



ACCESSIBILITY ACTION PLAN
2021 - 2024

CONTENTS

3	CEO message
4	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who We Are• La Mama Statement• What is Disability?
6	History of La Mama's Accessibility Action Plan
7	Journey so far <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summary of Previous Plan• Goals Audit
9	Action Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview• Commitment to Accessibility
12	Key Goals and Ambitions
13	Action Plan Roll Out
15	Contacts
16	Access Resources
17	Photo Credits



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge that our theatres are on traditional land. We pay our respect to all First Nations people, past and present, and we recognise their continuing spiritual and cultural connection to the land

CEO MESSAGE | LIZ JONES AND CAITLIN DULLARD

La Mama is an organisation committed to inclusive practice.

Our value of **Artistic Freedom** means we do not impose artistic parameters. We are **Artist Driven** - artists from all walks of life are at the core of our programming, programs and pathway opportunities. We believe in **Theatre for All** - we value participation and inclusivity for all (artists and audiences alike). **Diversity at Our Core** and works by First Nations artists, artists with a disability, artists from all cultures, ages and genders are not labeled 'diverse', they are celebrated, championed and regularly programmed. By **Celebrating Creativity** we encourage exciting, adventurous, intimate, ambitious, risk-taking theatre and art.

Since its inception in 1967, openness to all people, from all walks of life, has been essential to the La Mama philosophy.

With the rebuilt La Mama, due to open in 2021, we will be completely accessible for the first time in our history. As a priority in the brief of the rebuild, the Faraday street venue will see the inclusion of a platform and full lift, accessible bathrooms and a hearing loop. Furthermore, in the name of equal access, once within the La Mama gates, all patrons will enter the theatre through the same door. This inclusion was central to the design developments. Complimenting the renovations done in 2017 at the Courthouse, we will be proud to have realised this long-held ambition.

This Disability Action Plan communicates La Mama's intentions for improving not just our physical access but, much more than that, it provides La Mama staff, board, patrons and stakeholders, with an understanding of our strengths and weaknesses in servicing the needs of people of all abilities.

Our 2021 – 2024 plan is built on extensive consultation undertaken for the 2014-18 Disability Action Plan. These foundations set La Mama a clear direction for future work beyond the scope of the 2014 – 2018 timeframe and as such that original plan continues to provide us with the groundwork for this subsequent document.

La Mama programs independent artists and provides the venue and support to enable art making on their own terms. Resources we provide (such as this plan) need to be user-friendly for artists from all backgrounds. This way we can ensure genuine engagement within an under-resourced organisation. We take a whole of organisation approach to accessibility, ensuring everyone and all elements of operations consider accessibility at all times.

We're pleased to be where we're at, but there is always ongoing work to do and room for improvement. Our intention is to contribute to ongoing social education and change to make La Mama, theatre and the world a place for all people.

Thank you to Reis Low and Xanthe Beesley for their work on this document and continued acknowledgement goes to Dorine Blaise who prepared our original DAP.

Finally, thank you to those who offered feedback and support us to develop and grow our ambition to be a space for everyone.



INTRODUCTION

WHO WE ARE

La Mama Theatre: facilitating fearlessly independent theatre making.

La Mama is Australia's most vital, responsive, inclusive and diverse home of independent theatre-making. We believe in the power and possibilities of theatre and art for all people.

La Mama is committed to a diversity of artistic approaches, to innovation and to exploring minority as well as general concerns. A vital space and prolific production house, La Mama has given initial exposure and support to thousands of playwrights, directors, actors, and technicians as well as poets, musicians, performance artists and experimental film-makers.

Our Mission is to discover, uncover, and provide a platform for new voices and ideas through theatre and art. **Our Fundamental Purpose** is to provide independent artists from across Australia with opportunities to develop, practice and present work, by:

- **Enabling art making:** Our unique programming and presentation model provides artistic teams with a modest production budget, full 'no-rent' venue access, marketing, ticketing, front of house, technical support and 80% box office return, allowing artists to focus on making art.
- **Enhancing opportunities for artists:** Our programs support artists in Presentation, Creation, Outreach, Festivals, Engagement and Multi-arts.
- **Empowering artistic freedom:** As a hub for truly independent theatre in Australia, our commitment to minimal intervention in the creative process supports artistic risk and freedom.
- **Engaging audiences as a community:** We offer an affordable and hospitable cultural experience that appeals to a broad range of people.
- **Equipping independent artists with skills to thrive:** We provide services to independent artists including: script appraisal, industry advice, sharing opportunities and a space to connect, reflect, develop and create.

