

**DISABILITY ACTION PLAN**

**2015 – 2017**

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**1. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The Australian Chamber Orchestra is most grateful to the following organisations and individuals for their assistance and advice in the development of its Disability Action Plan.

Accessible Arts NSW

Arts Access Victoria

Australian Bureau of Statistics

Australia Council for the Arts

Australian Human Rights Commission

Department **Family and Community Services NSW**

Sydney Opera House

**2. MESSAGE FROM OUR GENERAL MANAGER**

The Australian Chamber Orchestra (ACO) is immensely proud to have fully implemented its first Disability Action Plan, launched in 2012 and covering the period 2012 – 2015. The process has been enlightening and enriching for a performing arts company with a deep commitment to making our music accessible to the widest possible public.

The 2012 – 2015 Disability Action Plan addressed a significant number of access issues, ranging from a nationwide audit of the accessibility of the nine major public venues in which the ACO performs across the country, a significant upgrade of the ACO website to enhance its accessibility for people with hearing or sight impairments, the expansion of the companion card scheme, the creation of a music and movement program for people with disability and the first trial of an audio-described performance (Reflection on Gallipoli in March 2015).

All of these initiatives were carried out with the oversight of our Disability Advisory Committee and we are especially grateful to Morwenna Collett and Amanda Tink for their expert advice and their continued commitment to the ACO’s Disability Action Plan.

The new plan 2015 – 2017 builds on the major achievements of the first plan, re-energises the ACO’s efforts in this vitally important field and throws the ACO some new challenges to reach further, climb higher and enrich more lives through the power of music.

In particular, we are excited to take our Disability Action Plan to an international dimension by exploring partnerships with significant institutions and venues abroad as an extra strand in the ACO’s international touring program. The life of the 2015 – 2017 Plan will also see work commence on the planning and design of a new home for the ACO and the profound involvement of the ACO’s disability access advisers in the development of those plans and designs to ensure that the ACO’s future home will provide the most modern, innovative and engaging facilities for people with disability.

We look forward to implementing this Plan over the coming three years.

Timothy Calnin

General Manager

May 2015

**3. THE ACO**

**3.1 About the ACO**

The ACO is recognised as one of the finest chamber orchestras in the world, renowned for the integrity and excellence of its musicianship, the boldness and vitality of its programming and the loyalty of its audiences, stakeholders and supporters.

Internationally renowned for inspired programming and the rapturous response of audiences and critics, the Australian Chamber Orchestra is a product of our country’s vibrant, adventurous and enquiring spirit. In performances around Australia, around the world and on many recordings, the ACO moves hearts and stimulates minds with broad ranging repertoire and a vitality and virtuosity unmatched by other ensembles.

“This is one of the most precise, cutting-edge virtuoso string ensembles to be found anywhere in the world.” *Chicago Tribune, 2014*

In 2005 the ACO inaugurated a national education program including a mentoring program for Australia’s best young string players, an inspirational schools’ education program, and ACO2 – a regional touring and education ensemble.

In 2013 the ACO launched ACO VIRTUAL, a world-first interactive, immersive, digital experience of the Orchestra. ACO VIRTUAL tours to museums, galleries and other spaces throughout metropolitan and regional Australia, allowing audiences who may never otherwise have the opportunity to attend an ACO concert, to interact with the Orchestra.

Since 2014, the ACO has created programs specially designed for people with disability, most notably ACO Move – a music-and-movement program developed in close partnership with several disability organizations and conducted in the ACO Studio and involving ACO musicians working side-by-side with people with disability, culminating in a performance presentation.

**3.2 Our Values**

The core values of the ACO are the principles which have been adopted over the years to provide guidance and context for the Orchestra’s artistic development and its relationships with audiences and stakeholders:

* Performing music of a quality and at a standard that both challenges and satisfies audiences and players alike;
* Adherence to principles of trust, honesty, candour and integrity in dealing with the needs and contributions of all players, members of staff and members of the Board of Directors in furthering the organisation’s achievements;
* Developing a holistic culture within the organisation that nurtures and supports the Orchestra’s artistic aspirations;
* Ensuring that all stakeholders are welcomed into the broad family of the ACO and are recognised for the contributions they make to it;
* Aspiring to be distinctive and worthy representatives of Australian culture throughout the world; and
* Developing and maintaining an education program which uses the Orchestra’s skills and resources to contribute to and enhance the standard of string playing in Australia.

**3.3 Our Community**

**3.3.1 Our Customer profile**

Subscribers

Approximately 9,000 people each year Australia-wide (Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Melbourne, Newcastle, Perth, Sydney and Wollongong) subscribe to ACO National Tour performances.

Single ticket buyers

Approximately 58,000 people each year attend ACO subscription concerts, special events and international performances, as well as ACO2 regional performances.

