

# **Guidelines for providing accessible information products – Clarence City Council**

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## **1. Why it is important to provide Council information in an accessible format?**

It is important to ensure that people with disabilities, older citizens and those who have literacy issues in the Clarence community have access to public documents and information regarding the Council's functions, services and facilities. Access to such information is essential for community members to:

- make informed decisions
- participate in the life of the City
- meet their obligations as residents, traders or members of community groups.

Having access to Council information is a legislative requirement but is also about affording people with disabilities, older citizens and those with limited literacy skills with the same rights as other community members.

It makes good economic sense to ensure that the money Council invests in information products is well spent and successfully reaches its audience. There is no point producing information which looks good but is not read by anyone.

## **2. Who is the audience for accessible or alternative format information?**

The focus of these guidelines is the provision of information that is accessible for:

- people with disabilities (e.g. vision, physical, hearing loss, intellectual disabilities)
- older community members who may have age related reading difficulty
- people with learning or literacy issues (e.g. someone with little formal education, someone with dyslexia).

**However, any improvement in access to these documents for one group are also likely to benefit the general community** (e.g. use of plain English, clear layout for documents).

It is also important to note that all of us may require more accessible information products at some time in our lives. Think about how you or your mother/father might access information. What would they read? Would they use the Internet?

Clarence City has:

- a high proportion of older residents (16% of the residents are aged over 65 years and this proportion will increase over time)<sup>1</sup>
- a significant population of people with literacy issues
- 5.1% of community members who need assistance in daily life because of a disability

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<sup>1</sup> Drawn from 2006 Census data.

- approximately one in six people or 22% of the population who are affected by hearing loss. In Clarence this amounts to around 9927 people.

Thus, the implementation of these guidelines will impact on the lives of between 20% and 50 % of the total population of Clarence. This is not just about catering for a small number of people.

### **3. What are the barriers to these groups accessing Council information products?**

The common barriers to people with disabilities, older citizens and those with limited literacy skills accessing Council information products or services are outlined below. The most important way to improve access to Council information products and services is to provide multiple delivery methods so people can choose which format most suits them (e.g. verbal, written, audio, web based).

#### **3.1 People may not know that the information exists or how to access it**

Recent consultation has indicated that while Council produces a range of information products many residents may be unaware of their existence or do not know where they can gain a copy. This can be easily resolved by:

- Listing all the information publications produced inside the front cover of each document
- Making sure that the website has a list of all information products on the front page.

#### **3.2 The way the information is presented**

Common problems with information products include:

- A reliance on written information –not everyone can read or chooses to read the information we produce
- Font sizes – can be too small to be easily read (e.g. smaller than size 12)
- Font types- some types of font are more easily read than others (e.g. simpler fonts like Arial are easier to read)
- Colours used – these can often be hard to read, especially for those with a visual disability
- Use of jargon – often when we write publications we can use language which may not be well understood by those outside of Council.

#### **3.3 The format the information is provided in: e.g.**

- Many websites are not easy to 'navigate' or find your way around
- The document may not be available in a large print format
- The information may not be available in an audio format
- Assistive devices like hearing loops may not be available, people may not know they are available or Council staff may not know how to use them.

#### **4. Scope of the documents covered by this policy**

These guidelines apply to **all** documents and information products that are to be read by members of the public, including Council planning documents, information products, letters and promotional materials.

Council staff developing new information products or services or updating existing documents should read and adhere to these guidelines to ensure consistency and the highest standard of customer service.

#### **5. Principles for providing accessible information**

The principles that underpin this policy are:

- All community members are entitled to have the same level of access to Council produced information products and services.
- Printed and electronic information produced by Council should be clear and easy to understand.
- Council will provide information in a number of different ways – not all of it written. Wherever possible Council will use visual images and symbols to convey information. New products will be developed over time to increase access.
- Electronic information products will be developed with all user groups in mind, including those who access information using assistive technology (e.g. Electronic Braille Displays, Screen Readers, Portable Reading Devices). This means that electronic documents will be made available in formats that are compatible with such tools (e.g. Rich Text Format, and audio files) as well as other formats.
- Council will actively encourage community members to register to receive information in alternative formats (e.g. large print, on a CD) to ensure access.
- Public consultation/participation processes will be developed with these guidelines in mind.

