Choose Film Context

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# The Social Model of Disability

The Social Model of Disability makes a distinction between impairments (the condition, illness or loss/lack of function) and disability (barriers and discrimination). **Disability** is the loss or limitation of opportunities to take part in the mainstream of the community on an equal level with others due to barriers (physical, attitudinal, communication). It has little to do with the individual’s condition or impairment. Under the ‘social' model, we acknowledge that it is the barriers created by society, which are ‘disabling' to an individual and that it is our collective responsibility to remove these barriers.

# D/deaf?

Many people who use sign language as their first language identify as a cultural and linguistic minority, not as people with disability. We often use the term ‘people with disability’ to include Deaf people too, because the word ‘disability’ in the social model of disability refers to barriers and because people who use Auslan (Australian Sign Language) as their first language, tend to experience barriers too (like discrimination or lack of access).

# Legislative and Strategy Context

## International

### UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability

***Article 1*** Purpose

The aim of the Convention is to make sure that people with disability enjoy human rights, freedoms and respect like other people.

**Article 30:** Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

People with disability have the same right to take part in cultural life as other people do. Countries are to

* take steps to make sure that people with disability have access to:
* cultural materials, such as books and other forms of literature; television programs, films and theatre;
* places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and tourism services; and
* as far as possible, monuments and sites that are culturally important to the nation.

## National

### Disability Discrimination Act 1992

The Federal ‘Disability Discrimination Act 1992’ (DDA) provides protection for everyone in Australia against discrimination based on disability

### National Arts and Disability Strategy

The National Arts and Disability Strategy presents a vision for improving access and participation in artistic and cultural activities for people with disability.

### National Disability Strategy 2010-2020

All governments are committed to a national approach to supporting people with disability to maximise their potential and participate as equal citizens in Australian society. The Australian Government is leading the development of a new National Disability Strategy for beyond 2020.

## Victorian

### Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities 2006

The **Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities** 2006 is an Act of the **Victorian** Parliament that sets out basic human rights and freedoms. Its purpose is to protect and promote human rights.

## Screen Sector

### Broadcasters

From 28 June 2020, SBS and the ABC have been providing audio described content every week, supported by features designed to ensure all audiences are aware of when this programming is available

### The Screen Diversity and Inclusion Network

The Screen Diversity and Inclusion Network (SDIN) is a network of broadcasters, screen funding agencies, business associations, guilds and industry-aligned education and training organisations who have committed to work together towards a more inclusive and diverse screen industry.

# Language

The language of disability changes quickly and different terms are used within and outside of Australia. It can be political; it can be very personal and can sometimes be quite confusing.

In Australia, terminology for individuals is ‘person with disability’ or ‘people with disability’. This is also called ‘person first’ language. However, there is a growing movement of people with disability in Australia and internationally that prefer ‘identity first’ language. Within ‘identity first’ terminology for individuals is ‘disabled person”.

The Australian Government Style Manual recommends use person-first language when you don’t understand individual or community preferences.

The Other Film Festival uses ‘identity first language’ which is used in this report.

Acceptable doesn’t mean ‘sounds nicer’. Acceptable doesn’t mean ‘politically correct’.

Acceptable certainly doesn’t mean words which individualise or medicalise the experience of disability. Acceptable language are those terms which disabled people have chosen themselves in the process of self-definition and which are situated within the Social Model; locating the focus of disability where it belongs, squarely upon society as a whole.

# Terminology for Deafness

**Deaf (with a capitalised D)** is used to describe those who use Auslan (Australian Sign Language) to communicate, and who identify as members of the signing Deaf community.

These people may also identify themselves as "culturally Deaf." They are more likely to have been born deaf or become deaf early in life.

**deaf (with a small d)** is a more general term used to describe the physical condition of not hearing, and also to describe people who are physically deaf but do not identify as members of the signing Deaf community.

