



Tennis Venue Accessibility Profile

Tennis Australia, in partnership with Get Skilled Access, have created this guide which provides clubs the opportunity to assess their venue's accessibility, as well as adopt best practices to create inclusive spaces.

The checklist within this guide will also assist clubs and venues with reviewing where they are at with providing accessible, safe and inclusive spaces for people with disability.

CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE TENNIS CLUB: A PRACTICAL GUIDE

Running a tennis club isn't just about unlocking the gates — it's about creating an inclusive, welcoming environment where everyone can enjoy the game. For people with disability, it can be discouraging when they encounter barriers that prevent them from accessing facilities or participating in club activities.

While the ideal outcome is for all tennis clubs to be fully accessible, we understand that many clubs — especially those in older buildings — may not yet meet that standard. Achieving full accessibility takes time, planning, and resources. What matters most right now is knowing how accessible your club is today and clearly communicating that to the people who need to know.

People with disability don't expect perfection — but they do expect honesty, respect, and the ability to plan ahead. When clubs provide clear information about what is and isn't accessible, it helps people make informed decisions and feel confident visiting your venue.

This guide is designed to help your club:

- Understand what accessibility means in practice
- Assess the current accessibility of your club environment
- Identify areas where improvements can be made
- Plan future upgrades based on need and feasibility
- Build a culture of inclusion and openness

You'll also find a practical checklist that highlights common accessibility barriers and offers simple solutions that can make a big difference.

Don't worry if your club isn't fully accessible yet. Accessibility is a journey, and the most important step is knowing where you're starting from.

By taking the time to understand how people access your facilities — and by making thoughtful, achievable changes — your club can become more welcoming to all players, families, and visitors.



Why make your club accessible and welcome more people with disability?

Grow Your Club

Improving accessibility can open the doors to new players, members, volunteers, and supporters. By creating an inclusive environment, you're inviting more people to get involved — helping increase participation and grow your club's membership base.

Build a Stronger Reputation

Being known as a club that welcomes everyone — including people with disability — helps build a positive and respected reputation. It shows your club stands for fairness, diversity, and inclusion, which resonates with the local community, sponsors, and potential partners.

Create a Welcoming Club Culture

Accessibility isn't just about physical features — it's about creating a culture of respect, teamwork, and fairness. An inclusive tennis club benefits everyone by fostering a friendly and supportive atmosphere where all members feel they belong.

Improve Your Chances for Funding and Support

Many local councils and government grant programs prioritise clubs that are inclusive and support participation for people with disability. Making your club more accessible can boost your eligibility for funding, sponsorships, and community support.

Strengthen Community Connections

Accessible tennis clubs often attract a broader and more engaged community. They build stronger ties with local schools, disability organisations, and councils — and often become community role models. Showing leadership in accessibility sets your club apart and contributes to a more inclusive sporting landscape.



Checklist

You can utilise this checklist below to thoroughly assess the accessibility of your club and to identify areas for potential improvements and updates. Remember, it's perfectly fine if your club isn't completely accessible right away; achieving full accessibility is a gradual process, and the most crucial step is to understand your current position on the path to inclusion.

Take the time to:

1. **Work through each section of the checklist** – you will find a series of statements covering different parts of your club — such as entrances, pathways, toilets, and communication.
2. **Read each statement carefully** - for every item, there are multiple options describing different levels of accessibility.
3. **Select the option that best reflects your club's current situation** - be honest — this process isn't about being perfect. It's about knowing where you are, so you can plan for what's next.
4. **Use your results to inform future planning** - once completed, this checklist can guide short-term fixes and long-term upgrades to make your club more inclusive.
5. **Promote your accessibility profile results**
6. **Once completed it's important to share your results through your channels** – eg. your website or social media pages, so people with access requirements can make an informed choice.

As you go through each section of the checklist, take the time to read each statement along with its corresponding options. Then, mark the box that most accurately reflects the state of your club's environment and facilities.

No adjustments needed:

Good enough and do not need any changes.

Some adjustments needed:

Mostly accessible but need some changes.

Adjustments needed:

Not accessible and need changes.

Access the checklist by [clicking here](#).



Next Steps

Once you complete this form, Tennis Australia will provide you with tailored promotional assets highlighting the results of your Accessibility Profile Checklist. These resources are designed to help you communicate your venue's accessibility features with your local disability community, ensuring individuals and families can make informed decisions and plan ahead with confidence. By promoting your accessibility, you'll also demonstrate your club's commitment to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.

TAKING YOUR VENUE ACCESSIBILITY TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Now you know the state of your club using the checklist, the information below is a good starting point for ways to make your club more accessible.

For the best results, it's a good idea to speak with an access consultant who can give you advice that meets all the right rules and suits your needs.

