and change as your sport grows and participation increases.

Organisations often choose to link their disability action plan to their business plan. This facilitates a whole of business approach to increase participation. It may also assist your sport to attract funding for particular actions.

### Where to start?

Use the information you gathered from others and the accessibility audit to get started.

You need to identify priority areas for action. This may include:

- improving venue access
- identifying staff training needs
- improving accessibility of promotional material
- increasing representation of people with a disability on committees
- increasing the number of people with a disability in paid and volunteer positions.

Develop strategies for each priority area. In other words, detail how it will be achieved. Then for each strategy assign a timeframe, responsibility, performance measure and budget. The table on the next page sets out an example.



## EXAMPLE

Priority area: Improving venue access

Strategy – how will we do this?	Timeframe	Responsibility	Performance indicator	Associated costs
Increase number of parking spaces for people with a disability	September 2004	Local council	Two new disability parking spaces by end December 2005	Local council costs
Increase signage around the facility	November 2004	Jo Smith, club board member	Flyer is given to all new members	Within existing budget
Develop a standardised induction for members	August 2004	Club Manager	All new members are inducted	Staff time

Copy your draft plan and send it to members, associates, volunteers and disability organisations for feedback. Incorporate feedback into your final plan.

You should register your final plan with the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) website at [www.hreoc.gov.au](http://www.hreoc.gov.au). Registering your plan with HREOC will promote your organisation as a proactive sport and/or recreational provider for people with a disability.



## 6. Explore opportunities for financial assistance

Securing financial assistance for your activities will be a major benefit.

Improving opportunities for people with a disability may require you to train staff, buy equipment, print new promotional material, or put a new sign in place.

While changes are often minor and inexpensive, financial support will help. A cash injection may enable you to do even more.

Sponsorship, fundraising and grant programs are all ways to get financial assistance.

**Get that Grant** is a handy booklet which profiles the funding assistance offered by NSW Sport and Recreation, as well as other organisations.

You may also get ideas and assistance from:

- NSW Sport and Recreation
- State sporting organisations
- Community Builders website
- Local councils  
(eg. Community Development Support Expenditure Scheme)

Contact details are listed on page 24.

## 7. Train staff and volunteers

Does your organisation have the skills and knowledge to include people with a disability?

Training needs for staff and volunteers should be included in your disability action plan. Training is a crucial ingredient for success.

Just like learning a new sport, learning about the varying abilities, needs and aspirations of people with a disability will mean you are equipped to deliver inclusive programs.

Some formal training costs money. Other types of informal training can be less expensive or free. All training is a good investment and will help you further promote your organisation.

### What training is available?

- Disability Education Program (NSW Sport and Recreation)
  - People with vision impairments seminars (Guide Dogs NSW/ACT)
  - Deaf awareness, sign language and TTY training (Deaf Society of NSW)
  - Linking to recreation (Royal Blind Society)
  - Disability and ethnicity (Multicultural Disability Advocacy Service)
  - Disability issues (TAFE NSW)
- See page 20 for contact details.

### A little training goes a long way

Kim Murphy, Development Officer  
Basketball NSW

“Just a small training investment can make a huge difference. We had next to no experience in sport for people with disabilities. I took part in the Disability Education Program and got involved in running clinics.

Several years on, we’ve built up a wealth of knowledge. Basketball NSW now offers services to schools for special purpose and specific programs for children with physical or intellectual disabilities.

On a personal level, my confidence and skills have grown enormously. Most importantly, more children are now involved in basketball.”





## 8. Promote your activities

Your overall strategy should be to communicate what your organisation does well for people with a disability.

If you have been successful in including people with a disability in your organisation, make sure everyone knows about it. Tell people about what you have been doing in your promotional material, contact local media and tell other disability groups who might want to use your services.

On the practical side, there are a number of ways you can make your promotional strategies, such as brochures or a website,

more effective in targeting people with a disability. Read through the relevant section of the access audit on page 16 for tips.

And remember, promotion doesn't just have to be external.

For everyone in your organisation who has been helping to improve opportunities for people with a disability, make sure you recognise and celebrate these achievements. This can be as easy as a thank you letter or recognised award at a presentation night.

### Handy references

*Media guidelines*, Disability Council of NSW

See page 24 for contact details.



## 9. Evaluate, improve and grow

Once you are providing more opportunities for people with a disability, make sure you continually evaluate what you are doing. What's working? What could be improved?

Ask for feedback from your members. For example, conduct a survey or facilitate a focus group or practical workshop. Offer an incentive such as movie tickets or a free meal for two to encourage participation. Once you've got the feedback, incorporate it into your planning and implement new strategies.

Keep being innovative. For example, try offering a buddy program for people with a disability. A buddy (or support person) can

assist with the orientation process (introductions to members, touring facilities, allocation of parking space/locker and so on), as well as providing continuing support.

Learn by trying new things. Don't be afraid to give it a go!