Online community

Approximately 475,000 people each year visit the ACO website, are a friend of the ACO on Facebook, follow the ACO on Twitter, or view ACO performances via YouTube.

Broadcast and listening audience

Listeners to the ACO’s concerts which are regularly broadcast on ABC Classic FM and 4MBS-FM in Brisbane, and international radio stations.

**3.3.2 Our Education Program participants**

* The ACO’s National Education Program targets both tertiary, secondary and primary school students across Australia.
* The Program comprises training and mentoring for the next generation of professional string players through ACO2 and the ACO Emerging Artists Program, and also features a Schools Program which focuses on children who are disadvantaged for economic, social or geographical reasons.
* In 2013, the ACO Schools Education Program reached approximately 3,000 primary and secondary students from over 260 Australian schools.

**3.3.3 ACO VIRTUAL audience members**

* ACO VIRTUAL reaches a broad range of audience members in metropolitan and regional Australia.
* To date, over 23,000 people in NSW, VIC and QLD have experienced ACO VIRTUAL.

**3.3.4 Our Musicians, Staff and Board**

* The ACO Board is comprised of 12 directors and is chaired by Guido Belgiorno-Nettis AM.
* Under the Artistic Direction of Richard Tognetti, the ACO has a permanent ensemble of 17 full-time musicians and 4 part-time musicians.
* Led by General Manager Timothy Calnin, the ACO employs 37 administrative staff.
* The next generation of Australian string players participate in the ACO’s Emerging Artists Program and ACO2.

**3.3.4 Our Corporate Partners and Private Donors**

The ACO receives approximately 31% of its revenue from the business community and private donors. We are proud of the relationships that we have developed with each of our partners and donors that generously support the breadth and width of our activities, including international touring, national touring, the Chairs of our individual players, recordings, our Education Program and ACO fundraising events.

**3.3.5 Governments – Federal, State and Local**

The ACO receives approximately 14% of its revenue from government sources and is supported by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council for the Arts – its arts funding and advisory body – and the NSW Government through Arts NSW. The ACO also receives funding for regional touring from the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.

**3.3.6 Our Suppliers**

The ACO engages with a large number of external suppliers, from IT services to office cleaning and catering. Many of these suppliers are on long-term agreements with the ACO, while others are short-term or project specific. Their services are supplied to the ACO in a number of ways, either physically or online, within the ACO’s offices, by telephone or in external locations where the ACO performs.

**3.3.7** **Our Venues and External Box Offices**

The ACO currently performs a total of 76 subscriber concerts nationally spread over ten major performing arts venues throughout Australia and ACO2 performs in approximately 15 regional venues throughout Australia each year ranging from regional performing arts centres to community halls.

**3.4 Our Commitment to Disability and Access**

The ACO is an equal employment opportunity employer, as articulated in the ACO’s Policies and Procedures Manual.

The ACO is committed to giving every job applicant and employee ‘a fair go’. The ACO is also committed to providing equal employment opportunity to all potential and existing employees in relation to their recruitment, promotion, transfer, remuneration and conditions of employment, training, working environment, termination and redundancy throughout the course of their employment with the ACO.

The ACO will not discriminate against any employee regardless of their disability and has a Complaint Procedure as part of is Equal Employment Opportunity Policy to address any complaints under the Policy.

The ACO recognises that people with disability have the right not to disclose their impairment.

The ACO is committed to making our information and services available to people with disability. When developing responsibilities and access for people with disability, the ACO identifies the following as key roles. These are:

* as a provider of information - introduce just policy and procedures into our core business practice;
* as an arts presenter, venue hirer and provider of services - strive for equity of access to all performances and events; and
* as an employer - develop skills with staff through training to communicate effectively with people with disability whilst providing a work place of equal opportunity.

**4. OUR ACCESSIBILITY VISION**

The ACO’s mission is to inspire and challenge audiences everywhere through the music we play.

As one of Australia’s leading arts organisations, it is our vision to remove barriers to our organisation for people with disability to participate fully in our activities and programs.

We will achieve this through:

1. Leadership – including being an Equal Opportunity Employer;
2. Accessibility – of our information, our customer service and the venues in which we perform; and
3. Performances and Programming.

**5. DISABILITY DATA**

**Definition of disability**

**The ACO has taken these definitions and information into account when developing its Disability Action Plan.**

The *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act* 1992 (DDA) contains the most widely used definition of “disability”. This definition is broad-ranging and covers physical, sensory, intellectual and psychological impairment. The DDA definition includes:

* total or partial loss of the person’s bodily or mental functions; or
* total or partial loss of a part of the body; or
* the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness; or
* the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness; or
* the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person’s body; or
* a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction; or
* a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person’s thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour.

