

The CBR Gals Network



Disability Inclusion Action Plan

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Introduction

The CBR Gals is a not-for-profit organisation whose mission is to consciously connect and advance the lives of Canberran women and gender-diverse people. Accessibility in all its forms has remained a cornerstone of our organisation since its conception in 2018.

The ACT Government has found that over 80,000 Canberrans identify as living with disability. This Disability Inclusion Action Plan (DIAP) will act as a living document that formalises our values as an organisation, and assigns accountability and responsibility to action steps. In writing this policy, we intend to not only improve the accessibility of our Network, but also inspire other local grassroots not-for-profit or for-profit corporations to increase their commitment to inclusive practices, therefore improving the Canberra community as a whole.

Informed by consultation, the CBR Gals have chosen to create an 'Easy Read' companion to this DIAP. This companion uses easy to understand language and text styles, with images to convey meaning. This can be found on our website, at:

<https://cbrgals.com/diap/>

As per the Australian Government's Style Manual in relation to Inclusive Language, as well as guidance provided by prominent organisations such as People With Disability Australia, this plan has adopted person-first language throughout.

Other best practices and resources provided by consultation and specialised organisations, such as Vision Australia's Legibility Considerations, and the Australian Human Rights Commission's Disability Discrimination Act Advisory Notes, have been taken into account.

Message From The Board

At CBR Gals, inclusion and connectedness are central to our values. Our mission is to help every gal find their place in our community, and we celebrate the diverse individuals who make up our community. We are committed to ensuring that our community is welcoming and accessible, and this plan has been co-designed with our stakeholders to achieve that goal. We are proud to live by our values and empower our community to shine.

Rae Knopik

Founder and President

6 March 2023



Our Statement of Intent

At CBR Gals, we believe in building an inclusive community where everyone is welcome and can participate equally.

Our DIAP is our commitment to improving accessibility for people living with disability in all aspects of our organisation. We have consulted with our community to ensure that we are addressing the needs of those who may face barriers to participation. We are dedicated to implementing practices and policies that will ensure our events and offerings are accessible to all. This commitment extends to all members, participants, employees, and board members, now and in the future.

We believe that by fostering a culture of inclusivity, we will continue to build a stronger and more connected community for all Gals.

Legislative Framework

Rights and obligations outlined in various legislative and policy frameworks also serve as a guide for the CBR Gals DIAP. Since its conception, the CBR Gals Network has been committed to complying with all aspects of these instruments. This DIAP does not replace or alter our current commitments but instead intends to extend our commitments broader than the minimum standards required by law to create even more inclusive communities.

The CBR Gals is compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and the Australian Human Rights Commission Act 1986 (Cth) on a domestic level. These codify the principles contained in the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In brief, the relevant Article 3 principles of this convention for our organisation include:

- “(b) Non-discrimination;
- (c) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
- (d) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
- (e) Equality of opportunity;
- (f) Accessibility;”

At a territory-level, our employment practices and services offered are governed by the Discrimination Act 1991 (ACT), Human Rights Commission Act 2005 (ACT), and the Human Rights Act 2004 (ACT).

The CBR Gals Network remains alive to the ever-improving legislative frameworks that govern disability and inclusion in our society, and we regularly review relevant legislation to identify any internal controls that need to be updated to reflect legislative requirements.

We have also consulted the ACT Disability Strategy - Community Services Strategy, which outlines the government's commitment to improving the lives of people living with disability through a range of initiatives. Their initial consultation snapshot discussed systemic issues such as: (1) “the impact of social isolation and lack of inclusion”, (2) “poor community attitudes toward people with disability, stigma and discrimination”, (3) “lack of disability awareness and knowledge across many sectors”, and (4) “financial disadvantage”. As an organisation, we understand that these are the relevant key concerns of ACT communities on which we can have a positive influence, and we have therefore undertaken further consultation and aligned the focus areas of our plan accordingly.

Therefore, this DIAP is not only guided by ethical considerations but is also informed by governing legal and policy frameworks that prioritise the rights and inclusion of people living with disability.

Consultation

Consultation is a crucial aspect of our DIAP, and we are committed to ensuring transparency and involvement from members of our community, including those who self-identify as living with disability. We began by extending a callout to local Canberrans through our email network of over 700 and social media posts with a following of over 4,500. Our first consultation was held with four community members on 28 November 2022.

Throughout the development of the DIAP, our staff, board members, and volunteers who self-identify as living with disability, and/or have experience in disability inclusion or policy writing sectors collaborated on the plan. We also provided progress updates in our newsletters, soliciting feedback from our community.