## 6. Specific guidelines

### Section one: Printed information

Some of the following information is drawn directly from the Vision Australia website: [www.visionaustralia.org.au](http://www.visionaustralia.org.au).

#### Text and background colours on printed materials

- Text should be printed with the highest degree of contrast. There should be at least a 50% contrast between background and foreground text.
- Black text on white background is the best practice standard. Some people with low vision find it easier to read white letters on a black background (but this may be difficult to print out as it uses a lot of ink).
- Use colours only on large text such as headings and headlines. The colour of the text should be significantly darker or lighter than the background.

For example:

Yes

No

Yes

#### Type size

- A minimum of 12 point should be used as a standard. Ideally for Arial it would be size 14-16 and for Verdana size 12.
- For large print documents the type should be at least 18 point.

Arial 12  
Arial 14  
Arial 16  
Verdana 12

### **Handy hints**

To help you to achieve this without thinking about it simply set your default settings on your computer to be Arial font size 12.

It is not usually necessary to produce a large number of large print documents. People access information in many different ways so some will want to view the information on the computer screen and may print it out in large print format themselves.

What is important is to offer to produce some information in large print format if this is required. Many documents can simply be photocopied in a larger format for those individuals who require it. Ask the person what font size would be appropriate for them.

### **Type faces**

Use simple typefaces that do not have 'feet': e.g.

- Arial
- Verdana
- Helvetica
- Swiss.

Avoid the use of decorative or irregular typefaces as they are very hard for many people to read (e.g. Times New Roman). You might think they look very good or look more professional but they are not useful if others cannot read them. If you adopt the same principles for internal and external communication it will make life easier- just change the default settings on your computer for a start!

### **Avoid use of capitals for whole bodies of text**

- Text written totally in capitals is harder to read. Use a mix of upper and lower case.

### **Do not overuse bold text**

- Keep the use of bold text to a minimum. Too much bolding loses its effectiveness and also makes it harder for many people to read the document. People do not know what is important if there is too much bolding.

### **Avoid the use of italics**

- Italics can distort the type face and make it harder to read.

### **Emphasise key words or headings with bold print or underlining**

- Some use of bold print or underlining is acceptable to draw attention to key points in a document.



## Spacing of text

- Keep spacing at a standard setting (e.g. 12 pt before and 3pt after). Single line spacing is preferred.
- Make spacing consistent- if you vary this it makes it difficult for someone with a visual impairment to read it.
- Justify text to the left hand margin- but do not justify both left and right hand margins
- Text that is too closely spaced or with too much space in between is harder to read
- Do not indent paragraphs as many people with mild print disabilities find it hard to locate the beginning of a line when reading.

## Margins

- Extra wide margins on documents are easier to read with a magnifier. It also makes it easier to hold the document without obscuring text. A margin of around 2.0 to 2.5 cms is a reasonable width to ensure accessibility.

## Paper type

- A matt finish is preferred. Avoid overly glossy paper as the reflective surface makes it harder for many people to read.

## Layout

- Do not use words over a background design or photos as this makes it more difficult to read.

## Use identifying colours, sizes for formats to identify particular documents

A print disability can make it difficult to distinguish one document from another in the same series. Use of distinctive colours or sizes can make make this easier (e.g. if all the blue documents are the planning documents).

## Use plain English

It is important to make our documents easy to read, understand and user friendly.

Use short, simple sentences and words that are in everyday use.

Think about how the reader will 'hear' your message. How will it sound to them? What is the reader's interest in this topic? Write for them not for you.

e.g. 'The next rates notice you receive will look different. Council is introducing a new billing system on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009' .....**instead of**

'Council has been reviewing its operations and wants to improve how it collects revenue from ratepayers....'

Avoid using jargon (e.g. words like 'strategies, stakeholders, milestones, targets' do not mean a lot to many people).

Use dot points where possible.

Include examples where these will be helpful.

Do not include too much information in the document- be clear about what you need to say and stick to this.

For example: 'The next bill you receive from Council will show:

- The date of the bill
- The amount you owe
- Whether you are paying using a direct debit from your bank account
- How long you have to pay the account'.

### **Use of parallel text**

This technique is used by some organisations to make complicated documents more accessible to a wider audience. Parallel text involves the use two different ways of providing the information within the one document. On one page you have the standard text which can be quite complex in nature. On the opposite page you have much simpler text version in a box.