In addition the *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities* states:

* Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."

The Australian Bureau of Statistics states that four million people in Australia (18.5% or approximately 1 in 5 Australians) reported having a disability in 2012, according to the results of the [Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers (SDAC)](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs%40.nsf/Latestproducts/A813E50F4C45A338CA257C21000E4F36?opendocument).

**6. POLICY CONTEXT**

Currently there is an encouraging national policy environment with a focus on the rights of people with disability that includes:

* [National Disability Strategy 2010-2020](https://www.dss.gov.au/our-responsibilities/disability-and-carers/publications-articles/policy-research/national-disability-strategy-2010-2020)
* National Arts and Disability Strategy (2010)
* [Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act (1992)](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2014C00013)
* [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities/convention/conventionfull.shtml) (ratified by the Australian Government in 2007)
* [Disability Inclusion Act 2014 No.41](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/viewtop/inforce/act%2B41%2B2014%2Bcd%2B0%2BN/?autoquery=(Content%3D((%22disability%22)))%20AND%20((Type%3D%22act%22%20AND%20Repealed%3D%22N%22)%20OR%20(Type%3D%22subordleg%22%20AND%20Repealed%3D%22N%22))%20AND%20(%22Historical%20Document%22%3D%220%22)&dq=Document%20Types%3D%22%3Cspan%20class%3D%22dq%22%3EActs%3C%2Fspan%3E,%20%3Cspan%20class%3D%22dq%22%3ERegs%3C%2Fspan%3E%22,%20Search%20In%3D%22%3Cspan%20class%3D%22dq%22%3EText%3C%2Fspan%3E%22,%20All%20Words%3D%22%3Cspan%20class%3D%22dq%22%3Edisability%3C%2Fspan%3E%22&fullquery=(((%22disability%22)))) (this replaces the Disability Services Act 1993. The new Act takes a human rights approach with people with disability, with the Act’s objects, principles and definition of disability aligning with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
* World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/)
* [Stronger Together: A new direction for disability services in NSW, 2006-2016](http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/file/0004/227866/StrongerTogetherPlan_2.pdf) is a 10-year plan to provide greater assistance and long-term practical solutions for people with disability and their families.
* NSW Ageing Disability & Home Care has launched [Guidelines for disability action planning by NSW Government agencies](http://www.adhc.nsw.gov.au/about_us/strategies/disability_action_planning/guidelines_for_disability_action_planning) to provide a flexible framework and suggested good practice for agencies to use in developing and implementing effective Disability Action Plans.
* [Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2011C00214)

The ACO values the importance of each person’s individual right to participate in the culture of Australia. It is for this reason that ACO has implemented and continues to evolve a Disability Action Plan, in order to identify and implement changes to our policy, programs and operations which address equal access for all. We have consulted all the policies listed above in drafting our Disability Action Plan 2015-2017.

**7. CONSULTATION**

The ACO consulted with internal and external stakeholders to develop this Plan. These included ACO administration staff and musicians, specific venues, ACO partners, ACO Disability Advisory Committee, ACO audience members with disability and arts and disability organisations.

The consultation process ranged from meetings with ACO staff, musicians and Disability Advisory Committee; discussions with the management of the venues at which the ACO performs; a comprehensive survey of ACO audience members with disability; discussions with participants in our ACO MOVE program; discussions with staff members from schools who participate in our open rehearsals for students with disability and advice from arts and disability organisations.

The consultation process will continue throughout the life of this Plan and inform its rollout as well as the development of the next ACO Disability Action Plan. In particular, there were 70 respondents to the Disability Survey to Stakeholders in 2014 and the ACO will go back to this focus group for further advice in the future.

As plans for a new home (including a public performance space) for the ACO develop, we will ensure representation of our Disability Advisory Committee on our Building Committee.

**8. DISABILITY ACCESS ACHIEVEMENTS AND INITIATIVES TO DATE**

* Open rehearsals for students who are blind or have vision impairment held annually in association with International Day of People with Disability;
* Access symbols on individual constituent’s accounts in its database system (Tessitura) to better recognise customers with disability;
* Lobbying of venues and box offices to heighten the need for better access to information and services for people with disability;
* Support of fundraising events for disability organisations including Cerebral Palsy Alliance NSW, Down Syndrome NSW by providing concert tickets and merchandise;
* National Companion Card affiliate;
* Affiliate of the Scheme Ticket incentive offered to members of Arts Access Victoria;
* Innovative conceptual ways of presenting concerts and Education Programs, for example videos of particular concerts uploaded to YouTube, the development of the ACO VIRTUAL Orchestra, Skype music lessons with ACO musicians, Open Rehearsals via video conferencing and auditions for the ACO Academy via YouTube;
* The ACO’s Customer Relations Manager, Dean Watson, has undertaken accredited disability staff training with Accessible Arts NSW, is a current member of Accessing the Arts Group, was an attendee at the music forum developed in association with Accessible Arts NSW, and attended the City of Sydney’s City Access Forum;
* An Accessibility Audit of the ACO’s website;
* The formation and regular meeting of an ACO Disability Advisory Committee;
* The creation of ACO Move – music and movement classes for adolescents with disability;
* The acquisition of string instruments for use in when presenting sensory and tactile classes for students with disability;
* The expansion of “best priced ticket” program for people with disability via Accessible Arts NSW.

