




ANNUAL COURT REPORTING TOOLKIT - ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Available at: <http://www.fedcourt.gov.au/pjdp/pjdp-toolkits>



Toolkits are evolving and changes may be made in future versions. For the latest version of this Additional Documentation please refer to the website – Available at: <http://www.fedcourt.gov.au/pjdp/pjdp-toolkits>

Note: While every effort has been made to produce informative and educative tools, the applicability of these may vary depending on country and regional circumstance.

ANNEX 17: TAKING STEPS TO MAKE A COURT MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH A DISABILITY

Taking steps to make a court more accessible for people living with a disability makes courts more accessible for everyone.

Who should consider these issues from a policy perspective? Chief Court Administrator, Chief Registrar, Chief Justice and judges of the courts

Take the time to consider the five points below and draw up a protocol for your court on how to make courts more accessible for people living with a disability.

When a client files a case at court, court staff members should ask whether they will need any assistance to do any of the following?

- I. **To locate, enter and navigate court proceedings within the court-room.**

Issues for court staff members to consider where a court client has a mobility impairment:

- is the court room on the ground floor or, if not, is it accessible by a lift?
- If the courtroom is not accessible for people with a mobility impairment has the court identified another room that they will use for hearings in these cases?
- If the courtroom is on the ground floor, is the courtroom access stair-free or are there ramps for any steps?
- Can the door width accommodate wheelchairs?
- Where can a party who uses a wheelchair sit in the courtroom or when they are giving evidence/ being examined/ cross-examined?
- Is there enough space for wheelchair users to move around the courtroom?
- Are court hallways wide and clear of furniture or debris?
- Is there a wheelchair accessible toilet available?

Issues for court staff members to consider where a court client has a visual impairment:

- Do all court staff know that a guide dog may enter the courtroom?
- Will court staff assist with directions and/or or walk with the client to the courtroom?
- Do elevators have braille buttons or a sound system to announce the floors?

Issues for court staff members to consider for all court users:

- Is courtroom signage clear?

II. to read a document

Issues for court staff members to consider where a court client has a visual impairment:

- Can the document be emailed to the client as one that can be “read” by someone with a computer that uses visual impairment appropriate software?

III. to hear what is being said in court

Issues for court staff members to consider where a court client has a hearing impairment:

- Sign interpreter, hearing loop in court
- Answer any questions on what will happen on the day through a TTY phone or some other service.

IV. to understand what is happening in the court hearing as well as what preparation may be required before the hearing day

Issues for court staff members to consider where a court client has an intellectual impairment:

- What steps need to be taken to ensure that a court client with an intellectual impairment will be assisted to understand the proceedings.

V. to feel safe at court:

Court leadership and staff members should have discussed the arrangements that the court will make to ensure the safety of parties appearing before the court as well as all court personnel, including people living with a disability.

Given the prevalence of sexual and family violence experienced by women and children in the Pacific, where possible, the court should endeavour to obtain the resources necessary to enable a separate waiting area for women and children who are appearing before the court and have experienced sexual or family violence.