

The Nationals WA Disability Access and Inclusion Policy

16/12/2023

The Nationals WA

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Disability Access and Inclusion Policy

Aim

The Nationals WA Disability Access and Inclusion Policy (the Policy) will encourage the participation and inclusion of people with disability in the Nationals WA (the Party). It reflects the intent of a policy motion accepted in 2021 (see below) to establish a Disability Access and Inclusion Plan in accordance with the commitment, set out in our Code of Conduct, that:

‘The Nationals WA are committed to providing a safe, respectful and welcoming environment for all, regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, age or mental or physical disability.’

The Policy will bolster existing efforts to provide a safe, respectful and welcoming environment for people with disability.

Objective

Adopted from the 2021 resolution, the objective of the Plan is to;

- a) Encourage participation by people with disability in the Nationals WA;
- b) Improve venue and meeting accessibility;
- c) Improve the accessibility of materials, websites, and correspondence;
- d) Develop the potential of members, office bearers and candidates with disability on an equitable basis; and
- e) Establish a culture that embraces the diversity of experience and perspective that people with disability may bring.

Strategy

This policy;

- a) Identifies barriers to participation in The Nationals (WA);
- b) Recommends methods to overcome those barriers;
- c) Promotes equality of opportunity within the party; and
- d) Helps ensure all Party Members can participate in Party activities.

Barriers

A survey of our members, conducted via Survey Monkey in May 2023 identified five common disability based barriers to participation in Nationals (WA) activities.

- Caring responsibilities (25.00 percent)
- Restricted mobility (15.63 percent)
- Physical access (9.38 percent)
- Hearing impairment (9.38 percent)
- Vision impairment (3.13 percent).

Overcoming Barriers

Caring responsibilities

Caring for a child, senior, or person with disability can limit a member's capacity to participate in Party events and forums. Strategies to overcome these barriers include;

- a) Holding meetings online using Zoom, Microsoft Teams or related communication platforms;
- b) Producing a regular newsletter for party members;
- c) Establishing a members only portal on The Nationals (WA) website.
- d) Ensuring that communications from State Secretariat, Branches and other Party bodies are prompt and efficient. (See Appendix One)

Restricted Mobility / Physical Access

People with restricted mobility, for example a person in a wheelchair, on crutches or even with a walking stick, experience serious difficulties in negotiating steps, stairs, crowded or cluttered environments. This can make it physically impossible for them to participate in forums and meetings. These barriers can be overcome by having;

- a) Doors wide enough for wheelchair access (min 85cm);
- b) Lift/ramp alternative to stairs;
- c) Accessible toilet available;
- d) Chairs available;
- e) Table and chair arrangements allow wheelchair access (e.g. isles not too narrow)
- f) ACROD parking available;
- g) Public transport access. (See Appendix One)

Hearing impairment

People who are hard of hearing may be excluded from debate and discussion. This, in turn, may cause feelings of isolation, frustration and low self-esteem, which further impact on their ability to participate in Party deliberations. Ways to incorporate people with impaired hearing include:

- a) Using visual aids such as projectors or written materials;
- b) AUSLAN / audio loop available (for large events);
- c) Motions and Amendments presented in writing;
- d) Microphones provided (large events). (See Appendix One)

Vision impairment

Impaired vision (blindness) can prevent people from reading printed materials and make it difficult for them to navigate crowded or cluttered spaces. This, in turn, creates barriers to participating in Party events, forums and discussions. Ways in which the Party can help people with impaired vision to participate include;

- a) Adequate signage in large font and contrasting colours.
- b) Ensuring that material such as minutes, agenda etc. are available in electronic format that can be accessed using assistive software, for example Job Access With Speech (JAWS);
- c) Ensure that websites are accessible (See Appendix Two)

Event Planning

Events accessibility can be enhanced by asking potential participants to notify the organisers of specific needs and being open about the extent to which dietary and other needs can be accommodated. Specific steps include;

- a) Request for attendees to notify regarding access and/or dietary requirements.
- b) Transparency about what needs can and cannot be met.

Website Accessibility

People with impaired vision, conditions such as epilepsy, or who are unable to manipulate a mouse may struggle to access websites, a vital tool to convey information about our party. Ways to ensure website accessibility include;

- a) Providing alternative (alt) text for images;
- b) Ensuring that text and backgrounds are in contrasting colours;
- c) Giving users the option to change font size;
- d) Audio and video should have subtitles, captions or written transcripts available;
- e) Users should be able to pause / stop audio and video;
- f) Describing link destinations rather than simply providing a URL address;
- g) Specifying file size to allow people with slow internet connection to decide if they wish to open a link;
- h) Ensuring that website can be navigated using only a keyboard or voice commands;
- i) Ensuring that there more than one way to find information (i.e search / site map / navigation);
- j) Putting labels next to fields into which people need to enter information (i.e. filling out forms) makes these accessible to users of assistive technology;
- k) If your page has time limits ensure these can be adjusted or turned off;
- l) Avoid links that move, flash or blink as these can trigger seizures if the flashing occurs more than three times per second.