Regular feedback sessions with board members have occurred throughout the development of the plan. Additional working group conversations have also been held with community members, particularly those living with disability, to tailor the plan and address any inaccuracies or issues that arose. For example, we held a direct consultation on 9 May 2023 in relation to the

presentation of the plan, with a community member whose professional area of expertise lies in Disability Inclusion.

A final consultation was held online in June 2023, and subsequently the draft plan was forwarded to community members to provide more detailed feedback.

Focus Areas

We have identified four key focus areas for our DIAP:

1. Accessibility of our website and communication channels:

- Implementing ID descriptions for all photos, newsletters, and other content to ensure accessibility for those with visual impairments.
- Developing a website accessibility navigation bar that will allow the user to modify the site, with tools such as zooming, colour-changing text, and read-out-loud options to improve accessibility for individuals with different disabilities.
- Editing the website at a general level to comply with WCAG 2.0. Guidelines.

2. Accessibility at physical and online events:

- Providing guidance for each event to all attendees ahead of time with instructions to access the venue.
- Ensuring all venues are ramp and lift accessible to accommodate individuals with mobility impairments.

- In the future, providing translators and sign language interpreters for events to assist individuals with hearing impairments.
- The ACT Government has found that 59.6% of people living with disability are economically disadvantaged. Therefore, CBR Gals will continue to keep events low-fee for broader accessibility, but will begin to provide a “no-questions-asked” concession discount or ticket for those who would like to attend but are experiencing financial difficulty.

3. Support within the structure of the organisation:

- Providing support for employees, volunteers, and board members to accommodate their needs and different disabilities.
- Creating a positive and inclusive workplace culture that values diversity and inclusion.

4. Education at a broader community level:

- Creating inclusive guides, resources, and content from relevant creators to promote disability inclusion and awareness in the wider community.

We will measure the success of these goals through ongoing monitoring and evaluation by the board, staff, and volunteers. Additionally, we will seek feedback and suggestions from people living with disability to ensure our initiatives are meeting their needs and improving their experiences. Our commitment to disability inclusion will remain ongoing and continuous.

Actionable Goals

1. Ensure that all venues and vendors selected for events are accessible for different disabilities.

Compliance with a tailored Event Checklist document (See Annex 1), distributed internally and to event volunteers, that ensures all venues meet minimum standards. Adherence will ensure that planning, communication and coordination of the event is inherently inclusive throughout.

- Timeframe: Ongoing.
- Ownership: Operations Officer.
- Measuring progress: Review of event planning and attendee feedback.

2. Create the framework to fundraise for and implement WCAG 2.0 compliance, and Accessibility Tools on our website. These Accessibility Tools will include the ability to alter font size and page colours, and access voice reading in order to make the website more accessible for a person who is blind or has low vision.

- Timeframe: 12 months.
- Ownership: Operations Officer and Non-Executive Head of Fundraising.
- Measuring progress: Tracking fundraising efforts and implementation of Accessibility Tools on the website, and feedback from users living with disability.

3. Create the framework for aggregating and creating social media posts that connect and advance women and gender-diverse people living with disability in our community, while enabling members without disability in our community to become more informed and aware of challenges faced by people living with disability.

- Timeframe: Ongoing.
- Ownership: Operations Officer and Non-Executive Head of Communications.
- Measuring progress: Tracking engagement metrics and feedback from attendees living with disability, and people without disability in the community.

4. Partner with women and gender-diverse people who have disabilities to deliver events. By tracking which members of our community self-identify as living with disability, we will seek out and partner with them to create informed and meaningful events for our members to connect and advance Canberran gals.

- Timeframe: Ongoing.
- Ownership: Operations Officer and event volunteers.
- Measuring progress: Tracking the number of partnerships formed, attendee feedback, and tracking the representation of women and gender-diverse people living with disability at our events.

5. Fundraise for, and develop, training for staff and volunteers on disability inclusion and accessibility best practices.

- Timeframe: 6 months.
- Ownership: President.
- Measuring progress: Completion of training toolkit for all staff and volunteers, and feedback from staff and volunteers on the effectiveness of the training.

6. Support and accommodate stakeholders living with disability to ensure that they can fully participate in our events and activities.

- Timeframe: Ongoing.
- Ownership: Board and Operations Officer.
- Measuring progress: Feedback from staff and volunteers living with disability on the effectiveness of accommodations and support provided.

