



**Townsville
Entertainment &
Convention Centre**

Equity & Access Plan

August 2004

Table of Contents

Introduction

- Overview of operation
- Ownership
- Letters of Endorsement
- Our Equity & Access Advisory Committee
- The Plan
 - The process of developing the Plan
 - Key outcomes
 - Monitoring and evaluation of the Plan

Strategies of the Plan

Introduction

Overview of Operations

The Townsville Entertainment & Convention Centre is a versatile facility in northern Australia catering for concerts, conventions, exhibitions and sporting events. The Centre is located on the shores of Cleveland Bay overlooking Magnetic Island and adjacent to Jupiters Townsville Hotel & Casino.

The Townsville Entertainment & Convention Centre was opened in February 1993 and was, along with a minor refurbishment, extended in 1998. The Centre caters for a regional population of 150,000 and plays host to an average of 250,000 visitors per year.

The Centre is best known as being the home of the Townsville Crocodiles NBL team and in this configuration can seat 5,150 fans. However, the Centre plays host to a variety of other and sometimes quite different events including Davis Cup Tennis, Disney on Ice, International Bull Riding, the Pirates of Penzance theatre production and a range of local consumer and trade exhibitions, school graduations and gala dinners.

Ownership

The Centre is owned by joint venture partners, Townsville City Council 57.1%, Thuringowa City Council 22.7% and Breakwater Island Trust 20.2%. Breakwater Island Limited in its capacity as trustee for Breakwater Island Trust holds the management agreement for the operation of the Centre.

Our Equity & Access Advisory Committee

To assist with the review of our facilities and services, an Equity & Access Advisory Committee was established. The committee consists of nine members who are representatives of active and well known community groups in our community. The role of the committee is to identify the barriers faced by all users of our services and facilities and to advise on practical and commonsense solutions to these problems.

The committee will play an ongoing role in the evaluation and future direction of the plan.

The Equity & Access Plan

The process of developing the Plan

In 2003 the Committee of Management of the Townsville Entertainment & Convention Centre approved a recommendation to establish an Equity & Access Plan to manage these issues affecting its operation. The senior management of the Centre made the development of an Action Plan its priority.

The Equity & Access Advisory Committee was established and provided advice on the problems faced by users of the Centre's services and facilities. An external consultant was used to assist with drafting the plan and to provide additional expertise. Both the committee and consultant received input from the Centre management to gain an understanding of the operation and corporate culture.

Once complete, the plan was approved by the Committee of Management of the Townsville Entertainment & Convention Centre for lodgment with HREOC.

Key Outcomes

The Equity & Access Advisory Committee and the Centre management identified two main areas in which users faced barriers to accessing the Centre's services and facilities. These are:

1. Physical access and design of the Centre's facilities.
2. Communication with staff, customers and the public about the Centre's services and facilities.

The Plan aims to achieve two key outcomes in relation to the Centre's services and facilities. These are:

- ◆ Accessible services and facilities.
- ◆ High quality customer service as a result of informed staff, effective communication and information exchange with users.

The plan sets out two objectives, each containing a number of strategies and timeframes for achieving outcomes. In some areas the Plan is quite specific about strategies and outcomes. However, in other areas the plan identifies a need for further review, research and audits to ascertain the full extent of the barriers and possible solutions.

Any commitment given to undertake work is subject to financial capability and also approval by the Committee of Management.

Monitoring and evaluation of the Plan

The effective implementation and evaluation of the plan will be maintained by ongoing monitoring. The plan will be monitored at six monthly intervals for the first 12 months and annually thereafter on the anniversary of the lodgment of the plan.

The Equity & Access Advisory Committee will be formally involved in the review of the plan along with Centre management.

The evaluation will recommend any changes to ongoing objectives, strategies and outcomes and will also incorporate any changes necessary due to external or internal factors.

Strategies of the Plan

Objective 1

To create a physical environment at the Townsville Entertainment & Convention Centre which is barrier free for all users.