Parallel text can be very useful for complex documents like strategic plans or annual reports. Many people who can read the standard text actually choose to read the parallel text version for a quick overview of the content.

An example of how parallel text might be used – using the Disability Access Plan 2007 as the 'content'.

<b>Standard version</b>	<b>Parallel text version</b>
<p>To help meet its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act, Council established an Access and Facilities Advisory Committee in 1995. The committee is comprised of representatives from different disability community organisations, representatives from State Government departments, Aldermen and Council staff. The Committee meets every 8 weeks at Council Chambers and is chaired by an Alderman.</p> <p>The role of the committee is to.....</p>	<p>Council has a committee which is helping it to make access better in the City.</p> <p>People who live in the city who have a disability can be part of this committee.</p> <p>Other people on the committee will be Council Aldermen and people from Government Departments and community organisations.</p>

## Example document – accessible print document principles in action

Council wants **all** residents and visitors to be able to access our information.

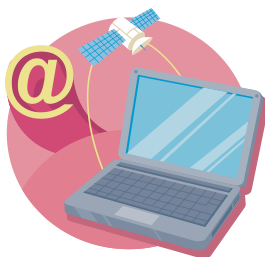
To make this happen we are going to:

- Make sure we use at least a size 12 font in all our written documents
- Update our website to make it easier to find your way around it
- Be careful about the colours we use for documents to make sure they are easy to read
- Print documents on matt rather than glossy paper to make them easier to read
- Use plain English in our correspondence to you
- Produce some new information products (e.g. a fridge magnet with essential information for new residents).
- Encourage residents who require information products in a particular format (e.g. on a CD, in Braille format) to register with us so we know what is required.

We want to know if the information we are providing is easy for you to read and understand. Please contact us if you have any trouble reading or understanding the documents or information that we produce or have any ideas on how we can further improve our information to you.



Phone XXXXXX between 8.30am and 5pm weekdays



Email us on XXXXXX

## **Section two: Website information and electronic documents**

### **Many websites are not very accessible for people with visual disabilities**

For many people the electronic documents available on websites are inaccessible because of their format or the way the documents are organised. For example, they may not be able to tab easily around the screen. Someone using a screen reader may need to be able to move around the screen without using a mouse. They may not be able to access documents provided on the site as they are only available in PDF format rather than Rich Text format.

Remember some of your audience will be reading the document on the screen or using assistive technology such as screen magnifiers. The proportion of people using screen readers is still quite low due to their cost, but is growing over time. Some screen readers currently in use are called 'JAWS for Windows' and 'Magic'. The Council website, to ensure a high level of access, must be compatible with these assistive technologies.

### **Best practice expectations**

Accessible information guidelines in use in other states<sup>2</sup> suggests that the standard Local Government should be aiming for is compliance with W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines to at least Level 1 and preferably level 2 compliance. These national and international recognised access guidelines are available through the website [www.w3.org](http://www.w3.org).

### **Writing for your whole audience**

You need to write for the **whole** audience. The following guidelines are designed to ensure that Council documents can be accessed by the widest group of people.

Much of the following information is also drawn from the Vision Australia best practice information.

Remember that the same requirements outlined for print documents (e.g. font size, colours, typeface, margins etc) apply to electronic documents.

### **Document type/format for web based documents**

- Avoid the use of Portable Document Format (PDF) documents as these are often inaccessible to screen readers and many people cannot open the documents as they do not have the appropriate software. While these are in common usage on websites they are inaccessible to a proportion of your potential audience. It is preferable

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<sup>2</sup> See Accessible Information Policy and Guidelines for Local Government November 2001, Western Australian Municipal Association.

to use Rich Text Format (RTF) options for all documents to ensure that readers with different operating systems can work with them.<sup>3</sup>

- Information can be loaded onto the website as MP3 files to allow people to listen to the information rather than read it.
- Use consistent formatting (e.g. use a style sheet for titles, headings and paragraphs to ensure consistency).
- Use font types that are more accessible (e.g. Arial).
- Avoid the use of text boxes as these cannot be read easily by many groups.
- If you use tables in a document make sure the headings are in the same cell as the text and that the tables can be read in a linear manner (ie across the page).
- Do not use multi-column layouts and don't continue columns across several pages).
- Use footnotes rather than endnotes.
- Provide text explanations for all graphs, diagrams and images and make sure the explanation is going to 'stay with' the diagram if the size is altered.