LA MAMA ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

La Mama values the importance of each person's individual right to participate in the culture of Australia. La Mama has always strived to be a welcoming place for people of all abilities. Artists with a disability have regularly been programmed at La Mama and embraced as audience members. Over the years, La Mama has run many programs and participated in numerous events that support artists and audiences with a disability.

This AAP is an opportunity to formalise the commitment La Mama has towards inclusive arts practice. In doing so, La Mama is implementing government policies around accessibility and inclusion strategies into all areas of its operations.

WHAT IS A DISABILITY?

The 1992 Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) defined disability as any impairment that is physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, and/or neurological, whether it currently exists, may exist in the future, or is imputed to a person, through accident for instance, and may be long or short term in nature.

This might be translated in common words to define a person with a disability as anyone who cannot complete everyday tasks because their social and physical environment does not account for their impairment.

A disability is different from a functional impairment, such as a broken leg. It can be presented as one or more medical conditions that affect the ability of a person to undertake physical and cognitive activities, or to understand information in the short or long term.



HISTORY OF LA MAMA'S ACCESSIBILITY ACTION

THE JOURNEY SO FAR

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS PLAN

Our first Accessibility Action Plan (then termed 'Disability Action Plan') was developed at the end of 2014, continuing a long-standing relationship with the disability community since the theatre's foundation in 1967. Based on the extensive consultation with internal and external stakeholders, with and without disability, including audiences, staff, board, volunteers, artists and advocates, the process included research, surveys and critical feedback on La Mama's practices, culminating in a plan of action for 2014 - 2018.

The plan's four key strategy areas were:

- Increase participation of people with disability through better access to La Mama
- Reduce barriers to persons with disability obtaining and maintaining artistic opportunities and employment
- Create audience development by making performances inclusive and accessible
- Lead changes in attitudes and practices that will enhance access for all

Each area included concrete actions that were realistic and achievable with the resources and actual operating environment of the time, while producing the greatest benefits for the everyday experience of patrons and artists with disability as well as staff members. Some goals were successfully achieved and implemented, some are being carried forward, and some are being actioned beyond our imagination at the time.

On 19 May 2018, La Mama was struck by fire. The rebuild gave us the opportunity to make the Faraday Street site far more accessible than we ever thought possible, given its status as a protected heritage building. The consultation process for the La Mama rebuild involved accessibility specialist consultants Philip Chun (who have been involved since the beginning of the process) advising and guiding and driving best practice. A snapshot of our plans will be included in the Venue section under action 2.1.



GOALS AUDIT

The following is an audit of the 2014-19 goals achieved across four key areas – Venue, Communications, Ticketing, People.

Venue

- Making the La Mama Courthouse fully accessible for patrons using wheelchairs including easy to open doors and an accessible toilet
- Installing shade and varied seating in the Courthouse's foyer
- Creating comprehensive evacuation plans for both venues
- Creating a Venue Management Plan that details user pathways for artists, audiences and staff with mobility issues
- Continue discussion with Front of House staff and volunteers as to our standards and processes around accessibility and inclusion.

Communications

- Advertising a welcoming space for guide dogs and assistance animals
- Providing information on accessible parking spots
- Ensuring the new website is compliant with WCAG 2.0 Accessibility standards (Level AA)
- Integrating alt text and captioning into our marketing
- Making large print show programmes available around the foyer

Ticketing

- Registration with and advertising of the Companion Card program
- Joining and advertising of the National Relay Service
- Keeping concession ticket prices low with a variety of programs for community tickets

People

- Developed and promoted an anti-discrimination policy including flexible work arrangements, a code of conduct, complaint handling and investigation procedures
- Continued to program artists who experience disability
- Continued to build and maintain long-term partnerships with inclusive theatre companies
- Held many Auslan interpreted shows, tactile tours, relaxed performances and encouraged and educated artists to factor these performances into their seasons.
- Provided training for adults with a disability through TAFE and workplace courses.
- Created a Venue Management Plan that detailed upcoming employment opportunities and strategies for ensuring equal access.
- Continued volunteering programs for adults with disability to meaningfully engage with La Mama

As La Mama reviews its journey to formulate the new AAP, we are not only carrying forward actions but re-strategising how best to achieve them. The new plan serves as a chance to balance existing and new priorities, aligning our values with the needs of the present and future.



