

SECTION 3

FACILITY PLANNING, DESIGN DELIVERY AND MAINTENANCE

3.6 ACCESSIBILITY

Tennis Australia supports all forms of tennis which includes deaf tennis, persons with an intellectual disability (PWID), visually impaired (VI) and physically impaired (wheelchair tennis). An accessible and inclusive club design that meets the needs of these players can benefit all users, fostering participation growth by providing opportunities for all community members to engage in club activities.

Users who may benefit from accessible venues include but are not limited to:

- Parents and carers with prams, pushchairs and wheelchairs
- People using mobility aids
- People with low literacy, where English is a second language or don't speak English
- People with temporary impairments or injury
- Aging population.

To achieve accessible facilities and amenities both standards (measurable) and Universal Design (principles) should be embedded in to planning from all stages of the planning, delivery and operation.

This section provides recommendations on how to ensure tennis venues are accessible to as many people as possible, highlighting considerations for the following areas.

- 3.6.1 Planning**
- 3.6.2 Courts**
- 3.6.3 Clubhouse**
- 3.6.4 Amenities**
- 3.6.5 Parking / public transport**
- 3.6.6 Thoroughfares**
- 3.6.7 Equipment**
- 3.6.8 Evaluating Access**

Standards

All new building designs or upgrades to existing buildings in Australia must comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and relevant Australian Standards, which include, but are not limited to the following:

- Disability Discrimination Act (1992).
- Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010.
- AS 1428.1 – Parts 1, 2, and 4 – Design for access and mobility

These provide minimum specifications that do not meet the needs of all people with a disability or temporary impairments. Tennis Australia recommends these standards are used as a baseline when designing new developments or refurbishments, integrating of the principles of Universal Design in order to be fully inclusive.

Refer to **Section 2.2.4 Planning considerations** and **3.4.1 Clubhouse design principles** for information on Universal Design.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

What you need to know

- Australian Standards are considered to be minimum planning requirements for accessibility at tennis venues and broader Universal Design principles should also be implemented to promote inclusion.
- The width of sports wheelchairs is greater than day chairs therefore door widths up to 1.35m with the appropriate design is recommended as the optimum width for universal access of gates and doorways.
- Sport and Recreation Victoria's Design for Everyone Guide provides more information on inclusion design practices for sports facilities.

Primary audience

This section has primarily been designed for:

- Community tennis clubs, associations and venue operators
- Local Government
- State and Territory Member Associations
- Architects, planners and designers

Definitions

Ambulant facilities – Facilities designed for use by a person with an impairment or disability that does not prevent walking.

Amenities – Desirable or useful features of a venue.

Grade access – Access free of vertical obstruction providing seamless and unimpeded access entry to facilities.

Building Code of Australia – Technical provisions for the design and construction of buildings / structures in Australia

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) (1992) – Act passed by Parliament of Australia prohibiting discrimination against persons with disabilities.

Disability – An inability or a reduced capacity to perform a task in a specific way.

Ground tactile indicators – Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSIs)

Impairments – Any loss or reduced capacity of a psychological or physical function.

Stair nosing – A grip and colour contrasting surface on the top edge of each stair tread

Premises Standards – Standards applying to buildings covered by building classifications in the Building Code of Australia.

Thoroughfares – Road or path forming a route between two places.

TPA (Total Playing Area) – Includes all areas of the defined court area and up

to the fence lines where a player might reasonably be expected to travel during play.

Universal Design – A design philosophy that ensures that products, buildings, environments and experiences are accessible to as many people as possible.



For information on the types of classifications for wheelchair tennis competition visit www.itftennis.com/wheelchair/players/quad-classification.aspx and for wheelchair tennis tournament hosting including specifications visit www.itftennis.com/wheelchair/organisation/rules-regulations.aspx.

3.6.1 PLANNING

Planning for all forms of tennis involves eliminating barriers that players may experience to enter a venue and use the facilities. Impairments can be both physical and psychological, temporary or permanent. The level of accessibility of a venue will therefore be interpreted differently by individual users and their ability.

Community and State or Territory Member Association consultation in project planning stages is critical to achieve a user-centred design (focussing on users and their needs) and integration of inclusive features above legislative requirements. Other venues, specialist organisations (e.g. access consultants) and experienced personnel (e.g. Tennis Australia accredited coaches) can also assist with the co-design of developments with architects.

This collaborative approach is vital to ensuring any changes improves the experience and safety of all users. Safety both on and off court (e.g. obstructions, uneven surfaces) should be managed as Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) requirements by venue operators.