To learn more about the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, Defining disability in the 'Social Model' context and the concept of universal design, please refer to page 9 of this document.

Parking and drop off

- People should be able to get from their car to using a safe, flat, and easy-to-follow path — without steps or barriers.
- Make sure the path from the parking spots to any buildings or areas on site is easy for people using wheelchairs, prams, or walkers.
- Put up clear signs at the entrance so people know where to park — including where the accessible parking is, where bigger vehicles can go, and where people can load or unload from the back or side of their car.
- Try to put accessible parking bays as close as possible to the main entrance so it's easier for people who need them.
- Use clear signs at these parking spots — with signs people can see when driving and markings on the ground, like the wheelchair symbol or pram symbol.
- Make sure there's enough space above the parking spots for taller vehicles, like those with roof racks or boxes on top.
- Parking spaces should be flat and not slippery — even when it rains.
- In big car parks, it helps to have separate ways in and out for cars, and speed bumps placed in the right spots to keep everyone safe.
- Consistent and even lighting at parking bays



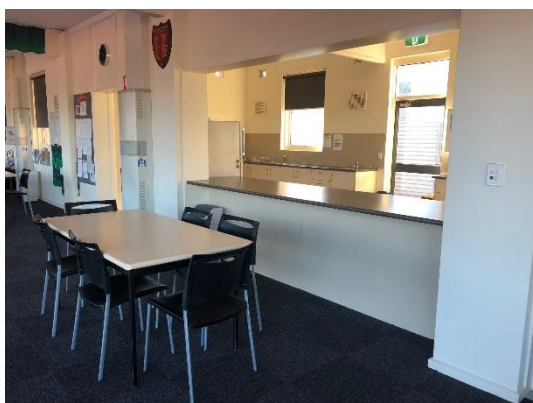
Entrance

- If there are steps at your entrance, think about adding a ramp with a gentle slope so people using wheelchairs, prams, or walking aids can get in. Make sure the ramp has handrails and follows the rules for safety.
- If you can't build a permanent ramp, you can use a portable or temporary ramp. These can be set up when needed — just make sure they're not too steep and are safe to use.
- If the main entrance can't be made step-free, make sure there's another entrance that is accessible, easy to find, and clearly signed.
- If there's a small step at your door (like a raised edge), you can add a small ramp (called a "threshold ramp") to make it easier to get over.



Club Facilities

- Leave enough space between furniture. Try to keep at least 820 mm between tables and chairs — even when people are sitting — so there's room for wheelchairs, prams, or walking frames to get through.
- Keep walkways clear. Avoid putting tables, chairs, signs, or displays in the way. People should be able to move around easily without obstacles.
- Think about space when setting up. When you're arranging furniture or displays, make sure there's room for people to get by comfortably.
- Don't overcrowd the area. Try not to squeeze in too many tables or displays. Less clutter makes it easier for everyone to move.
- Talk to your staff/volunteers. Make sure your team knows how much space is needed for walkways so they can help keep things clear and safe.



Spectator and viewing areas

- Create a clear path: Make sure people can get from the entrance to the viewing area without stairs or barriers. Paths should be wide enough for wheelchairs and prams.
- Add clear signage: Use big, easy-to-read signs with symbols (like the wheelchair or hearing loop symbol). Add Braille and raised text where possible.
- Keep paths clear: Don't put seating or viewing spots in the middle of walkways — keep paths open so everyone can move through safely.
- Include raised viewing spots: In areas where most people stand, add a raised area so people in wheelchairs or who need to stay seated can still see.
- Let people sit together: Make sure people using wheelchairs or support animals can sit with their friends and family — not off to the side alone.
- Leave space between seats: Rows should be wide enough so people can move through easily.
- Add extra space near some seats: Include room for things like bags, wheelchairs, or support animals.
- Offer different types of seating: Use a mix of seats with backrests, armrests, and at different heights for adults and children.
- Use removable seats: In fixed seating areas, keep some seats removable so the space can be adjusted when needed.
- Give everyone a good view: Make sure all seating spots have a clear line of sight to the stage, field, or screen.
- Make temporary areas accessible too: If you're setting up a temporary viewing space (like for an event), make sure it still has ramps, handrails, and safe seating.
- Add safety features to raised platforms: Use handrails and a raised edge so people don't fall or roll off.
- Help people who are hard of hearing: If you have a speaker system, add a hearing loop or similar system to support people with hearing aids.
- Provide shade and shelter: In outdoor spaces, add some covered seating areas for comfort in sun or rain.
- Make toilets accessible: Include unisex accessible toilets and ambulant toilets close to the viewing area.
- Universal accessibility iconography

Wayfinding

Internationally recognised accessibility icons (like the International symbol for access) make it easy for those with accessibility requirements to identify facilities that accommodate their requirements. We will use them on all signage, including maps, marketing materials, websites and programs to publicise to attendees that our event is accessible and inclusive.