References

Australian Human Rights Commission ND, Access For All: **Improving Accessibility For Consumers With Disability**, accessed 25.10.2023 via <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/employers/access-all-improving-accessibility-consumers-disability>

The Nationals (WA) 2019, **Code of Conduct**, adopted 17th August 2019, accessed 23.10.2023 via https://mcusercontent.com/827b2596d8715a8c302c5fdea/files/459cd6de-565b-4d07-b3b5-9e1fe4e67c6c/190718_Code_of_Conduct_SC_Approved.pdf

Vision Australian 2023, **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines**, accessed 25.10.2023 via <https://www.visionaustralia.org/resources/digital-access/resources/tip-sheets-whitepapers/web-content-accessibility-guidelines>

Appendix One – Accessible Events Checklist

Venue

Accessibility Item	Y/N
ACROD Parking Available	
Sufficient Parking Available	
Public Transport Access	
Door wide enough for wheelchair access (min 85cm)	
Stairs have lift/ramp alternative	
Accessible toilet available	
Chairs available	

Comment _____

Event

Accessibility Item	Y/N
Projector used/written materials provided	
AUSLAN/audio loop available (Party events)	
Motions and Amendments presented in writing	
Teleconference option available	
Adequate signage in large font, contrasted colours	
Microphones provided (large events)	
Table and chair arrangements allow wheelchair access (e.g. isles not too narrow)	

Comment _____

Invitation

Accessibility Item	Y/N
Request for attendees to notify regarding access requirements	
Open about what can and cannot be offered	
Dietary requirements asked (catered events)	
Open about what dietary requirements can and cannot be met	

Comment _____

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Appendix 2: Website Accessibility Checklist

Images

Accessibility Item	Y/N
Does your site use alternative (alt) text for images (unless purely decorative)?	
Have you checked that your site does not use images as text, unless part of a logo or brand name?	

Audio and Video

Accessibility Item	Y/N
Does audio and video have subtitles, captions or written transcripts available?	
Can audio and video be paused / stopped by users?	

Colour and Contrast

Accessibility Item	Y/N
Are text and background in contrasting colours?	
Have you made sure that colour is not used as a prompt or to convey information?	

Text

Accessibility Item	Tick
Can website users increase and decrease text size?	

Links

Accessibility Item	Tick
Do links say where the link is going rather than simply providing a URL address?	
Do links to documents include the document type and file size?	
Are accessible versions of all documents available (i.e. both Word doc and PDF)?	

Navigation

Accessibility Item	Tick
Can all parts of the website be accessed using only a keyboard (i.e. without a mouse)?	
Is there more than one way to find information (i.e search / site map / navigation)?	

Forms

Accessibility Item	Tick
Are there labels immediately adjacent to fields into which users are to enter information (i.e. name / email / comments)?	

Page Time Limits and Flashing

Accessibility Item	Tick
If your page has a time limit, can this be adjusted or turned off?	
Does your page avoid blinking, flashing or scrolling to highlight content (since more than three flashes per second can trigger epileptic fits)?	

If you can answer yes to all these questions your website will be accessible to people with disabilitiesⁱ.

Comment _____

Appendix Three – Relevant Legislation and Standards

Australian Human Rights Commission – Disability Standards <https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/disability-standards>

WA Department of Communities – Rights of People With Disability <https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/departments-of-communities/rights-of-people-disability>

People With Disability Australia - Language Guide <https://pwd.org.au/resources/language-guide/>

Western Australian Disability Services Act 1993 [https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_27760.pdf/\\$FILE/Disability%20Services%20Act%201993%20-%20%5B04-d0-05%5D.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_27760.pdf/$FILE/Disability%20Services%20Act%201993%20-%20%5B04-d0-05%5D.pdf?OpenElement)

Western Australian Equal Opportunity Act 1984 [https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_41630.pdf/\\$FILE/Equal%20Opportunity%20Act%201984%20-%20%5B07-f0-02%5D.pdf?OpenElement](https://www.legislation.wa.gov.au/legislation/prod/filestore.nsf/FileURL/mrdoc_41630.pdf/$FILE/Equal%20Opportunity%20Act%201984%20-%20%5B07-f0-02%5D.pdf?OpenElement)