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When planning facility developments or auditing to understand existing provision, any number of the following facilities and amenities can be fundamental to influencing whether prospective users attend a venue:

- Courts
- Clubhouse
- Amenities
- Parking / public transport
- Thoroughfares
- Equipment

All forms of tennis can be integrated with venue programming where appropriate facilities and amenities are available. The minimum requirements for access above legislative standards are determined by individual ability and preferences.

3.6.2 COURTS

It is essential to ensure all court users (players, officials, coaches, spectators, volunteers) can safely access and navigate on and around the court, including changing ends. Some barriers that may exist and need to be considered include:

- Steps to court enclosures / sunken courts – each court should have at least one at grade access point
- Inadequate gate widths – recommended width for universal access is 1.35m
- Lighting – sufficient lighting levels and location of posts outside TPA
- Gates – location, weight, handle position and swing direction should all be considered
- Moveable equipment – Umpire chairs, player benches, bins etc. should not impede on TPA
- Inadequate court run offs – obstructions (e.g. lighting, fencing, equipment) should not impede on TPA



Questions potential users may have about a venue that could determine how accessible it is may include:

- Do the courts have at grade access?
- Does the clubhouse have a lift?
- Do changing rooms have fixtures and fittings such as hand rails?
- Are there parking bays in close proximity to the entrance?
- Are pathways clearly signposted and free from obstructions?
- Does the venue offer modified equipment?

- Additional allowances should be given to run offs, turning spaces and manoeuvrability around the perimeter of the court for wheelchair tennis players.
- Accessible viewing areas and circulation spaces leading to the court. Sightlines above or through the surrounding fences is a key consideration.



Refer to the ITF website for further information of court dimensions and access provisions:

**ITF Technical Facility Guide
- court dimensions**



Ensure provision is made courtside for spectator seating allowing for wheelchair / mobility aid access.

TRIP HAZARDS

Image 3.6.2
Court entrance with step



3.6.3 CLUBHOUSE

All facilities within the clubhouse environment require considered design for access by wheelchair users, mobility aids and prams. Location of amenities should be planned in consultation with community groups to ensure ease of access and use. Additionally, furniture should be arranged in a logical manner that provides easy access.

Player lounges and catering are often on the second level of clubhouses, therefore if there is not a lift available that fits a sports chair then these areas may be considered inaccessible.

In existing builds not designed for inclusive access, clear and appropriate signage should be in place indicating alternative service provision or option(s) for players.

As the first point of contact with users, there are important considerations to take into account when designing the customer service area, these include:

- Variable bench heights
- Suitable leg clearance underneath counters and tables
- Circulation space around and between furniture and fittings
- Clear directional signage
- Adequate lighting
- Variable bench heights – universal bench heights i.e. 900mm
- Hearing augmentation where Public Address System
- Ramp access to stages or presentation areas

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3.6.4 AMENITIES

Amenities are any desirable or useful features of a venue. It is important to ensure that amenities are designed to cater for all club users. Some key considerations to be aware of include:

- Mobility and manoeuvrability
- Offering unisex accessible options that cater for families and users with carer
- Appropriate signage
- Regular maintenance
- Unisex accessible toilets that contain baby change tables, showers, first aid kits, defibrillators, sharps bins that provides more flexible use.
- Changing Places toilets are now a key feature in very large community facilities. These provide a specialise area where adults who have high care needs are able to be assisted for person hygiene or medical care needs in a dignified, safe and functional environment.

Accessible changing facilities

Dedicated accessible toilets are just one type of amenity that can meet the needs of players who have physical disability. Ambulant toilets or larger than standard cubicles can also be advertised as viable options. As standard practice for all amenities, importance should be emphasised on cleanliness and provision of necessary equipment (e.g. bins and hand wash). Fittings such as grab rails and shower seats can also significantly assist independent use.

Signage

To facilitate wayfinding around venues signage should be located at the following:

- Carpark bays
- Directional pathways to various areas
- All entrances and exits
- Changing facilities / toilets
- Any non-accessible entrance (directing to an accessible entrance)

A list of considerations when creating signage are:

- Clear, concise and easy to read
- Contain braille and tactile markings
- Placed at suitable location and height
- Sufficient lighting of signs
- Appropriate font
- Created using contrasting colours appropriate terminology (e.g. 'accessible' not 'disabled')



Fully accessible washrooms for people with complex needs can be met with a Changing Places facility, visit www.changing-places.org/ for more information



For further information about accessible communication, Victorian State Government Accessible Communication Guidelines provide considerations to ensure the widest possible audiences are reached, including those with a disability.

