

Vision Australia Radio & Audio: Accessibility



About Vision Australia



Vision Australia exists to support people who are blind, have low vision or a print disability to live the life they choose.

We work in partnership with people of all ages and backgrounds, their families, supporters, and other providers.

We are a for-purpose organisation and the leading national provider of blindness and low vision support services.

We serve more than 25,500 clients across 35+ locations around Australia and 420,000 audio consumers.



Marilyn Barclay, Vision Australia Radio volunteer

Vision statistics

- An estimated 357,000 people in Australia are blind (10%) or have low vision (90%)
- Approx. 90% of blindness and vision impairment is preventable or treatable if detected early
- Blindness is 3 times more prevalent amongst indigenous Australians than non-indigenous
- Approximately 1 in 3 people with low vision will experience depression



Aston, Vision Australia client

- An essential service for people living with a print disability, broadcasting and streaming across Adelaide, Perth, Darwin, Melbourne, regional Victoria and Southern New South Wales on AM, FM, DAB+ plus online.
- Over 500+ volunteers deliver programs across the VAR Network each week.
- The content we present attracts a broader audience of people living with a disability, and the general population who make up over 60% of our audience who we see as ambassadors and potential future users of the service.

VAR SNAPSHOT

- A cumulative radio audience of 420,000 monthly listeners including streaming online
- 30+ podcast feeds, many including transcription to support Australia's Deaf, Deafblind community. 85,000+ podcast downloads Jan 2024 to Jan 2025
- 36% of our audience self-identify as living with a disability
- 47% of our audience speak a language other than English at home



Vision Australia Radio content



Vision Australia Radio is known for its reading programs (turning print in to sound). This includes magazines, newspapers, books, periodicals and online published content.

There are also a variety of original specialist programs made for and by people with a print disability across the network. These look at topics and issues specifically relating to our community of interest and focus on sharing information and stories from people with a lived experience of vision loss.



Tim McQueen, Vision Australia Radio volunteer

Access to information via Radio and Audio

Why is it important?

Vision Australia Radio conducts an annual listener survey where we provide an opportunity for our listeners and community of interest to provide insight into what is important to them in terms of content, how they listen and what we can do to ensure they have access to news, information and entertainment.

- When asked 'Do you have difficulty accessing written material?', 40% self identified as stating that they do, with it being directly related to blindness, low vision or another disability.
- When asked 'If not for Vision Australia Radio, could you access this content by any other means?', 45% said no with the main reason being that there were barriers for them with technology or they did not know where else to source this content in an accessible way.



Improving accessibility of news content



What works to make news content accessible

•Use Plain Language:

- Avoid jargon and complex sentence structures. Keep language simple and easy to understand. Keep content clear and concise, focusing on the main points.

•Descriptive Link Text:

- Use clear, meaningful text for links instead of phrases like "click here." E.g. instead of "Click here to learn more," use "Learn more about this policy here."

•Break Up Content:

- Use headings, subheadings, and short paragraphs to make information easier to scan and digest.

•Alternative Text (Alt

Text): Provide descriptive alt text for all images, so screen readers can convey the image's content to users with visual impairments.

- Color Contrast:** Ensure sufficient contrast between text and background colors, making it easy to read for people with visual impairments.

- Use Accessible Fonts:** Choose legible fonts that are easy to read.

- Avoid Background Images:** Use plain backgrounds with no distracting images or graphics.

Improving accessibility of news content



Examples of accessible content

Alt Text Best Practices

- Keep it short, usually 1-2 sentences. Don't overthink it.
- Consider key elements of why you chose this image, instead of describing every little detail.
- No need to say "image of" or "picture of."
- But, do say if it's a logo, illustration, painting, or cartoon.
- Don't duplicate text that's adjacent in the document or website.
- End the alt text sentence with a period.

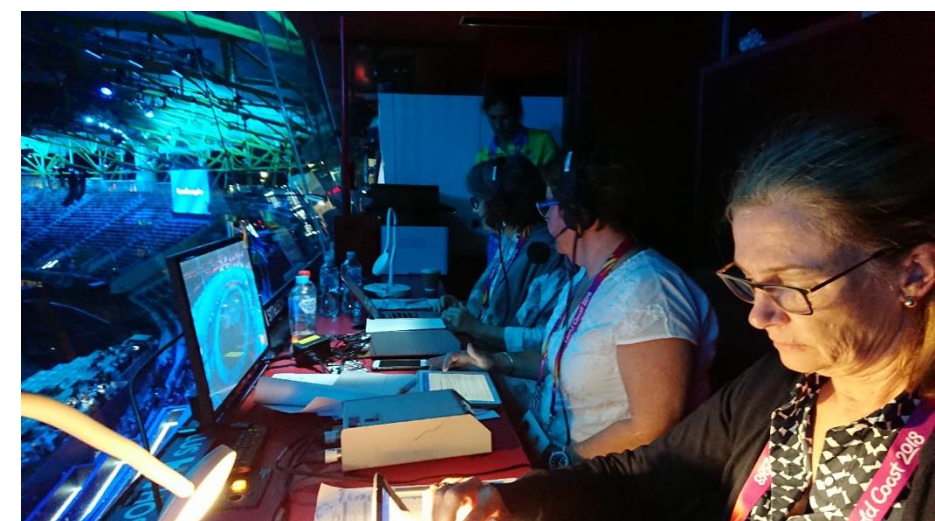


Group of young college students laugh and walk along a tree-lined pathway.

Audio Description

What is audio description?

- Audio description (AD) offers people who are blind or have low vision an understanding of what is happening visually within a theatre, television, film, DVD, museum, exhibition or other arts related productions.
- An additional narration that succinctly paints an image of transitions, movements, gestures, props, settings, costumes and scenery woven between the dialogues.
- Providing services for over 30 years at theatres, in cinemas, on television and more.



Audio Description at Gold Coast 2018
Commonwealth Games

Improving accessibility of news content

What works to make audio and video content accessible

- **Provide Captions and Transcripts:**

- Ensure all video and audio content has accurate and synchronised captions and transcripts.

- **Audio Description:**

- Include audio descriptions for video content that relies heavily on visual cues.

- **Make Audio Understandable:**

- Ensure audio is clear and at an appropriate "readability" or grade level for your audience.



Alternate format production



- Production of accessible alternate formats for any information you need to communicate. The largest production capacity for alternate formats in Australia
- Offering professional narrators and dedicated studios
- High volume braille mastering and embossing machinery and facilities which also produce large print, electronic text and tactile graphics
- Secure facilities to produce materials requiring high levels of confidentiality
- Vision Australia Library members receive up to 360 print pages converted to audio or braille fee free each year. Membership is free



Final words on accessibility



When in doubt, ask for help

There are many organisations and services who provide support in making content more accessible:

- Vision Australia has a digital access service, alternate format production team and other resources available online: www.visionaustralia.org
- The Australian Disability Network is Australia's peak body helping employers to build the confidence and capability to welcome and include people with a disability as employees and as customers: <https://australiandisabilitynetwork.org.au/>
- Access Ability Australia creates tailored Access Keys, Access Guides, Communication Boards, Communication Access Signs and Social Stories, while also offering a wide variety of training modules: <https://accessabilityaustralia.com/>
- Knowable Me was founded to address the lack of available data and insights on the needs and preferences of people with disability. Their member panel can provide you with a full suite of market research programs from surveys and user experience testing, all from the perspective of people with disabilities and their support networks: <https://knowable.me/>



**Vision
Australia**

Blindness. Low Vision. Opportunity.