

INCLUSIVE FACILITY DESIGN

Accessibility

Tennis Victoria supports the participation of all Australians in our sport, inclusive of people who are deaf or hard of hearing, vision impaired, people with an intellectual disability or those with a physical disability. 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.

Planning

Planning for all forms of tennis involves eliminating barriers that participants 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.

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.

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
- Gates – location, weight, handle position and swing direction
- Moveable equipment – Umpire chairs, player benches, bins etc. should not impede on the total playing area
- Inadequate court run offs – obstructions such as lighting towers, fencing or equipment and consider marking
- potential hazards with yellow tape for the visually impaired
- 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
- Clear directional signage to courts, court numbering.

Key Points 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.

Clubhouse

All facilities within the clubhouse environment require considered design for access by wheelchair users, mobility aids and prams.

This could include:

- Availability of a lift if building is more than one level
- Circulation space around and between furniture and fittings
- Counter and table heights
- Grab rails in the toilets
- Clear directional signage.

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.



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 carers
- Dedicated toilet area for service animals
- Appropriate signage
- Regular maintenance.

Parking

Dedicated accessible parking bays are required to cater for all users. If accessible parking to relevant standards is not viable, consider allocating the most appropriate space as signed reserved parking.

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.

Equipment

All venues should consider modified equipment to offer all forms of tennis.

Evaluating Success

To assist venue users to understand the current level of venue accessibility and facilitate operators to target investment into the right areas, Tennis Australia has developed an [Access 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 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 for users.