

## **Disability Action Plan - October 2014**

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South East Arts (SEA) is the regional development organisation for arts and culture in the Bega Valley, Bombala, Cooma-Monaro, Eurobodalla and Snowy River Shires. SEA's aim is to actively assist the ongoing development of, and participation in, arts and culture throughout the South East region.

As an organisation funded under the Arts NSW Arts Funding Program, SEA is expected to consider the needs of people with a disability as creators, participants and audiences. SEA's Disability Action Plan identifies three priority areas:

- Addressing barriers to access and participation;
- Supporting artistic and cultural practice amongst those with a disability;
- Developing audiences for disability arts companies and individual artists.

### **Current situation assessment**

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#### **Services and Projects**

SEA does not currently provide any projects or services specifically to meet the needs of people with disabilities, either as participants or audience members. While statistical information is not kept on the number of participants/audiences with disabilities, it is assumed the figure is less than the 20% of the population who, according to information from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, have a disability.

SEA has previously supported and promoted projects run by other agencies that target people with disabilities, such as *Art in The Garage*, Eurobodalla Shire Council and Art Central programs. In 2012 SEA organised the Access All Areas training session that brought together disability service providers and arts organisations and individuals to encourage projects and partnerships.

#### **Policy issues**

There are no current SEA Board members with significant knowledge of disability issues. SEA has always had a commitment to access and equity. However, it has not focused its attention specifically on people with disabilities. Consequently, there is no strong policy statement about access and equity on the issue of people with disabilities. There are comparatively few artist practitioners in all artforms in the region who have an in depth understanding and experience in working with people with a disability.

#### **Physical access issues**

The Bega office is not well sign-posted, making it difficult to locate for people who have a disability affecting their vision, or an intellectual disability, or who are unable to read English.

The office is accessible for visitors who use wheelchairs. There is a ramp to the rear door but this needs to be assessed to confirm it has been constructed at such a gradient that it is safe for use by visitors who use a wheelchair. There is a small ramp between the two office rooms making accessible the meeting room. There is no visual fire alarm installed in the building, only audio. There are nearby parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities.

When SEA uses other venues for events (performances, workshops, concerts) in the region there are some that are not accessible for audience members in wheelchairs or the wheelchair access is not obvious and easy to manoeuvre through. This needs to be brought to the attention of the venue owners.

### **Communication issues**

The current SEA website has a number of design and content aspects that limit its accessibility for people with a disability. SEA does use a range of communications tools including TV, radio, press and web-based.

SEA has produced a range of hard copy collateral (eg flyers and programs) promoting services and projects, however the information is not available in alternative formats and is not distributed directly to people with disabilities.

### **Actions**

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#### **Policy**

- Develop a clear policy statement on access and equity for people with disabilities. The development of the policy will be discussed at the Regional ArtsNSW level to consider a state-wide approach for all RABs.  
*Responsibility* – GM and Board  
*Timeframe* – February 2015 RADO meeting with policy draft for April Board meeting 2015

#### **Services/Projects**

- Explore and initiate potential project/s to commence in 2016 that targets people with disabilities as participants. The project would ideally be developed in partnership with regionally based disability service provider.  
*Responsibility* – GM and staff  
*Timeframe* – partnership development by June 2015 - funding application submitted for 2016 project (pending identification of appropriate funding round).
- Encourage visual artists with a disability to join VASE or include a section of the VASE website to feature a range of artists with disabilities.  
*Responsibility* – GM and CDFO  
*Timeframe* – 6 artists included by end of 2015
- Encourage artists with a disability to engage in mainstream projects as well as those that are targeted to the sector by identifying barriers and eliminating or reducing them.  
*Responsibility* – Staff  
*Timeframe* – ongoing

- Establish data-base of disability service providers in the region to ensure that SEA services and communications are accessible to people with disabilities.  
*Responsibility – FAO*  
*Timeframe – February 2015*
- Host a follow-up workshop to Access All Areas that targets disability service providers, arts organisations and individuals, to coincide with 2015 rounds of funding for arts and disabilities projects.  
*Responsibility – GM*  
*Timeframe – July 2015*
- Advocate for the needs of both artists and audiences with a disability to the arts, cultural and government sectors in the region.  
*Responsibility- GM*  
*Timeframe- ongoing*
- Advocate for and support the provision of professional development and training opportunities for artists with a disability and their carers, together with the arts professionals who work with them.  
*Responsibility- GM*  
*Timeframe- commence 2016*

### **Physical access**

- Ensure that where possible, all SEA events are held in venues that have disabled access for and that information on access is clearly advertised both onsite and in promotional material.  
*Responsibility – GM and CDFO*  
*Timeframe – January 2015*
- Confirm if wheelchair access to Bega office is compliant and promote this access through the website. Install suitable signage.  
*Responsibility – GM and FAO*  
*Timeframe – January 2015*
- Advocate for other regional arts organisations to provide information on disabled access for their events.  
*Responsibility – GM and CDFO*  
*Timeframe – January 2015*

## Communication

- For all hard-copy off-line printed collateral, SEA will apply the following:
  - Use principles of plain English
  - Use sans serif font in at least 12 point (or 20 point for large print)
  - Limited use of italics or ALL CAPS
  - Use design principles that consider the needs of people with disabilities

*Responsibility* – GM and CDFO

*Timeframe* – October 2014

- Keep as many communication channels open as possible (eg phone, text message, email, post, Skype and in-person)

*Responsibility* – Staff and Board

*Timeframe* – October 2014

- Redevelop the SEA website to include accessibility standards as follows:

Perceivable information and user interface

- Text alternatives for non-text content, ie icons/links
- Captions (sub-titles) and other alternatives for multimedia
- Content can be presented in different ways
- Content is easier to see and hear

Operable user interface and navigation

- Functionality is available from a keyboard
- Users have enough time to read and use the content
- Users can easily navigate, find content, and determine where they are

Understandable information and user interface

- Text is readable and understandable
- Content appears and operates in predictable ways

*Responsibility* – GM and CDFO

*Timeframe* – December 2015