3.6.5 PARKING / PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Dedicated accessible parking bays are required to cater for all users and should adhere to the following recommendations:

- Located as close as possible to the venues primary entrance
- Sufficient space provided adjacent to dedicated parking bay for safe embarking and disembarking from vehicles and loading and unloading of equipment or aids
- Parking bay connects to a continuous accessible path of travel to the venue to ensure safety
- Managed / monitored to ensure appropriate use
- Consider undercover waiting areas with rest seating in line of sight of pick up / drop off locations, particularly important for kids and the elderly
- Consider locations of community transport where groups can load and unload safely

If accessible parking to relevant standards is not viable, consider allocating the most appropriate space as signed reserved parking.

3.6.6 THOROUGHFARES

A continuous pathway that accesses the entire venue to all common areas and facilities is required for manoeuvrability and safety of all club users. Where possible entrances, doorways and access ways should comprise of the following relevant features:

- Level and step free access throughout the facility – Clear building lines free of obstructions
- Slip-resistant surfaces
- Ground surface tactile indicators – Inclusion of colour and textural contrast

to minimise the use of Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSI's)

- Steps marked with bright colours to highlight location, distance and depth
- Sufficient width of entrances and pathways to accommodate for wheelchairs, prams etc.
- Appropriate signage including raised lettering and / or braille
- Clear walkways clear of obstructions
- Weight, swing direction and handle location of doors – easy to operate or automated entry doors
- Lighting and colour contrast between the walls and floor surface
- Gradients of ramps – graded walkways or ramps with appropriate components such as handrails

It is recommended that ramps are provided as an alternative to stairs to ensure equity of access for venue users. Where a ramp is unable to make a facility accessible, alternatives include:

- Contrasts on the stairs nosing to make them easily identifiable
- Slip resistant surfaces
- Handrails on both sides extending past the top and bottom sides of the stairs.
- Vertical platform lifts
- Porch Lifts
- Stairway Platform Lifts

3.6.7 EQUIPMENT

All venues should consider modified equipment to offer all forms of tennis, for example ANZ Tennis Hot Shots nets for children and provision of sports chairs for wheelchair users.

Blind and vision impaired tennis use tennis balls that are audible and range from various materials, sizes and colours. Venues are encouraged to provide a range

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Sports chair cambers (angle of wheels) are significantly wider than day wheelchairs, which can inhibit access to certain wheelchair pathway areas built to the DDA Australian standards.

of balls that support players that are blind or visually impaired. For more information visit: [Blind and Vision Impaired Tennis](#)

Sports chairs can generally be categorised as small, medium and large. Tennis Australia recommend a minimum of two small chairs for junior participation and two medium chairs for adults. They can be hired, purchased, jointly procured in partnership with basketball clubs or loaned.

Venues are encouraged to allocate dedicated storage for sports chairs and have somewhere secure for players to put day chairs when not in use.

3.6.8 EVALUATING ACCESS

To assist venue users to understand the level of venue accessibility and facilitate operators to target investment into the right areas, Tennis Australia have developed a Framework that can be used as a starting point to evaluate accessibility. This information can also be used to communicate potential barriers to wheelchair users, people using mobility aids or prams to make informed decisions as to whether the venue is accessible to their needs.

The Framework is designed to practically assess the key areas covered in **sections 3.6.2 - 3.6.7** that prospective users may have questions regarding access. Each component can be evaluated as accessible, partially accessible or inaccessible.

Accessible

Best practice components of a venue that are accessible for all users. These are typically built on flat land with plenty of space and additional features such as automatic doors, designated accessible amenities and modified equipment.

Partially Accessible to Assisted Access

Partially accessible components may have good accessibility with the exception of one or two features that have potential to be worked around. Small investments into these components such as hand rails, portable ramps or widening of paths may enhance their usability. It is important venues clearly identifies partially accessible components so users can decide if they are able to adapt for their use.

Inaccessible

These components are unlikely to be considered accessible and may not be considered viable to invest in improvements.

Existing venues are likely to have a hybrid of accessible, partially accessible and inaccessible features and the Framework can be used to highlight these strengths and weaknesses.

For more information on the Framework and ways it can be used contact your State or Territory Member Association.



Tennis Australia have sports chairs available to loan children and adults, for more information visit [Wheelchair Loan Program](#)



The Access Framework is not designed to measure accessibility but to provide an understanding of core requirements and identify strengths and weaknesses, to communicate potential gaps in provision to users.