**Hard of hearing** is the term that Deaf Australia now uses to describe those who have acquired a hearing loss in late childhood or adulthood, or who have a mild or moderate hearing loss. These people usually communicate using speech, lip-reading and residual hearing (often amplified by hearing aids). Source: Deaf Australia Inc.

**“Deaf” and “deaf”**

According to Carol Padden and Tom Humphries, in ‘Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture’ (1988):

“We use the lowercase deaf when referring to the audiological condition of not hearing, and the uppercase Deaf when referring to a particular group of deaf people who share a language – American Sign Language (ASL) – and a culture. The members of this group have inherited their sign language, use it as a primary means of communication among themselves, and hold a set of beliefs about themselves and their connection to the larger society. We distinguish them from, for example, those who find themselves losing their hearing because of illness, trauma or age; although these people share the condition of not hearing, they do not have access to the knowledge, beliefs, and practices that make up the culture of Deaf people.”

The World Federation of the Deaf disapproves of the term ‘hearing impaired’ as it describes people as if they have a deficiency.

Deaf and hard of hearing people have the right to choose what they wish to be called, either as a group or on an individual basis. Individuals can choose an audiological or cultural perspective.

In Australia, the Deaf community uses Auslan (Australian Sign Language) to communicate.

# Terminology for Blindness

‘Legal blindness’ or being ‘legally blind’ have specific definitions. In government use, these terms relate a person's sight loss to eligibility criteria. Many people who are legally blind do have some vision.

The terms ‘blind’ and ‘low vision’ include people with no sight and people who have some sight.

A person who is totally blind does not perceive light and has no usable vision. A person who has low vision has some ability to see. Wearing regular glasses will not improve their vision.

A person who is blind or who has low vision might use screen reading software, Braille displays, or screen magnification technology to access content. People who are blind might use other ways to communicate using hearing or touch.

Acceptable terms include ‘person who is blind’ and ‘person who has low vision. Don’t write ‘the blind’ or ‘person without sight’. (Australian Government Style Guide)

## However, Blind Citizens Australia (BCA) is the national representative organisation of people who are Blind or vision impaired. As this organisation is led by Blind people, we use “Blind and vision impaired” people as best practice in this report.

# Digital Accessibility Standards

The Federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*(D.D.A.) provides protection for everyone in Australia against discrimination based on disability. This includes freedom of access to information.

In 2010 the Australian Human Rights Commission recommended the Act be extended to include web content, and that this be enacted by adopting the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.0 (WCAG 2.0)

The Australian Government agreed and launched its Web Accessibility National Transition Strategy (NTS)iv in June 2010 that required all government agencies, federal and state, to meet WCAG 2.0 Level AA conformance by December 2014. The NTS has since been superseded by the Digital Service Standard (DSS).

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 2.0) specification comprises a set of accessibility checks to make web-based technologies and PDF documents accessible.

The specification contains four overarching principles and twelve guidelines. Under each guideline sits a number of relevant success criteria – testable standards that websites and PDF documents should meet. Each success criterion represents a potential barrier for a person with a disability.

A level of conformance is applied to each set of success criteria that reflects its importance – Level AAA being the highest level achievable.

• **Level A:**Describes items that will prevent users from accessing your document.

• **Level AA:**Describes items that users could work around, provided they have access to the right technology and skills.

• **Level AAA:**Describes items that are important for specific audiences or circumstances

# References

* The Screen Diversity and Inclusion Network. <https://www.sdin.com.au>
* Australian Government Style Guide.
* <https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/format-writing-and-structure/inclusive-language/people-disability>
* ‘Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture’
* Carol Padden and Tom Humphries, (1988)
* Deaf Australia Inc.

The Other Film Festival is a ground-breaking disability-led initiative that has put Deaf and Disabled people at the centre of the Australian screen industry for almost 20 years. Founded in 2004, it is Australia’s first international disability film festival and is a major artistic project of Arts Access Victoria

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