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*1 Taken from Youth Action Policy Association fact sheet – Working with young people with disabilities, 2003*


*2 Adapted from NICAN – information on Recreation, Tourism, Sport and the Arts for people with disabilities, 2003*



# Attachments

## Access audit checklist


### Physical and structural

	Yes	No	Action
<b>Acoustics – assists people with hearing impairments</b>			
Soft sound absorbent surfaces are used			
Background noise from electrical equipment is minimised			
<b>Car parking</b>			
There are designated car spaces for people with a disability			
Designated car spaces are located close to the venue entrance			
Designated car spaces 3,200-3,800mm wide			
 Designated car spaces are marked with the international access symbol			
Details on the number and location of accessible spaces is at the car park entry			
An enforcement procedure is in place to ensure disabled parking is only used by holders of the Mobility Parking Permit			
The car park is on firm and level ground			
Undercover parking areas have a minimum clearance of 2,500mm (allows for vehicles transporting wheelchairs on the roof)			
<b>Colour schemes – internal assists people with vision impairments</b>			
Differentiation is used between ceilings, walls, doors and floors			

	Yes	No	Action
Irregular, busy, geometric and/or striped patterns are not used			
Matt and mid sheen finishes (rather than shiny)			
<b>Doorways</b>			
Automatic doors or an easy to open manual door is provided			
Doorways are a minimum 850mm in width			
A smooth transit can be made across the doorway (ie. no step or difficult change in floor surface)			
<b>Emergency exits and evacuations</b>			
Emergency procedures/plans take into account the needs of people with a disability			
Emergency procedures/plans identify people with a disability who will require assistance			
Staff are trained to assist people with a disability in emergencies			
Both audible and visual alarms are used			
Safe havens are provided for people with mobility difficulties			
<b>Flooring</b>			
Carpet is low pile, anti static and firmly fixed			
Carpet texture is even and stable			
Hard flooring (eg. floorboards, vinyl or parquetry) is slip resistant			
Hard flooring is maintained to reduce glare			
Concrete flooring has a lightly textured finish to ensure slip resistance			
Tactile ground surface indicators (eg. raised bumps on the edge of railway platforms) are			

	Yes	No	Action
used to highlight hazards and to indicate the safest path of travel.			
<b>Lighting</b>			
Lighting meets Australian Standard 1428			
Internal lighting is flexible and can be adjusted			
Potential hazards (eg. stairs) are well lit			
<b>Pathways</b>			
Pathway surfaces are firm			
Pathways well maintained with no loose debris			
Pathways are lit at night			
<b>Public transport</b>			
Information is provided on public transport options to your venue			
The entrance to your venue is close to public transport drop-off and pick-up areas			
If this is not possible, a link is offered between the two (eg. courtesy shuttle)			
<b>Reception</b>			
Reception provides a wheelchair accessible area (height 830-870mm and leg clearance 800mm – 840mm)			
Reception counter positioning allows lip readers to see receptionist's face			
A Better Hearing Counter Card is displayed			
Seating is provided			
Reception staff can provide information and assistance to people with a disability			

	Yes	No	Action
Promotional material is easily accessible (ie. at the right height for wheelchair users)			
<b>Set down and waiting areas</b>			
There is a designated set down area located close to the venue entrance			
<b>Signage</b>			
Signs direct to all important venue features (eg. car parking, toilets, reception)			
Signs are fixed to appropriate venue features (eg. toilet doors)			
Signs are located at venue entry points			
Signs are placed 700-1,700mm above ground level			
Signs are illuminated for day and night use			
Signs are clear and concise			
Symbols are used on signs (rather than words) where possible			
Signs feature a clear lettering style (eg. Arial font) at least 18 points			
Signs feature dark writing/symbols with a contrasting light background			
Signs are multi lingual when appropriate			
<b>Stairs</b>			
Staircases are well lit			
Alternative access routes are provided			
Handrails provided on both sides of the stairs			
Tactile indicators are used			

	Yes	No	Action
<b>Toilets, change rooms and showers</b>			
Designated accessible toilets, change rooms and showers are provided			
Unisex accessible toilets are preferable to allow mixed genders to toilet together, eg. female in wheelchair, male carer			
 Signs indicate the location of toilets, change rooms and showers			
All meet Australian Standard 1428.1 and 1428.2			
Signs featuring the international access symbol is used			
<b>Venue access</b>			
Venue access routes are obvious and/or signposted			
Signs direct to the nearest accessible entrance			
Entry points are located near to set down areas			
Obstacles do not prevent easy venue access (eg. stairs, steep ramps)			
If the venue entry route is a long distance, seating is provided along the way			
If there are stairs at the venue entrance, a lift or ramp is also provided			
Handrails are provided where there are steps and/or ramps			

	Yes	No	Action
<b>Administration and practices</b>			
<b>Communication and promotional material</b>			
Website meets www.w3.org standards			
Promotional material uses:			
dark coloured print on a light background			
pictures and diagrams			
clear lettering style (eg. Arial) at a minimum size 12 point font			
non-reflective paper that contrasts with the print			
Writing style is clear and concise			
Information is provided in other languages where appropriate			
Information is provided in other format where appropriate (eg. Braille)			
A range of media outlets are used for advertising (eg. print, radio or TV)			
Disability specific media outlets are utilised (eg. Radio for Print Handicapped)			
Tele typewriter (TTY) is offered or staff are aware of the National Relay Service			
People can phone, email or fax your organisation			
<b>Management</b>			
People with a disability are involved in decision making (eg. represented on committees)			
An appointed staff person ensures accessibility for people with a disability			
Relevant policies address the needs of people with a disability			
A disability action plan is in place			

