

AFTRS

Australian Film Television
and Radio School

Disability Action Plan
2024-2027



Australian Government



Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Film Television and Radio School (AFTRS) acknowledges the Traditional Owners, the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples of the Eora Nation, on whose unceded land we meet, work, study, learn and teach.

We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Zenadth Kes (Torres Strait Islands) peoples as owners of vast bodies of knowledges and wisdoms about this land and pay our respects to their ongoing guidance on to live here responsibly, accountably and harmoniously.



Other Acknowledgments

The development of this plan was led by the AFTRS Accessibility Working Group (AWG), in partnership with Accessible Arts NSW, and through consultation with key stakeholders, including staff, students and alumni living with disability.

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Disability

People with disability include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments, which, in interaction with various attitudinal, environmental, and structural barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others¹. Experiences of disability can include, but are not limited to:

- Physical, Intellectual, sensory, neurological, immunological, learning
- Chronic conditions and illnesses e.g., arthritis, diabetes, multiple sclerosis
- Psychosocial condition; mental ill-health (e.g. depression, anxiety), cognitive impairments (e.g. Alzheimer's) or neurodevelopmental (e.g. autism)

Disability is dynamic, and may be acquired, permanent, temporary, hidden, and/or visible. While not all people who meet these definitions will choose to identify with the term 'disability', we acknowledge that these groups may face barriers to access and inclusion. AFTRS acknowledges different people have different preference towards identity-first or people-first language². Throughout this plan, AFTRS utilises the people-first language approach, however AFTRS recognises each person living with a disability and their choice of language they choose to use about themselves.



1 United Nations 2006, Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Treaty Series, 2515, 3.

2 People with Disability Australia, 2019. What do I say? A guide to language about disability.

Context

AFTRS mission is to deliver world-leading creative education so that Australian talent and culture thrive at home and around the world. The Disabled and d/Deaf Communities is an integral part of our country's story and creators with disability are a critical part of our industry's future. In 2018, we launched the AFTRS Accessibility Action Plan 2018-2020. The plan formalised our existing commitment to ensuring AFTRS is a safe, equitable, and accessible place for staff, students, and visitors with disability. The *Disability Action Plan 2024-2027* (DAP) builds on that legacy and incorporates principles of accessibility and universal design in all areas, with the intention of modelling best practice and innovation to industry.

As Australia's national screen and audio school we heartily accept our role in moving the industry toward access equity for creators living with disability. We know, despite comprising 17.7% of the general population, people with disability remain vastly under-represented in the Australian screen and audio Industry, making up only 8.9% of cast and 5.3% crew³. This plan is aligned with our Corporate Strategy, *Creating the Future 2022-2026*, which, under the principle of National Reach, articulates our commitment to providing flexible, accessible, and responsive models of learning. In doing so, it creates opportunities for under-represented talent across Australia to fulfil their creative dreams and goals.

With an understanding that 45% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples experience disability, at nearly twice the rate of non-Aboriginal Australians⁴, this DAP acknowledges our commitment to First Nations storytellers living with disability and reflects the objectives of AFTRS *First Nations Strategic Plan 2022 – 2026*. Using strength-based approaches to our work, we draw upon the Six Rs; Relationship, Respect, Relevance, Reciprocity, Responsibility and Representation as a framework for embedding First Nations values and knowledges into AFTRS.

This plan was developed in accordance with section 61 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth), and with guidance from the Australian Human Rights Commission. It sets out our access priorities for the coming three years and is supported by a detailed action plan. Optimising access is an ongoing practice. We will continue to work with our partners and be guided by the AFTRS Accessibility Working Group (AWG) to remain flexible and responsive to access concerns as they arise.

3 Screen Diversity and Inclusion Network 2022, *Everyone Counts: Preliminary data on diversity in the screen industry from The Everyone Project*, Screen Diversity and Inclusion Network

4 Australian Bureau of Statistics 2021, *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with disability*, ABS.



Action Plan

This plan focuses on four priority areas for action:

- 1: Our People
Employment and Policy in Action
- 2: Our Spaces
Physical and Digital Environments
- 3: Our Practice
Teaching, Learning, Production and Creative Practice
- 4: Engagement
Industry Engagement, Advocacy, and Partnership

1: Our People

Employment and Policy in Action

Our commitment to access and inclusion is reflected in our strategic plans, operations and policies. We continue to build disability confidence and systems of support into our workforce and practices.

- Maintain Confident Recruiter status to recruitment and admission processes conform to best practice standards. (Confident Recruiter Status is a national standard monitored by the Australian Network on Disability).
- Include accessibility and reasonable adjustment conversations in staff 90-day planning processes.
- Implement annual training to capacity build Directors and Managers to manage accessibility and disability matters.
- Incorporate the suitable recommendations as per the Accessible Arts Document Review Report.

2: Our Spaces

Physical and Digital Environments

Our physical and digital environments are accessible and responsive to the needs of our staff, students, and visitors. We are proactive and receptive to disability matters and directly address barriers to access.