### **Print options**

Ensure that the website has options for printing at standard size and in large print formats. (e.g. a specific tool bar up in right hand corner of screen). The current Clarence Council website does not have this option. When the website is re-developed this is an option that could be included in the new format.

### **Colours**

Check to make sure that the foreground and background colour combinations provide good contrast.

### **Design features**

Where possible include design features that improve accessibility (e.g. a web accessibility toolbar).

### **Ask for feedback and continue to improve access over time**

Conduct consultations with user groups to ensure that the website is accessible to the groups who need to access it.

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<sup>3</sup> You can create accessible PDF documents but it requires more specialised tools and for the creator to develop them with this access in mind. See section 9 for contacts for more information on this matter.

### Section three: Alternative formats for documents

If you follow the principles outlined in this document the written products you produce will be much easier for residents of Clarence to read. However, this will not provide access for all of your potential audience. The following section provides some options for other things you can do to improve access to Council documents by **most of** your community.

Remember people with intellectual disabilities rarely access websites and a substantial number of people living in the City have reading difficulties.

The most appropriate alternative formats will vary according to an individual's specific communication requirements and can include:

- The website
- Email
- Computer disk/CD
- Audio cassette<sup>4</sup>
- Large print text
- Ensuring audio loops (with appropriate signage) are fitted for public meetings and events where public address systems are used
- Captioning any videos or films including advertisements used by Council
- Use of the AUSLAN (sign language) interpreting service
- Use of ACE telephone interpreting service
- Braille format (if requested)
- Display of Better Hearing Counter Cards at Reception Desks.<sup>5</sup>

It is recommended that Council publicise that alternative formats are available on request by including a statement as follows on all publications.<sup>6</sup>

**'This publication is available in alternative formats such as CD, large print or Braille on request'.** In order to help us to provide this service within a reasonable time frame residents and business owners who require these services are requested to register with Council to receive such information products by contacting Customer Service on XXXXX.

#### Large print documents

It will not usually be necessary to produce multiple copies of a document in large print format as:

- Some people with a visual disability will be using a screen reader on a computer at home to access information so will not be seeking hard copy products

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<sup>4</sup> Council will need to negotiate with the Association for the Blind to produce Audio tapes and factor in a production time.

<sup>5</sup> These cards can be obtained from Better Hearing Australia phone 08 93287938.

<sup>6</sup> This information is drawn directly from the Accessible Information Policy Guidelines for Local Governments produced by the Western Australian Municipal Association, November 2001.

- Use of the recommended font size 12 and above as standard practice will meet many people's needs.

It is important however that you make residents aware that Council **can provide** larger print versions of documents if they are required.

**All documents produced by Council should provide indicate that residents/ratepayers can contact Council if they require information in a different format.**

The simplest way to produce large print documents if a small number is required is to enlarge and copy it on the photocopier. This can be done while a resident is at the counter or alternatively it can be posted out to them after a telephone request. Simply ask them what size print will be most useful for them.

### **Establish a register of people seeking alternative format information products**

Council encourages residents/ratepayers to register to receive larger print or alternative format versions of information products that are sent to each household (e.g. the Infobook and Community Directory). This would enable a print run to be produced of larger format documents to meet this demand.

### **Provide the information on a CD**

If a document is likely to be very long when in large print format it can be saved onto a CD and posted or given to the person requesting it. Simply select the whole document, increase the font size and then burn it to a CD. You may need to highlight and enlarge headings in a revised version to make it more easily read.

### **Developing larger print versions of documents**

If you are going to produce a larger print version of a document adopt the following approach:

- Use at least 18 point in size in either Arial or Helvetica
- Line spacing should be at least 1.25 spaces.
- Headings and sub-headings should be much larger in large print documents
- Use bold or underlining for emphasis - never italics.
- Use block style paragraphs - no indentations for paragraphs
- Provide 2-2.5 cm margins
- Justify the left margin but not the right hand margin.
- Avoid use of columns and divided words where possible
- Use black print on white, ivory, cream or yellow matt finish paper
- Do not use words over a background design or photos
- Paper size should be no larger than 210x297mm to enable it to be easily handled by the reader.

