

MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Media Access Australia launches new accessible website

Media Access Australia has today launched [our new accessible website](#), merging the Media Access Australia and Audio Description websites. The site, designed by [Doppio Design](#) and built by [OPC IT](#), showcases innovative design and the latest web technologies while meeting international standards for web accessibility.

CEO of Media Access Australia, Alex Varley said, “Media Access Australia’s core business is about accessibility. We are out there talking to the community, to business and government about the need for accessible websites and our new site shows it can be achieved. Many people won’t see the accessibility features and that is the point. They are there for the people that need them and you don’t need to put a big label highlighting an accessibility feature, it is part and parcel of standard website design which includes everybody.”

The website is a key source of news on media access developments and practical information and resources on access to media, particularly for people who are Deaf, hearing impaired, blind and vision impaired. The site focuses on access to television, DVDs, digital technology, online media, cinema and the arts and access in the classroom.

[In line with our mission](#), accessibility has been at the forefront of the new website’s design, development and testing. The site has been built to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 level ‘AA’ using Drupal content management system. In addition to its development by experienced developers of accessible websites, the site has undergone automatic as well as real world testing for accessibility.

Media Access Australia’s New Media Manager, Sarah Pulis said, “We didn’t compromise any of the website’s functionality to meet the ‘AA’ guidelines. A common myth is that an accessible website must be a boring website, a myth that desperately needs debunking. For instance, we wanted a rotating feature on our homepage. We worked with both our designers and developers to ensure the feature met WCAG 2.0 ‘AA’ guidelines and also tested it with users.”

Our brand research showed confusion over the ‘New media’ section. You will now find this content and much more in two new sections, [‘Digital technology’](#) and [‘Online media’](#). Digital technology contains information on accessible mainstream devices and technologies that make your computer accessible, for example, software and assistive technology devices.

The Online Media section focuses on the internet itself. Here you’ll find information on website accessibility and accessible media on the web, such as audio and video material (e.g. captioned videos on YouTube and movies on iTunes) and social media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter).

[The Education section of our new website](#) has also seen a lot of new content added, including information and resources specifically for teachers for access and inclusion in the classroom.

Sign up to our [new customisable news alert system](#) for daily, weekly or monthly news alerts. You can choose which type of news items you would like to receive, whether relating to television, DVD, education, cinema and the arts, digital technology, online media or research and policy, or a combination of these. You can also choose whether you want to receive information relating to the blind and vision impaired or the Deaf and hearing impaired.

Please bear in mind that a lot of content has been transferred over from our old sites and some older content might not be 100% compliant. Over the coming months we will be adding more features and content to the site.

Our [Your Local Cinema site](#) remains unchanged, providing information on accessible cinema locations, session times and cinema news.

If you have any difficulty using the site, or would like to provide us with feedback please phone us on 02 9212 6242 or [send us an email](#).

-ENDS-

For more information about Media Access Australia's new website, please contact:

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About Media Access Australia - Inclusion through technology

'We believe that all Australians have the right to access all forms of media and information, through technology, so they can participate fully in society.'

Media Access Australia is Australia's only independent not-for-profit organisation devoted to increasing access to media for people with disabilities.

At the core of our work is the understanding that exclusion from mainstream audiovisual media has profound effects on educational outcomes, workforce participation and social inclusion.

Access to media through technology empowers people to be independent, gain knowledge, make their own choices, and be active members of our society.

Our expertise

We promote inclusion by providing expert knowledge and advice on existing and emerging mainstream technologies to government, industry, educators, consumer organisations and individuals.

We demonstrate how media accessibility can be improved in practical ways, by piloting innovative ideas and major projects.

We work as a catalyst for change in areas of access that include television, DVD, cinema, the arts, education, computing and the Internet, with a primary focus on people who are blind or vision impaired, or Deaf or hearing impaired.

We seek to improve national and international Internet accessibility standards as a member of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), an international online community where the general public and organisations work together to develop web standards.

We are a national organisation, based in Sydney, with a satellite office in Perth.

Our heritage

Media Access Australia was formed out of the Australian Caption Centre, a not-for-profit organisation co-founded by Adam Salzer and Alexandra Hynes in 1982.

The Centre aimed to promote and produce captioning for Deaf or hearing impaired Australians. At the Centre's inception, captions were non-existent, however, over its life the organisation grew to provide captioning services on TV, video and DVD.

In 2005, the Centre sold its commercial operations including captioning services to Red Bee Media, and became Media Access Australia. We no longer provide services to business, allowing us to focus on promoting inclusion without the conflicts of commercial operations.

As Media Access Australia, our focus broadened to include people who are blind or vision impaired and others who are disadvantaged in access to media.

We recognised that, while some needs are different between disabilities, there are important similarities in terms of solutions, technologies, industries and regulation. By focusing on these similarities we can achieve better results for all.