Universal Accessibility Iconography

Below are examples of utilising Universal Accessibility Icons:



Sensory space

A sensory space or room is a tranquil area designed to help people manage sensory overload and stress, away from loud noises and crowds. While these spaces are particularly beneficial for people who are Neurodivergent, they are inclusive and welcoming to anyone with sensory sensitivities. To foster inclusivity at event venues, it is essential to incorporate features that address diverse sensory needs.

An effective sensory space should include:

- Fidget tools such as stress balls, textured surfaces, or spinner tools to aid in sensory stimulation and focus.
- Ear plugs or noise-cancelling headphones are also important for minimizing auditory distractions and supporting people with auditory sensitivity.
- Adjustable lighting options, like dimmable lights or soft illumination, cater to visual sensitivities.
- Comfortable seating and calming textures enhance physical comfort, while soothing colour palettes and visual aids prevent overstimulation.



Club Staff & Volunteer training

Starting a role at a tennis club isn't just about learning the game, it's about learning the values that make the game for everyone. Staff training is the heartbeat of creating lasting inclusion in sport, it's where understanding turns into action. When club staff, coaches, and volunteers are equipped with the right knowledge and mindset, they can transform tennis into a space where everyone feels welcome, valued, and able to participate.

Below are four tips you will learn in your induction that will help build inclusion from day one

1. First impressions matter – A warm greeting, accessible information, and taking time to listen can set the tone for a positive, ongoing relationship.
2. Use inclusive communication – Simple changes in language, such as focusing on what a person can do, and offering information in multiple formats (spoken, written, visual), help build trust and connection.
3. Challenge unconscious bias – We all have assumptions we don't notice. Being aware of them and questioning them helps ensure decisions and interactions are fair, welcoming, and respectful.
4. Involve people in shaping their experience – Don't decide for people with disability; decide with them. Asking for input on scheduling, equipment, or game format shows respect and leads to better experiences for everyone

The Sport4All Online Club Module takes this journey step-by-step: from learning how inclusive communication builds confidence and connection, to rethinking disability through a social model lens, to challenging unconscious biases that can quietly exclude. It provides practical tools, like accessibility checklists, quick-win ideas, and adaptable activity frameworks, that empower staff to create meaningful first impressions, foster an inclusive club culture, and embed these values into everyday operations. By embracing this learning, clubs don't just 'tick the box', they nurture an environment where inclusion becomes second nature, inspiring members, and the wider community alike.



DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT 1992 (CTH) (DDA)

Approximately one in five Australians (18.5% or 4.0 million persons) indicated having a disability in the census of 2012. A further 21% had a long-term health condition that did not restrict their everyday activities. Supporting the access requirements of people with disabilities is the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) enacted by the Federal Parliament in 1993. The Legislation is complaints based, with complaints being administered by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (HREOC) and enforced under the Federal Court of Australia.

DEFINING DISABILITY IN THE 'SOCIAL MODEL' CONTEXT.

The Disability Inclusion Act 2014 defines disability as a long-term physical, psychiatric, intellectual, or sensory impairment that may hinder a person's full and effective participation in the community on an equal basis with others, especially when interacting with various barriers.

Tennis Australia endorses this definition, which aligns with the 'social model' of disability. This model emphasises that it is not the individual's disability that serves as the barrier to community participation, but rather the external physical and attitudinal barriers that obstruct full inclusion and participation. By removing these physical and attitudinal barriers, people with disabilities can engage and contribute with equity and dignity.

WHAT IS UNIVERSAL DESIGN?

Universal Design is a set of principles that can drive how products or environments are designed so that they are intuitive, easy to use and have the greatest possible accessibility for all. The Principles of Universal Design are:

1. Equitable use - All people can use it
2. Flexibility in use - Can be operated in more than one way
3. Simple and intuitive use - Easy to use without prior experience
4. Perceptible information - All users can observe how to use it
5. Tolerance for error - Unintended and adverse use is minimised
6. Low physical effort - Can be used comfortably and efficiently
7. Size/space for approach and use - People of any size or posture can use it

Universal design encompasses all members of the community within all environments. Key considerations of those with an accessibility need who are encompassed under Universal Design include:

- People who use canes, Braille, service animals or companions
- People who use hearing technology and/or sign language or hearing hubs
- People who use wheelchairs, scooters, crutches, walkers or mobility canes
- People who encounter fatigue, confusion, interpretation, perception or cognitive issues
- People of gender identity, body image, medical or personal preferences
- Nursing or pregnant woman
- Families with infants or children who use strollers
- Service or emergency services personnel

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO DISABILITY COMMUNITY WHEN YOUR CLUB/COACHES MAKE CHANGES TO SUPPORT THEIR DISABILITY. OR IF A CLUB/COACH ACTIVELY SHIFTS SOMETHING TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE?