Source Vision Australia [www.visionaustralia.org.au](http://www.visionaustralia.org.au)

### **Audio files**

Council may wish to produce some information in audio format and provide to residents as audio files on the website or on a CD. Remember many people who cannot read rely on someone else to read the information to them. This format would enable them to access the information directly. Audio files may be used for information about:

- Paying accounts
- Hours of opening of Council services and facilities
- Dog management
- The range of recreational and cultural activities available in the City.

Audio files would be very useful for anyone with a visual impairment or a reading difficulty. Please see section 9 of this document which outlines the costs and contact point for producing information in this format.

In the longer term Council may seek to have a website that has the capacity to 'read' out the information content to anyone accessing the site. This service is available currently on a number of UK based sites.

### **Braille**

As technology increases and equipment such as screen readers and magnifiers become more widely used the demand for Braille information may decrease. Any Council information could be produced in Braille format if required. It is important to recognize that not everyone who is blind can read Braille. However, Braille readers may prefer their documents in Braille rather than audio cassettes. Audio cassettes are therefore not a replacement for Braille resources.<sup>7</sup> Residents can be encouraged to register with Council for alternative format information products which would provide a clear indication of the demand for such products. See section 9 for details on who can provide this service for Council.

### **Hotline/Telephone**

Voice relayed information is one of the most accessible for many people. While there is a customer service number available during business hours this service may not be widely known in the community. Providing a contact number for telephone information on all Council publications is a requirement of accessibility. Make sure you include a contact number in all publications. If you need to contact someone who has a communication or speech impairment the Australian Communication Exchange (ACE) operates a Relay Centre which is staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with trained staff. The operators relay calls between callers who are Deaf or have a speech or hearing impairment and other parties, such as a Council officer. For contact details for the ACE please see section 9 of this document. You also need to be aware that someone who is Deaf or who has a hearing impairment may contact you via the Relay service using a teletypewriter (TTY) or computer modem in their home.

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in the DVIRC Newsletter Winter 2004.



## **Section four: Signage**

Council is responsible for only some of the signs in use in the municipal area. In order to make signage as accessible as possible:

- Use relevant international visual symbols where possible (e.g. male and female figures rather than words on toilets).
- Use simple concise language and no jargon.
- Develop and provide standard signage to enable 'wayfinding' for people with visual disabilities (e.g. a luminous yellow pole which can be seen from a distance placed in each park to indicate exit points).
- Ensure a high level of contrast between the background colour and text on the sign.
- Review all internal Council signage to develop a consistent set of markers in public spaces, including Council offices.
- Internal signage should be clearly visible to people with a disability in accordance with AS1428.1 and AS1428.2 (e.g. not too high to be easily seen by someone in a wheelchair or with limited vision).
- It should be appropriately located at entrances and reception desks.
- Use arrows to give directional information about facilities and services where appropriate.

Internal signage within Council facilities should be provided in accordance with the W3C Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

## **Section five: Public events and consultations**

For all public events and consultations you will need to plan to maximise participation and access. This means thinking about:

- Physical access (can all people get into the venue)?
- Will everyone be able to hear? Is there a hearing loop available?
- Do you know how to use the hearing loop?
- Do you need an Auslan Interpreter for those attending who are deaf?
- Emergency alarms - consider exit issues as well as access. For example, the installation of flashing fire alarms rather than just sound based ones would allow those with hearing issues to be aware of an emergency alarm.

**Ask those attending an event or consultation to indicate if they need either an Auslan Interpreter or a hearing loop as part of the RSVP process.**

Schedule regular breaks in the proceedings to allow those who are lip reading time to recuperate as well as the interpreters.

Use a portable microphone for meetings and other events.

Check to see what equipment is available in the venue – e.g. hearing loop.

Make sure that the venue has a sign on the door to indicate that such equipment is installed.

Make sure you know how to use the equipment prior to the event.

If you need to produce meeting minutes or other documents in Braille or audio CD format you will need to organize for someone to produce the documents in these formats. See section 9 for contacts on who can provide this service.

## **Section 6: Monitoring our performance**

Council must ask for feedback at regular intervals to make sure that it is delivering the type of information needed in the most accessible formats. The best way to do this is:

- Consult 'user groups' with specific needs (e.g. those with a visual disability who are using screen readers). This may be done by contacting individuals and asking for their feedback via a survey or by holding a focus group.
- Seek feedback via the Council newsletter.
- Conduct a telephone survey of a sample of households in the City.

The feedback from such research would enable Council to:

- Refine the website
- Develop new information products or services
- Refine written information products.

