



Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres

## ACCESS AND EQUITY POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

VAPAC endorses diversity, supports equal rights, and does not advocate, support or practice discrimination based on race, religion, age, national origin, language, gender, sexual orientation, or disability whether covered by applicable legislation or not, except where affirmative action may be required to redress individual or social imbalance.

This Access and Equity Policy seeks to ensure that diversity in any form is not a barrier for people engaging with the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC).

### PURPOSE

The Victorian Association of Performing Arts (VAPAC) acknowledges that its legal and moral responsibilities cover the areas of:

- access in the provision of services offered by VAPAC
- access in employment by VAPAC
- access in the provision of information offered by VAPAC
- access to any training and development offered by VAPAC
- access to events hosted by VAPAC

## **POLICY**

### **Access**

As a membership organisation and service provider, VAPAC will make membership and services available to everyone who is entitled to them, free of any form of discrimination on the basis of a person's race, religion, age, national origin, language, gender, sexual orientation, disability or any other personal attribute protected by law, except where affirmative action has been identified as necessary to redress social imbalance.

### **Equity**

As a membership organisation and service provider, VAPAC will develop and deliver services on the basis of fair treatment of all members and users who are eligible to receive them.

### **Communication**

As a membership organisation and service provider, VAPAC will use all reasonable strategies to inform eligible members and users of the services available, their entitlements, and how they can participate. VAPAC will also consult with their members and users regularly about the adequacy, design and standard of services.

### **Responsiveness**

As a membership organisation and service provider, VAPAC will be sensitive to the needs and requirements of members and users from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and with diverse abilities, and be responsive as far as practicable to the particular circumstances of individuals.

### **Effectiveness**

As a membership organisation and service provider, VAPAC will be focused on acknowledging and meeting the needs of members and users from all backgrounds.

### **Efficiency**

As a membership organisation and service provider, VAPAC will optimise the use of available public resources through a user-responsive approach to service delivery that meets the needs of members and users.

### **Accountability**

As a membership organisation and service provider, VAPAC will have a reporting mechanism in place which ensures it is accountable for implementing access and equity objectives for its members and users.

# ACCESS AND EQUITY PROCEDURES

Procedures number	001	Version	01
Drafted by	General Manager	Adopted by	23/11/21
		Membership	
Responsible person	Gemma Robertson	Scheduled review date	23/11/2023

## RESPONSIBILITIES

It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Director to implement this policy and to report to the Board annually on its progress.

## PROCEDURES

- All VAPAC staff, contractors and representatives shall, wherever feasible, have adequate support and training to provide services and information accessible to all people.
- VAPAC will design and construct its programs and events to provide equal access for all users and will take all reasonable steps to ensure that when received in a timely manner any additional requests for access to participation are met wherever possible.

As such, VAPAC recognises that services, including but not limited to audio description, sign language (Auslan) interpretation and captioning attract a fee for service and will ensure that financial allocations are included in the budget line of all applicable meetings and events. Where it is not feasible to provide such services, VAPAC will make every attempt to negotiate with event partners and venues to share the cost and/or to investigate alternate methods of funding.

- VAPAC will honour Companion Card users to ensure that people who are otherwise unable to access its programs, activities and venues without attendant care support are entitled to a complimentary registration or ticket for their companion.
- Where appropriate VAPAC will make use of [Universal Access Symbols](#) across its platforms including but not limited to advertisements, newsletters, programs, brochures, websites, floor plans and maps to help visitors, audiences and staff identify accessible events at a glance.
- VAPAC in its role as an employer, will ensure all people have equal access to advertised positions, interviews, equipment, office accommodation, staff training and promotion.
- VAPAC shall, wherever feasible, assess proposals for any new (or substantially revised) policies or programs for their direct impact on the lives of people from a range of backgrounds and/or abilities prior to any decision to pursue such proposals.
- Any new (or substantially revised) policies or programs that impact in different ways on the lives of people from different backgrounds and/or abilities shall, wherever

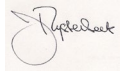
**Policies** can be established or altered only by the Executive: **Procedures** may be altered by the Executive Director.

feasible, be developed by VAPAC in consultation with people from those backgrounds.

- VAPAC shall, wherever feasible, for any new (or substantially revised) policies or program initiatives have a communication strategy developed and sufficiently resourced to inform people from the relevant backgrounds of these changes.
- VAPAC shall provide resources so that publicly available and accessible information on its policies and programs is where necessary communicated appropriately to people from a range of backgrounds and/or abilities.
- VAPAC shall institute complaints mechanisms that enable people (regardless of background or ability) to address issues and raise concerns about its performance.
- VAPAC shall, where necessary and feasible, provide for the special needs of clients from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds by providing language assistance through the use of interpreters or facilitators.
- VAPAC shall, where necessary and feasible, provide for the special needs of clients in rural and/or remote areas through developing outreach and community liaison arrangements and/or via the use of appropriate technology
- VAPAC shall consider cultural diversity and disability-appropriate issues in the budgeting, design and delivery of any training, professional development programs and events
- VAPAC staff shall, where necessary, receive ongoing cultural diversity training so that they develop knowledge and skills to work effectively from a cultural framework.
- VAPAC shall, where necessary and feasible, provide information in languages other than English, and through print, electronic media, and disability-appropriate methods of communication.
- VAPAC shall, where appropriate, consult with other providers and government agencies to ensure co-ordination of services appropriate to clients' needs.
- VAPAC shall promote diversity in the membership of its boards, committees and working groups.
- VAPAC shall keep in its client data collection records, where appropriate, such data as whether a person is of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, gender, location and access requirements (the collection of data will not always include all these items, as the relevance of these data items will vary depending on the reporting context).
- VAPAC shall protect the privacy of individuals when collecting this data. Consideration will be given to:
  - collecting only data essential to the particular service delivery or evaluation purpose;
  - guaranteeing anonymity; and
  - ensuring that all data collection proposals are non-intrusive.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- Acknowledgement of Country Policy
- Grievance Policy

A small, square image containing a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature is cursive and appears to read 'J Ryssenbeek'.

Signature of ED  
J Ryssenbeek  
20/10/21