7. Conduct an annual review of the DIAP to assess progress and identify areas for improvement.

- Timeframe: Annually.
- Ownership: Board Secretary.
- Measuring progress: Review of progress made against goals, and feedback from staff, volunteers, and the community.

Governance

At CBR Gals, we firmly believe that our commitment to diversity and inclusion must be reflected in our governance structure. We are committed to fostering an inclusive environment that values and leverages the unique perspectives and experiences of all members of our community, including those with disabilities.

To ensure that our commitment to disability inclusion is upheld at all levels of our organisation, we will:

1. Ensure that the DIAP is integrated into our governance policies and procedures, and that it is regularly reviewed and updated as needed.
2. Establish a Disability Inclusion Committee composed of staff, board members, and volunteers who self-identify as living with disability and/or have experience in disability inclusion or policy writing sectors. This committee will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the DIAP, monitoring progress, and making recommendations for improvements.
3. Incorporate role-based assessments of disability accessibility and inclusion, to both ensure each paid and volunteer role at the CBR Gals is as accessible as possible, and to be transparent with requirements of each role with respect.

4. Ask applicants for paid roles and volunteers for any circumstances that may affect their ability to perform the role they are applying for.
5. Provide regular training and education to our staff, board members, and volunteers to ensure that they have the knowledge and skills to effectively implement our disability inclusion policies and practices.
6. Encourage ongoing communication and feedback from our community, including those living with disability, to ensure that our inclusion policies and practices remain relevant and effective over time.

We recognise that our commitment to diversity and inclusion is an ongoing process that requires continuous learning, growth, and improvement. As such, we will remain open to feedback and suggestions from our community, and will work consistently on an ongoing basis to ensure that our policies and practices reflect our values of inclusion, equity, and respect for all.

Contact Us

Please view the checklist below in Annex 1 for a broad overview of how event venues are vetted.

More information about inclusion practices at each of our events can be found on the specific event page. We always have an option to add your accessibility requirements at checkout, or email us for details about the venue.

If you would like any further information, would prefer an alternate way to view this document, or want to provide feedback on this plan, please reach out to us at: enquiries@cbrgals.com

Annex 1: Venue Accessibility Checklist

This document forms part of the CBR Gals commitment to creating inclusive events for all, and focuses on ensuring the venues we choose for events are accessible.

How to Use:

There are both mandatory and points-based questions. If mandatory requirements are met, the venue must score 60% out of 100, or 341 points out of 569 points. Where points are “missed”, those accessibility elements should be noted for inclusion in the event description. Please note, where Value is ‘M’, the checklist item is mandatory. This checklist may be reviewed and edited internally, once initial feedback is received.

Section 1: Mandatory Requirements Value

Is the venue on the ground floor without any obstructions, such as stairs or a lip?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	M
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If the venue is not on the ground floor, is there a lift?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	M
Is there a car parking spot close to the premises entry or lift?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	M
Is there an accessible toilet?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	M
Does the venue have an entry doorway of at least 850mm?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	M
Does the venue have access paths of at least 1000mm?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	M

Section 2: Car Parking (preferred answer with bold underline = specified points)

Are there car parking spaces designated for people with disabilities?	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Yes</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> No	10
How many designated car parking spaces are there?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>2+</u>	10

- | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----|
| Is there a white wheelchair in a blue background in the parking space? | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Yes</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 10 |
| Is the parking space size 5400x2400mm with equivalent reserved space beside? | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Yes</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 8 |
| Is the area flat? | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Yes</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 7 |
| Is there a parking sign on the wall or pole? | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Yes</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 5 |

Section 3: Access from Car Parking, Drop-off areas and Public Transport (not in venue)

- | | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|----|
| Is the route to the venue easy to find? | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Yes</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 10 |
| Are there any obstructions along the accessway (i.e street seating on footpath, uneven walking surface)? | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>No</u> | 10 |
| If yes, can these obstructions be moved? | <input type="checkbox"/> <u>Yes</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> No | 10 |

Are there any steps along the accessway?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	10
Are steps indicated by tactile ground surface indicators at the top and bottom?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	10
Is there a ramp along the accessway?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	10
Is the ramp indicated by tactile ground surface indicators?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	5
If there is a ramp, is the gradient flatter than 1 in 10? (i.e 100mm high x 1000mm long)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	5
If the ramp is 1 in 10, is it longer than 1900 mm?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	5
Is there a 1500mm x 1500mm space to turn where corners exist?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	5
Do any steps include a handrail?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No	8
If so, on one or both sides?	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> Both	5