- Execute identified changes to our webpages to achieve Web Content Accessibility Guidelines compliance.
- Ensure that people with disability have a regular presence in our media, marketing, and communications
- Implement recommendations of the Accessible Arts Building Audit to meet Commonwealth Disability Standards 2010.
- Establish accessibility guidelines to inform all internal and externally delivered events and screenings at AFTRS.

3: Our Practice

Teaching, Learning, Production and Creative Practice

We foster a culture of inclusive learning and creative practice that enables staff and students with a disability to meaningfully participate in their work, study and craft.

- Provide training and support to teaching staff to incorporate accessibility into course development and delivery.
- Embed principles of accessibility and Universal Design into the Award Course Plan to inform future course changes and development.
- Review our policies relating to reasonable adjustments and special consideration to ensure equity in access to support and reflect contemporary best practice.
- Create a monthly forum for Teaching Staff and Student Centre to collaborate on student access needs.
- Instil Accessibility Assessments as a mandatory component of all student productions, completed in conjunction with risk and feasibility assessments.

4. Engagement

Industry Engagement, Advocacy, and Partnership

Through our work and partnerships, we demonstrate best practice in creative leadership with a visible commitment to accessibility, inclusivity, and industry-wide change.

- Collaborate with other education providers to share knowledge and experiences of access disability matters.
- Participate in programs and initiatives to increase career pathways for filmmakers with a disability.
- Engage with filmmakers living with disability, researchers, advocates, artists to build upon our knowledge and understanding of current disability matters and industry relevant conversations.



Governance, Monitoring and Review

Embedding accessibility into everything we do is an important feature of our future planning at AFTRS. The actions identified within the plan will be absorbed into divisional planning and incorporated into our annual and tri-annual planning and reporting process. The plan will be reviewed annually, and a progress report made available to staff, students and alumni. This Plan is publicly available on our website and is registered with the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Appendix 1 – Key Definitions

Disability is the dynamic interaction between long-term health conditions and various attitudinal, environmental, and structural barriers, that may hinder full and effective participation in society. This framework for understanding is referred to as the Social Model of Disability. The Australian Disability Discrimination Act (1992) provides further detail, including eight types of disability:

- Physical: Impacts mobility or dexterity,
- Intellectual: Impacts ability to learn or process information,
- Mental illness: Impacts thinking processes,
- Sensory: Impacts the ability to hear or see,
- Neurological: Impacts the brain and central nervous system,
- Learning: Impacts acquisition, organisation, retention, and understanding of information,
- Physical disfigurement: Impacts physical appearance, and,
- Immunological: Impact due to the presence of organisms causing disease in the body.

Access / Accessibility is the practice of removing barriers to environments, information, products, employment, and services to support equitable use by as many people as possible. It is a commitment to addressing the barriers present in attitudes, communication, and policy and social practices and when implemented can have benefits for all people.

Inclusion the principle of recognising and embracing the diversity of people in our community. To be inclusive is to commit to action and continual review, to enable all people to have meaningful contribution, feel valued, connect with others and have autonomy over what is important to them in their workplace, place of learning, community.

Intersectionality recognises that people's lives are shaped by their identities, relationships and social factors. These combine to create intersecting forms of privilege and oppression depending on a person's context and existing power structures such as patriarchy, ableism, colonialism, imperialism, homophobia and racism. The barriers that a person with disability face may be further compounded when an individual is part of more than one underrepresented group.

Universal Design is the design of products, environments, programs, and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialised design. The seven principles of Universal Design are equitable use, flexibility in use, simple and intuitive use, perceptible information, tolerance for error, low physical effort and size and space for approach and use, advocate simply for good design, made to meet the needs of all people. These principles can be applied to online environments, physical spaces, products and practices.

Reasonable Adjustment refers to a necessary and appropriate modification to a work practice, procedure or the environment to enable a person to perform their role, and address the impacts, if any, of their disability. Reasonable adjustments can apply to both employees and students and are covered under both the Fair Work Act 2009 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

Appendix 2 – Legislative Framework

Key Documents

[The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 \(NSW\)](#)

[The Anti-Discrimination Act 1997 \(NSW\)](#)

[The Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(NSW\)](#)

[The Disability Discrimination Act 1992
\(Commonwealth\) \(DDA\)](#)

[The Fair Work Act 2009 \(Cth\)](#)

[The National Arts and Disability Strategy
2009 \(Commonwealth\)](#)

[Australia's Disability Strategy
2021-2031\(Commonwealth\)](#)

[The United Nations Convention on the
Rights of People with Disabilities](#)

[The Marrakesh Treaty](#)

[The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
\(WCAG\) 2.2 Level AA](#)

[The Disability Standards for Education 2005
\(DSE\)](#)

[Disability \(Access to Premises – Buildings\)
Standards 2010.](#)

[Higher Education Standards Framework
\(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#)

