



Accessibility: creating content for everyone

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Why accessibility?

- Requirement for government content
- Best practice for web design and development
- Makes websites available to the broadest possible audience
- Recognises the diversity of web users and the various ways people interact with a site
 - Content
 - Design
 - Functionality

Disability

- More than 4 million people in Australia have a disability
- Can be the result of accident, illness or genetics
- Strong relationship with age
- Examples
 - Sensory – blindness/low vision, hearing impairment
 - Motor – loss of function, unable to use a mouse
 - Cognitive – attention, problem solving, sensory overload

Disabilities can be temporary

- You break your arm and can't use your dominant hand
- You have an ear infection and you can't hear very well
- You got sand in your eye at the beach and can't wear your contact lenses

Other types of impairments

- Primary language not English
- Situational impairment
 - You're trying to watch a video on your phone on a crowded train and you forgot your headphones
 - You need to send an urgent email but your baby's nappy needs changing
 - You're trying to read an article for an important meeting tomorrow but your flatmate is having a dinner party

Accessible content

- Clear and logical structure
- Inclusive language and good readability
- Alt text for images
- Descriptive links
- Helpful microcopy
- Considers the user's purpose and situation

Structure and headings

- Structure is logical
- Well signposted with meaningful and descriptive headings
- Content is toploaded and frontloaded with meaningful words
- Mobile first – smaller chunks of content, bullet points
- Calls to action are close to the content they relate to

Why?

- Scannable, easier to find and absorb information, easier for screenreaders, less scrolling

Inclusive language and readability

- Plain language, simple sentences (Hemingway app)
- Voice and tone appropriate
- Avoid gendered language
- Avoid metaphors or idioms that don't translate well

Why?

- Easier to absorb and comprehend, less cognitive load, less visual space, less navigation

Alt text, captions and transcripts

- All meaningful images need alt text
- All video content needs captions, transcripts or both

Why?

- Makes information perceivable by multiple senses, alt text displays when images don't load, makes the visual content findable

Link text

- Short, descriptive and specific (not 'more information' or 'click here')
- Include keywords
- If it's a call to action, start with a verb

Why?

- Scannable, easier to find where you need to go next, no guessing or surprises, screenreaders can use links to navigate

Microcopy

- Text on buttons, labels, hints, error messages
- Conversational and human
- Micro – efficient use of words

Why?

- Helps users know what they need to do and why, makes the experience more delightful

Writing to the user's purpose

- What are they trying to do on this page?
 - Buy something? Complete a form? Find information?
- Help them do it quickly and easily
 - Big buttons in intuitive places (eg 'Buy now')
 - Logical order, autofill, adequate size for fields
 - Headings and other signposting, breadcrumbs, no dead ends

Writing to the user's situation

- Situational impairments can be hard to predict
- The purpose of the website can sometimes provide clues

Accessibility is for everyone

- Accessibility reflects diversity and how people really work
- Accessibility is inclusivity – it's about what's common between humans