

Access Considerations

Thembi Soddell

I have a range of complex physical and mental health issues that can have a significant but fluctuating impact on my daily functioning and ability to participate in events.

This includes multiple chemical sensitivities, meaning many chemicals (including those that occur in nature) at levels that are safe for others can trigger a broad spectrum of symptoms from mild to severe, depending on the day and level of exposure. Two of particular note are fragrances and moulds. If possible, **please make in person meetings and events fragrance-free where possible** i.e request that attendees do not wear fragrances such as perfumes, colognes, essential oils etc, and **please do not hold them in environments with mould**, water damage, or studios where people are using chemicals. If these are unavoidable, please let me know beforehand.

Accommodation also needs to be mould free and have windows that open - the more fresh air the better. Heavy pollution from traffic and smoke are also to be avoided where possible.

The fluctuating nature of my conditions can also make last minute requests problematic. **At least two weeks notice for information requests, deadlines etc** would be appreciated where ever possible. Also **please provide specific deadlines** - i.e. a specific date such as May 28 rather than late May or ASAP. Bear in mind there may also be times I need to ask for extensions, but the longer the lead time, the less likely this will occur.

I am also prone to sensory overload, meaning I may only be able to spend limited time around bright lights, loud sounds, large crowds and strong smells. On some days I also have trouble walking long distances, other days are fine.

Other things to note:

- **I cannot do heavy lifting**
- **I cannot work long days and need the option of plenty of breaks**
- **It can be difficult travel on the same day as work** (meaning accommodation is always appreciated where possible and I'm happy to discuss online or distant delivery options)

I do have some flexibility on all of these issues due to the fluctuating nature of my condition, so always feel free to chat through the options.

Also note that my pronouns are **they/them/theirs**. Please make an effort to get these right and inform those in your organisation and people who will be working with me too. For more information on working with trans and gender diverse artists there is a great document called *Clear Expectations: Guidelines for Institutions, Galleries and Curators Working with Trans, Non-Binary and Gender Diverse Artists* available on NAVA's website https://visualarts.net.au/media/uploads/files/Clear_Expectations_Guidelines_FA_Digital.pdf

I also recommend Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's book *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* if you would like to take a deep dive into what true accessibility looks like for the vast range of disabilities that exist (many invisible) and their intersections with race, class and privilege.

Thank you.