	Yes	No	Action
<b>New members</b>			
A welcome procedure for people with a disability is in place			
People with a disability are supported in their introduction to the club (eg. info pack sent prior to first visit)			
<b>Program delivery</b>			
Activities are scheduled at various times of the day (this, for example, will offer more choice to people with a disability, assisted by a carer or friend)			
Modified equipment and rules are used (remember, it doesn't have to be expensive or complex!)			
<b>Training</b>			
Staff have been trained in basic disability awareness			
Staff understand how to communicate with people with a disability			
Coaching staff and/or those delivering programs have suitable skills			
The organisation is aware of the wide range of disability training available			



## Contacts

Organisation	How they can help you	Contact details
Access e-bility	Website with lots of ideas and information	<a href="http://www.e-bility.com">www.e-bility.com</a>
Association of Consultants	Provide list of qualified access auditors in Access	<a href="http://www.access.asn.au">www.access.asn.au</a>
Auslan Services and education services	Auslan (sign language) interpreters <a href="http://www.deafsocietynsw.org.au">www.deafsocietynsw.org.au</a> <a href="http://www.deaf.nsw.edu.au">www.deaf.nsw.edu.au</a>	Freecall 1800 893 855 TTY (02) 9833 8858 (02) 8845 9444 TTY (02) 8845 9411
Australian Sports Commission (Disability Unit)	Assistance developing disability action plans	Phone 6214 1792 <a href="http://www.ausport.gov.au/connect">www.ausport.gov.au/connect</a>
Australian Standards	Accessibility standards	Phone (02) 8206 6000 <a href="http://www.standards.org.au">www.standards.org.au</a>
Basketball NSW	Experience in offering programs for people with a disability	Phone (02) 9746 2969 <a href="http://www.newbasketball.net.au">www.newbasketball.net.au</a>
Community Builders	Financial assistance options	<a href="http://www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au">www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au</a>
Community Relations Commission	Interpreting onsite	Freecall 1300 651 500 <a href="http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au">www.crc.nsw.gov.au</a>
D Sport	Community based sport and recreational activities for people with a disability	Phone (02) 9763 2455 <a href="http://www.dsport.org.au">www.dsport.org.au</a>
Disability Council of NSW	Media guidelines and communication tips	Freecall and TTY 1800 044 848 <a href="http://www.discoun.nsw.gov.au">www.discoun.nsw.gov.au</a>
Guide Dogs NSW	Education seminars	Phone (02) 9412 9302
Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission	Examples of Disability Action Plans	Phone (02) 9284 9600 TTY: 1800 620 241 <a href="http://www.hreoc.gov.au">www.hreoc.gov.au</a>

Organisation	How they can help you	Contact details
Ideas Inc	Information on services in NSW and Australia for people with a disability	Freecall and TTY 1800 029 904 www.ideas.org.au
Independent Living Centre NSW Inc	Products and equipment to assist accessibility	Phone (02) 9808 2233 www.ilcnsw.asn.au
Little Athletics NSW	Experience in offering programs for people with a disability	Phone (02) 9633 4511 www.laansw.com.au
Local council (your local council)	Accessibility Community Development Support Expenditure Scheme	Check the white pages listing www.whitepages.com.au
Multicultural Disability Advocacy Association NSW	Education and training	Freecall 1800 629 072
National Information Communication Awareness Network (NICAN)	Recreation and sport database	Freecall and TTY 1800 806 769 www.nican.com.au
National relay service	Relays calls between 'hearing people' and people who are Deaf or hearing/speech impaired	Phone 133 677
NSW Sport and Recreation	Disability Education Program Financial assistance General advice, resources	Phone (02) 9006 3700 TTY (02) 9006 3701 www.dsr.nsw.gov.au
Royal Blind Society	Education seminars Guidelines on producing information	Phone (02) 9334 3333 www.rbs.org.au
Softball NSW	Experience in offering programs for people with a disability	Phone (02) 9677 4000 www.nsw.softball.org.au
Standards Australia	Australian Standard 1428 – Design for access and mobility	Phone (02) 8206 6000 www.standards.com.au
Sutherland TAFE (Gym)	Experience in offering programs for people with a disability	Phone (02) 9710 5800 (and ask for the gym)

Organisation	How they can help you	Contact details
TAFE	Education and training on disability issues	Phone 131 601 <a href="http://www.tafensw.edu.au">www.tafensw.edu.au</a>
Tennis NSW	Experience in offering programs for people with a disability	Phone (02) 9763 7644 <a href="http://www.tennisnsw.com.au">www.tennisnsw.com.au</a>
Translating and Interpreting Services	Translation available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week	Phone 131 450
Youth Action Policy Association	Youth with a disability resources	Phone (02) 9319 1100 <a href="http://www.yapa.org.au">www.yapa.org.au</a>

