

Tips to improve the theatre experience

There's some simple ways to create a more inclusive theatre experience for a patron who is blind or has low vision.



Offer audio description

Audio description involves describing the key visual components of a scene such as movements, gestures, props and descriptions of costumes and stage settings either before a performance starts or woven between dialogue. A trained audio describer can provide this service.

Offering audio description is the greatest way to make the theatre experience more inclusive for someone with a vision condition.

There are various stages to ensure a theatre is truly audio description friendly. Vision Australia specialises in theatre accessibility consultancy and audio description. To start the process, please contact Michael Ward, national coordinator audio description at Michael.Ward@visionaustralia.org or call 1300 847 466

Communication tips

We find many theatres do a wonderful job of supporting patrons who are blind or have low vision. We have noted some tips that may be useful to share with new staff.

- Speak directly to the patron, not someone who may be accompanying them
- Provide the patron with clear instructions of the room layout, for example 'to the left of you is the café, in front of you are seven stairs which take you up to level two where the restrooms are located'.
- Introduce yourself when greeting the patron. When you're leaving, let them know you're going.



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In the theatre

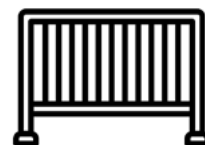
Braille

Add braille to the toilet signage, which will make it much easier for braille readers to find the restroom.

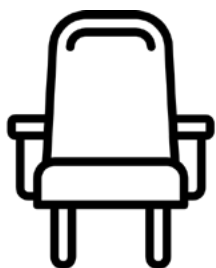


Barriers onsite

Be mindful of barriers such as stands and signs that might get in the way for guests with a vision condition.



On arrival



Suggest seating and key spots that are suitable for a dog guide. Make sure the patron is aware and comfortable about the suggested spot.

Headsets easily accessible

Have the collection point for headsets at a convenient spot such as having a staff member hand them out at the theatre entry point.



During intermission



- Check if the guest would like any assistance during the interval e.g. assistance to the restroom or cafeteria.
- If the patron accepts your invitation for support, offer your elbow, allowing them to grip it as you guide them.