Outcome	Strategy	Action	Respons- ibility	Proposed Timeline
Seating available at the drop off area at the front of the Centre.	Identify, with consultation, the most appropriate seating to be provided.	Install seating at the drop off area.	General Manager	In the FY concluding July 2005.
The exterior and interior of the Centre meets the needs of people with vision impairment.	Engage a consultant to audit the existing facilities.	<p>Ensure the following considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Installing tactile markings on the path of travel at change of direction and road crossings; ◆ Reviewing and altering signage to maximise readability. ◆ Auditing the lighting levels and stair contrasts in the auditorium. <p>Plan and budget work to be undertaken.</p>	General Manager	In the FY concluding July 2005 with the exception of the signage which will be ongoing as signage requires updating.

Adequate provision of low height counters.	Engage an architect to determine design solutions, scope of works and costs to modify existing facilities.	Ensure low height counters are provided where space and practicality permits, at existing food & beverage outlets, box office and public phone.	General Manager	In the FY concluding July 2005.
Easy access for users moving from the Palm or Magnetic rooms onto the respective outside terraces.	Install ramps at each of these locations.	Engage a contractor to provide and install ramps.	General Manager	In the FY concluding July 2005.
Accessible toilet facilities.	Engage a consultant to conduct an audit of the Centre's existing toilet facilities.	<p>Review audit results.</p> <p>Engage an architect to determine design solutions, scope of works and costs to meet the requirements identified above, if appropriate.</p> <p>Plan and budget work to the undertaken.</p>	General Manager	<p>Audit to be concluded by July 2005.</p> <p>Design solution to be provided by December 2005.</p> <p>Undertake works identified commencing January 2006-June 2007.</p>

<p>The provision of a hearing augmentation device.</p>	<p>Identify, with consultation, the best device for the Centre.</p>	<p>Installation of a hearing augmentation device.</p>	<p>General Manager</p>	<p>In FY concluding July 2005.</p>
<p>The provision of a range of seating options in the auditorium for all users of the Centre.</p>	<p>Engage an architect to determine design solutions, scope of works and costs to modify or add to the existing seating and the provision of suitable access to the auditorium.</p>	<p>Particular consideration to be given to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Seating which allows families or groups, of up to 6 persons, with disabled members to be seated together; ◆ Persons with sight or posture problems; ◆ The solution must suit both in-the-round and end stage modes of the auditorium. <p>Plan and budget work to the undertaken.</p>	<p>General Manager</p>	<p>Design solution to be provided by December 2005.</p> <p>Undertake works identified commencing January 2006-June 2009.</p>

Objective 2

To provide the highest quality customer service to people with disabilities.

Outcome	Strategy	Action	Responsibility	Timeline
Staff better able to provide quality service to people with disabilities and their attendants.	Improved staff training.	Undertake disability awareness training for all Front of House staff to improve venue knowledge and confidence when dealing with patrons with disabilities. There will be specific focus on the Box Office Attendants during this training.	Client Services Manager	Implementation prior to 2004/2005 basketball season and annually thereafter.
Managerial support of the implementation of the Equity & Access Plan.	Ongoing information sessions and active participation in the implementation of the plan.	Undertake information sessions to ensure a high level of awareness and support of the plan. Delegation of responsibility for areas in the plan, where appropriate.	General Manager	Immediately plan is formalized, and ongoing thereafter.

<p>Information about the facilities provided for people with disabilities is updated regularly on the Centre's internet site.</p>	<p>Ensure the information provided on the Centre's internet site is regularly updated.</p>	<p>Review content of website monthly.</p>	<p>Event Manager</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>Improved facilities and services through regular consultation with the Access & Equity Advisory Committee.</p>	<p>Consult members of the Access & Equity Advisory Committee to discuss or seek advice on current issues or new initiatives.</p>	<p>The Access & Equity Advisory Committee will meet on a six monthly basis.</p>	<p>General Manager</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>