ACTION PLAN

OVERVIEW

Creating an accessible La Mama is a priority commitment area in our 2021 -2024 Strategic Plan. In the plan there are four key categories we continue to address. These include Best Practice, Venue, Communications and People.

Best Practice includes actions informed by disability-led advocacy. These have a broad scope.

Venue refers to actions that improve the physical accessibility of our venues, including not only our two theatres but also shows programmed in other spaces and remote/mobile shows.

Communications refers to La Mama's marketing and access to information.

People is a broad category that not only refers to staff, artists and audiences, but also people of diverse backgrounds and communities that we hope to further engage.



LA MAMA'S COMMITMENT TO ACCESSIBILITY

From 2021 – 2024 La Mama is committed to accessibility through:

Best Practice

- Taking a whole of organisation approach, including responsibilities in all position descriptions
- Generating positive attitudes within the organisation and sector
- Ongoing consultation with Arts Access Victoria and Arts Access Australia and continuing to engage consultants with lived experience of disability
- Continuing to develop collaborations and processes that actively create access for all
- Promoting best practice accessibility initiatives and programs
- Programming works that address issues of inclusion

Venue

- Providing a physically accessible, inviting experience for artists and audience
- Committing to all La Mama events (e.g. Outreach and Mobile) being held at accessible venues
- Maintaining improvements of the recent La Mama rebuild to ensure venue accessibility

Communications

- Ensuring La Mama marketing material and artist information is accessible and available in a variety of formats and through a variety of channels to suit different needs
- Ensuring website is screen reader friendly and print material is in appropriate formats
- Ensuring accessible performance and other relevant information is easily locatable on our website and targeted communications reach relevant communities

People

- Maintaining affordable ticket prices at various price points for audience, honouring companion cards and welcoming assistance animals
- Actively removing barriers for economically and socially marginalised communities through La Mama Community and Ticket Access Program and promoting such opportunities
- Encouraging artist awareness of access and inclusion, providing resources and 'how to' guides
- Engaging more broadly with the Deaf community, surveying which works to Auslan interpret and audio describe
- Striving to provide financial support for artists whose shows will be interpreted
- Consulting with the Neurodiverse artistic community to develop Relaxed Performances
- Promoting the employment of people with disabilities, actively removing discrimination
- Programming works and nurturing opportunities for artists with disability

KEY GOALS/AMBITIONS

Within the above strategic framework fall our more tangible measures to be achieved across 2021 - 2024:

Venue

- Allocate priority seats in the foyer including signage
- Lower a section of the bar at the Courthouse
- Install both audio and visual emergency warnings/ alarms at the Courthouse
- Extend the hours for the accessible parking lot by the Courthouse

Communications

- Increase marketing of La Mama's long-term access measures and general procedures
- Make season brochures and show programmes available online in accessible formats (.pdf and Plain Text .doc)
- Continue developing content warning procedures and how they are communicated with audiences, as well as artists and production teams who use the space
- Update a database of interested individuals and organisations to keep informed about upcoming access-specific events, including the use of [ChooseArt](#), an arts listing website by Arts Access Victoria
- Consult on accessible marketing including online and print formats, screen reader-friendly marketing including the website and alt text/ image descriptions
- Create parking and wayfinding videos

People

- Training and consultation for staff and volunteers, including communication access training by Scope
- Recruit staff with disability especially in the capacity of producer/ outreach/ access/ FOH
- Involve someone with disability on the script appraisal panel
- Strive to program a minimum of one show per season that is created by an artist with a disability
- Budget for 1 relaxed performance, 1 Auslan interpreted show, 1 Tactile Tour and 1 Audio Described show per year
- Complete and distribute 'How to be an accessibly friendly show' to artists/ run sessions with artists



ACTION PLAN ROLL OUT

La Mama's Accessibility Action Plan 2021 - 2024 will be finalised in consultation with Arts Access Victoria. The Action Plan will be registered for the Human Rights Commission and communicated internally to all staff members, and externally to all patrons, stakeholders and artists.

MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

Staff will meet quarterly to monitor their progress and discussions goals, actions and strategies. An annual review of the plan will be led by the CEO to track progress and revise timeframes and strategies. A focus on accessibility is included on all staff position descriptions and therefore everyone will report on it annually.

People involved in the implementation of the Accessibility Action Plan will take into account that the Action Plan is a guideline document about what, at the very least, needs to be done; it is a living document that is always evolving. Further developments are welcomed and should be reported and communicated through the team and to the general public.

By the end of 2024, a new strategic Accessibility Action Plan will be created according to the results of and suggestions from this current plan.



CONTACTS

FEEDBACK AND CONVERSATION IS ALWAYS WELCOMED BY LA MAMA.

Address: 349 Drummond Street, Carlton VIC 3053

Office hours: Mon - Fri, 10:30am - 5:30pm

Phone: 03 9347 6948

Email: info@lamama.com.au

Mail: PO Box 1009, Carlton VIC 3053

You can also contact La Mama through the National Relay Service on 13 36 77 and request (03) 9347 6948.

THE FOLLOWING ARE A LIST OF STAFF CONTACTS:

Co-CEO & Company Manager:

Caitlin Dullard

caitlin@lamama.com.au

Co-CEO & Artistic Director:

Liz Jones

liz@lamama.com.au

Front of House Manager:

Amber Hart

amber@lamama.com.au

Venue Manager:

Hayley Fox

hayley@lamama.com.au

Marketing & Communication Coordinator:

Sophia Constantine

sophia@lamama.com.au

Social Media:

Solange Parraguez

solange@lamama.com.au

ACCESS RESOURCES

General Disability Education

- [Art for Everyone: an inclusive practice guide](#)
- [A guide for interacting with people with disability](#)
- Arts Access Victoria [Resources](#)

Handy Guides for Making your Art Accessible

- Arts Access Victoria [Fact Sheets](#)
- Melbourne Fringe [Producers Guide to Access](#) ([Plain Text version](#))

Arts Access Service Providers

- [Arts Access Victoria](#)
- [Arts Access Australia](#)
- [Auslan Stage Left](#)
- [Description Victoria](#)
- [A_tistic](#)
- [GoTheatrical! captioning \(and audio description\)](#)

Other Service Providers

- [National Relay Service](#)
- [Companion Card Programme](#)
- [Assistance Dogs Australia](#)
- [Scope](#)
- [Magic Hands Beginners Auslan](#)

Other Resources

- [City of Melbourne Access Checklist for Theatres](#)
- Arts Access Victoria [Quick Wins](#)
- [Australian Network for Disability](#)
- [Job Access](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission](#)

Legislation and Statistics

- [Victorian Disability Act 2006 \(VDA\)](#)

National

- [National Arts and Disability Strategy 2018](#)
- [Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers 2018 from the Australian Bureau of Statistics](#)
- [Disability \(Access to Premises – Buildings\) Standards 2010](#)
- [National Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#)

International

- [The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 \(DDA\)](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2006 \(UNCRPD\)](#)
- [World Wide Web Consortium \(W3C\) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\)](#)

PHOTO CREDITS

Cover	<i>A'Tastic's Helping Hands</i> , Alexis Desaulniers-Lea photographer
Contents Page	La Mama Theatre exterior
Page 4	<i>DVA's A Cosmic Love</i> , Sean Porter photographer
Page 6	<i>DVA's A Cosmic Love</i> , Sean Porter photographer
Page 7	<i>DVA's Spin Me A Yarn of the Ocean</i> , Patti Green photographer (both images)
Page 9	<i>DVA's A Cosmic Love</i> , Sean Porter photographer
Page 10	<i>A'Tastic's Helping Hands</i> , Alexis Desaulniers-Lea photographer
Page 13	<i>A'Tastic's Helping Hands</i> , Alexis Desaulniers-Lea photographer
Page 14	<i>DVA's Spin Me A Yarn of the Ocean</i> , Patti Green photographer