## **Section 7: Recommendations**

### **Publications**

Include a list of **all** Council information publications inside the front cover of each document so people know what else is available. Include a number to ring to have the documents sent out or where they can be collected from.

Ensure all documents produced by Council align with these guidelines – across all sections of Council and all types of documents.

Train and inform all staff in how to use the guidelines and why it is important to produce accessible information.

Encourage residents and business owners who have particular information access needs to register with Council for alternative format products (e.g. large print, CD, Braille format) so that Council has a clear picture of what is needed. It is important to do this after other documents have been aligned to the guidelines as adopting these guidelines will meet many people's needs.

Apply these guidelines to all newly produced documents. Priority should be given to documents like the Info book that are produced annually. Colour code the different sections of the Info Book to make it easier to read. Consider cutting back the content to make it less 'wordy'. Increase the font size and use more contrasting colours.

Council to publicise that alternative formats are available on request in all publications.

### **Website**

Review the Council website design and content in line with this document and accessibility guidelines. Update the website and then conduct user group consultations over the next 12 months to check for improved accessibility.

Add MP3 files to the Council website to enable some information to be provided as verbal files.

Investigate the potential to include an option on the Council website that will have the whole website read out to the viewer on demand.

### **Alternative formats and new products**

Contract other providers to produce information products for Council in Braille and other formats as required, e.g. as verbal files burnt onto CD or put on the website as MP3 files or in Braille format. See section 9 of this document for who can provide this service to Council.

Use visual tools/symbols as much as possible to simplify information products (e.g. standard symbols where possible on written products and signage).

Develop a specific information product for people with intellectual disabilities (e.g. fridge magnet with simple instructions on who to call for information, what to do/not to do as a resident):

- e.g. picture of a telephone with the number /photo of Council staff person who does customer service role
- picture of a dog and owner with dog on a lead
- picture of person putting rubbish in the bin etc.

Produce a short video/DVD which provides standard basic information to residents. This 'Welcome to Clarence City' DVD could provide information on:

- what you can do in the city
- where to get information
- what type of information is available
- your responsibilities as a resident.

This could be issued to Disability organisations, shown in Doctors surgeries, health facilities and youth centres. Many residents respond well to visual information that is not text based.

Hold an afternoon tea/open day at Council chambers for people with intellectual disabilities so they know where to come for information.

For complex documents like strategic plans Council could consider the use of parallel text options. In many cases the parallel text pages are read by many of those looking at the document as they are easier to read and provide a summary of the document.

Where possible use verbal information for older residents and those who have visual or reading issues. For example, consider use of a service desk in Eastlands Shopping Centre or at the Shoreline.

### **Signage**

Ensure toilet doors have Braille as well as visual indicators of gender.

Review signage within the Council building in line with this document to ensure access.

### **Improving access in relation to people with hearing issues**

The following recommendations come from the Mitcham City project in South Australia and are steps a Council can take to make their city more accessible for people who are deaf or hearing impaired.

Conduct an audit of hearing loops and other devices to assist people who are deaf or hearing impaired to:

- decide where hearing loops and other devices may be required (e.g. erasable message board, visual alarms).

- identify positive changes that could be made to the arrangement of rooms (e.g. creation of quiet spaces with minimal background noise, use of sound absorbing furniture or furnishings).<sup>8</sup>

Develop a Hearing Impaired and Deaf Friendly Portable Kit which includes a whiteboard and personal hearing system. It would also need to include Instruction on how to use hearing loops or other equipment available. Staff would need to be trained and written instructions provided on site and with the portable equipment.

Install a Counter Hearing System to allow customers to pick up the handset and listen to the staff member's voice at an amplified level. This is suitable for both those wearing a hearing aid and those who do not.

Provide information on the Council website about what hearing support equipment is available and where. Ensure that is included on invitations to events within the City. Work with TasDeaf to gain recognition for these initiatives both at Clarence City Council and within other Councils across the State.

Display signage on doors and other public areas to highlight the equipment and services offered – e.g. the international symbol of access for deafness, a sign that provides a visual cue that a hearing loop is available.

Use a portable microphone for meetings and other events.

Ask participants of events to indicate if they require an interpreting service. Use professionally qualified AUSLAN interpreters. Schedule regular breaks in proceedings to allow lip readers and those working with interpreters to have a break.