Do steps include contrast nosing
(strips contrasting on the edge of
each step) **Yes** No 5

Section 4: Independent access through Main Entry

Is the entrance to the venue
clearly marked? **Yes** No 10

If doors are glass, are there
appropriate safety decal
markings? **Yes** No 10

If the venue is not on the ground
floor, is there a lift or ramp
available? **Yes** No 20

Is there a step/lip to enter the
venue? Yes **No** 10

Is the minimum clear width
through doorways 850mm? **Yes** No 10

Are doors manual or automatic? Man
ual **Auto** 5

- If manual, does the door have a lever handle? **Yes** No 5
- If manual, is the door easy to open and is not heavy or stiff? **Yes** No 10

Section 5: Accessway to Main point of contact (such as Reception, Counter or Bar)

- Is the route to the event location, inside the venue easy to find? **Yes** No 10
- Is there 1500 x 1500mm space to turn where corners exist? **Yes** No 10

Section 6: Doors within Venue

- Are there doors within the venue that will be used during the event (not including bathrooms)? Yes **No** 10
- If so, how many 1 2+
- Are doors manual or automatic? Man
ual **Auto** 5

- If manual, does the door have a lever handle? **Yes** No 5
- If manual, is the door easy to open and is not heavy or stiff? **Yes** No 10

Section 7: Access to essential facilities within Venue e.g counters

- Is the counter/service area (or part of) less than 1050mm high? **Yes** No 10
- If the counter is used to sign in or pay at, such as for credit cards, is it 830-870mm high and open underneath? **Yes** No 10
- Can most objects be reached at 600-1350mm? (i.e drinks, food) **Yes** No 2
- Is seating available? **Yes** No 5
- Is there appropriate accessible seating throughout the space? **Yes** No 8

Does accessible seating give clear viewing of stage/performance/instructor (where applicable)? **Yes** No 9

Are all pathways a minimum of 1000mm throughout the venue (including around tables and chairs, access to counters, access to bathrooms etc.)? **Yes** No 10

Are pathways obstructed in any way? Yes **No** 7

Do all pathways have good slip resistance? **Yes** No 8

Section 8: Accessible bathrooms

Is the accessible bathroom on the same level of the venue as the event? **Yes** No 10

Does the bathroom have appropriate signage on the door (including wheelchair symbol and braille indicator)?	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Yes</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> No	8
Does the bathroom comply with standards (i.e minimum size 2300 x 1900mm plus basin and handrails)?	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Yes</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> No	10
Is the minimum width through the doorway 850mm?	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Yes</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> No	10
Are there any steps between the main area and the toilet?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>No</u>	9
If yes, is there also a ramp?	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Yes</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> No	9
Is there a male and female ambulant toilet (minimum width 920mm with grab rails either side of toilet and door opening outward)?	<input type="checkbox"/> <u>Yes</u>	<input type="checkbox"/> No	8

Does the ambulant toilet have appropriate signage on the door (including ambulant symbol and braille indicator)? **Yes** No 8

Section 9: Lifts

Do lifts have a minimum 900mm wide opening door? **Yes** No 9

Are lifts a minimum of 1400mm deep and 1100mm wide? **Yes** No 9

Are there lift controls on each side? **Yes** No 8

Is there a voice announcement of floors? **Yes** No 8

Section 10: Signage around venue

Does signage have a good contrast with the background? **Yes** No 8

Does signage have an easy to read font? **Yes** No 9

Does signage clearly identify where to find key facilities (i.e. counters, toilets, designated spaces/rooms)? **Yes** No 10

Is signage raised tactile/braille? **Yes** No 10

Section 11: Lighting

Is there appropriate lighting throughout the venue? **Yes** No 9

Is lighting adjustable for different activities? **Yes** No 7

Section 12: Sound

Is the venue typically loud at the time of the event? Yes **No** 7

Is there music playing in the venue? Yes **No** 8

Can the music be increased/decreased as requested? **Yes** No 8

Is there a PA system available for use? **Yes** No 4

Is there an audio loop available? **Yes** No 3

Section 13: Assistance or assistive measures in place

Are Service Animals allowed in the venue? **Yes** No 5

Where access barriers exist, are there arrangements in place to assist a person with disabilities? **Yes** No 4

Is there a quiet space to access for individuals? **Yes** No 4

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<https://www.visionaustralia.org/business-consulting/digital-access/blog/typography-in-inclusive-design-part-2>

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