"Tennis is a sport for everybody, and when clubs and coaches embrace that, it shows. Simple changes like using more descriptive language or walking to the net to explain techniques, rather than just demonstrating from a distance, make a world of difference. For someone like me who is legally blind, these thoughtful adjustments help me understand and visualise what's needed without relying solely on sight. It boosts my confidence, builds independence, and creates a truly inclusive environment. Living in a rural area, access to inclusive opportunities can already be limited, so when a club makes that extra effort, it doesn't just support me, it makes me feel seen and valued. Even small changes can open big doors, and show that with the right mindset, every club can be a place where all players are welcomed, supported, and empowered to aim high. When my club and coach made changes to make sure the courts were accessible and to take into account lighting it made me feel included and valued as a member of the club and team, they have welcomed me and others with in the blind and low vision tennis space like we are a player and treat me like a person first, who has a disability, not a disability that has a person attached This is vital in so many ways to get past the stigma of going into a clinic or a club with everyone treated equally

Our biggest challenge when joining non blind or low vision groups is that we are often left to fend for ourselves and told we will do what we can.

I am proud to say my coach and club are not one of those groups." **Courtney**

"My coach has shifted things around to help get a small squad or group together and that makes me proud to call that club and coach my home of tennis. They have even expressed interest in holding local events or tournaments in our off season from tennis world. They have been a great part of my BLV journey so far and I can only see greater interest coming in the future." **Tye**

"We were struggling to find a coach to support Madison. Maddys previous coach did not try to understand her condition, neither tried to modify his coaching style, provide the right equipment or even just believed in her. Maddy was becoming disengaged with the sport. Finding a coach and a club that is supportive, means that Maddy feels valued as a genuine player. To walk into a session that has the right balls, right size court, modified coaching style but still has high expectations means that she is just as important as any other player. She doesn't feel like a second class citizen. The equipment and attitude of the coach/club provides an equitable base. It is also motivating to be supported by people who believe in you. You want to give back to people who go out of their way to support you. You feel motivated to grow the sport and encourage others to join in." **Rachel**

"I feel included and welcome. It is a safe place where we are not judged for bumping into someone or for occasionally missing an easy ball. It means I can fully participate in a competitive sport which helps with my fitness provides a social outlet and is lots of fun." **Samira**

"When my club changes an activity to be more inclusive, I feel more engaged and excited to be a part of that community. When changes are made to enable me to perform at my best I feel valued and acknowledged." **David**

Strong communities make great Nations. Tennis is my sport my Club has welcomed every aspect of me. I see the same respect shown to others. Inclusion is so normal it is part of a culture of continuous improvement. **Rob**

Tennis has changed my life and how I feel about my disability, when I see a club or venue become more accessible it gives me the confidence to attend the venue and confidence in maybe becoming part of their community. **Chris**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY WHEN YOUR CLUB/COACHES MAKE CHANGES TO SUPPORT THEIR DISABILITY. OR IF A CLUB/COACH ACTIVELY SHIFTS SOMETHING TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE?

*It means the absolute world to me when my club/coach made changes to support not only my disability but my 4-legged assistance. I'm part of the most wonderful program called Tennis4All that is all about bringing tennis to everyone, regardless of their ability. Most people in this program/classes have intellectual disabilities and do not always understand that my dog is off limits but the club and staff continue to make sure that people know to leave him alone unless they've asked me personally if they can interact with Owen my seeing eye dog. He even has his own bed in the club shed for when he's just chilling! I feel welcome and wanted and went from just being there for my own lessons to assisting with other lessons, helping with morning tea and preparing fruit platters to going to disability expos and demonstrating BLV tennis to our local community. Accommodating me is more than just about my dog and my vision, sometimes I can't handle a busy event and need timeouts to feel calm. The club and my coach and team manager are just wonderful and continue to do their best to accommodate me and all people with disabilities to feel happy and welcome. Noticing lack of competition for BLV in WA, my coach Bellinda Devine and team manager Corry Ware setup the South Mandurah Tennis club open that has now run for 2 years. I will help in any way I can to aid this program and BLV tennis to grow to its full potential. Having support and community has literally saved me, without this program and BLV tennis I wouldn't have been able to turn my life around and still be here. **Kayden***





Tennis acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, rest and play, and pay our respect to Elders past and present.