Hold public information sessions on hearing impairment and deafness to encourage awareness (e.g. in conjunction with the new Integrated Care Centre, Australian Hearing, Audiologists).

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<sup>8</sup> This is drawn from the South Australian 'Access Friendly Cities, Building Bridges for the Hearing Impaired and Deaf Community' Project, City of Mitcham and Deaf SA.  
[www.mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au](http://www.mitchamcouncil.sa.gov.au)

## **Section 8: Definitions**

**Audio loop:** an audio loop consists of an amplifier and a long cable which transmits sound from a public address system to the hearing aides of people who are positioned inside the loop cable. Audio loops can be hired or may be owned by Council.

### **MP3 file**

This term is short for Moving Picture Experts Group who designed this format for encoding information. MP3 files are audio files and are used to provide music or verbal information. It is commonly used on music websites. MP3 files are useful for people who can best access information verbally – because of a vision issue.

### **ACE - Australian Communication Exchange**

A not for profit organisation that connects people who are Deaf or who have a hearing impairment with other community members. They provide website based information and resources as well as run a 24 hour per day/ 7 day per week relay service. Someone who is deaf may contact you using a teletypewriter (TTY) or a computer modem in their home. See contact details on the next page.

### **Counter Hearing System**

A device that is installed at a customer service point that allows the customer to pick up the handset and listen to the staff member's voice at an amplified level.

### **Screen readers and screen magnifiers**

Technology which allows people with visual disabilities to read what is on a website. The names of some of these are: 'JAWS for Windows' and 'Magic'. If the Council website is not compatible with these technologies residents who use this type of assistive technology will not be able to access the website.

## **Section 9: Contact points for equipment hire and services**

### **Hearing Loops**

Can be purchased from Word of Mouth Technology Pty Ltd in Victoria

Phone 03 9761 2211

[www.wom.com.au](http://www.wom.com.au)

Costs vary for purchase of Home Induction Loop Kits (\$299 March 2009) to Portable transmitter and conference sets (\$4286 in March 2009).

### **Better Hearing Kits**

These are counter cards that contain information for staff about communicating with people with hearing impairments.

Contact Better Hearing Australia phone 6228 0011. They are located at 28 Gormanston Rd. Moonah.

[www.tasmania.betterhearingaustralia.org.au](http://www.tasmania.betterhearingaustralia.org.au)

### **Audio Cassette, Braille or Large Print Format**

This service can be provided by Information Alternatives in Victoria:

Phone 03 57952307

Email [brailleandaudio@bigpond.com](mailto:brailleandaudio@bigpond.com)

Costs as of March 2009 were approximately:

- Audio format \$160 per recorded hour plus GST
- Braille – cost determined by word count and the complexity of the document. Quotes can be provided if the document is forwarded. Allow a few days to prepare for simple documents, longer for complex documents.

### **Auslan Interpreting**

Tasmanian Deaf Society

Phone 6231 6501 or book through the website: [www.tasdeaf.org.au](http://www.tasdeaf.org.au)

SMS (non-emergency) 0418 310 143

Emergency Interpreting only: 0418174226

Australian Sign Language Interpreters Association Tasmania (ASLIAT)

[www.aslia.com.au](http://www.aslia.com.au) or [inquiry@asliatas.org.au](mailto:inquiry@asliatas.org.au)

Interpreters may be employed through an interpreting agency or on a freelance/casual basis. Rates vary from state to state and interpreter to interpreter.

### **ACE National Relay Service (telephone interpreting service)**

A 24 hour service provided through the Australian Communication Exchange (ACE). Messages are relayed from a voice phone user to a deaf or hearing impaired person who uses a telephone typewriter (TTY).

Australian Communication Exchange phone 1800 652 201 or 132544.



**Captioning of films and videos**

Australian Caption Centre  
08 9449 9874

Television stations can also provide this service.

**Assistive Technologies**

The Independent Living Centre Tasmania  
Phone 1300 885 886 – based in Launceston but with an outreach service to Moonah in the south  
The ILC also offers education sessions, a reference library, and a display of equipment.

Tasmanian Living Technology  
Provides information about assistive technology products  
[www.taslivingtech.com.au](http://www.taslivingtech.com.au)

**How to create accessible PDF documents**

Accessibility Resource Centre  
[www.adobe.com/accessibility/index.html](http://www.adobe.com/accessibility/index.html)