**9. ACTION PLAN 2015 - 2017**

Within this Plan, individual actions and outcomes are assigned to specific members of the administration along with a timeline for delivery and review.

**9.1 2015 Outcomes**

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| **Goal** | **Action** | **By Whom** | **By When** | **Review**  | **KPI** |
| Leadership | Develop a new ticketing incentive with Accessible Arts NSW | Inclusion Coordinator, Box Office Manager | 31 Mar 15 | 31 Dec 15 | Provide Accessible Arts NSW newsletter subscribers the lowest price tickets in all reserves at all Sydney matinee concerts  |
| Leadership | Provide formal briefing on the DAP and its implementation along with disability awareness training to all existing ACO staff and musicians  | Inclusion Coordinator, Disability Consultant | 30 Jun 15 | n/a | Existing ACO staff and musicians provided with formal briefing on the DAP and disability awareness training; and this training is built into the ACO induction process |
| Leadership | Increase the ACO’s profile by including our disability practice in our international activities and publicity activities | General Manager, Inclusion Coordinator  | 30 Jun 15 | After approaches made to venues, festivals | ACO General Manager to initiate conversation with UK and US venues |
| Accessibility | Formalise communication guidelines which incorporate use of appropriate disability language into a Communication Guide document | DAC, Marketing Manager, Inclusion Coordinator | 30 Jun 15 | N/A | All relevant ACO communications include the appropriate use of disability specific language |
| Accessibility | Review all national performing venues for ACO subscription concerts and document their access features.  | Inclusion Coordinator, DAC | 31 Dec 15 | Annually  | A Venue Access Guide document produced and shared with ACO stakeholders |

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| **Goal** | **Action** | **By Whom** | **By When** | **Review**  | **KPI** |
| Accessibility | Conduct accessibility gap analysis of all national performing venues of ACO subscription concerts; present to ACO Management and share results with fellow Major Performing Arts Board companies and disability organisations as appropriate | Inclusion Coordinator, DAC | 31 Dec 15 | Biennially  | Biennial review of all national performing venues of ACO subscription concerts undertaken and results shared with the Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG) and disability organisations as appropriate through a Venue Guide document |
| Accessibility | Ensure DAC representation on ACO Building Committee for ACO new premises | General Manager, | 31 Dec 15 | As required | DAC represented on ACO Building Committee for ACO new premises  |
| Accessibility | Retain regular communication with survey respondents | Inclusion Coordinator | 31 March 1531 October 15 | As required | Issue of two communications per year |
| Performance / Programming | Present an audio described performance | Inclusion Coordinator, Artistic Administrator | 1 Mar 15 | 31 Mar 15 | Reflections on Gallipoli program Sunday 15th of March will be audio-described  |
| Performance / Programming | Present workshop for Sydney Opera House as part of their Disability Action Plan | Inclusion Coordinator, ACO Musicians  | 30 Jun 15 | Aug 15 | 1 x 2 hour workshop with high school students with autism at Sydney Opera House takes place |
| Performance/ Programming | Showcase the ACO’s disability achievements at the ACO’s 40th Birthday at the SOH | Inclusion Coordinator, Operations and Education teams | 31 Dec 15 | N/A | One of the ACO’s disability programs is showcased as part of ACO’s 40th Birthday at SOH |
| Performance / Programming | Research a creative collaboration with a disability arts organisation or artist with disability | Artistic Director, Artistic Administrator, Inclusion Coordinator | 31 Dec 15 | 2017 | Creative collaboration with a disability arts organisation or artist is researched |

**9.2 2016 Outcomes**

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| **Goal** | **Action** | **By Whom** | **By When** | **Review**  | **KPI** |
| Leadership | Profile the ACO’s access achievements at a national conference or event | Inclusion Coordinator, Education Manager | 31 Dec 16 | n/a | Event attendees are aware of the ACO’s access achievements and given the opportunity to consult with the ACO in developing accessible arts practice ideas  |
| Accessibility | Circulate ACO Disability Focus Survey  | Inclusion Coordinator | 31 Dec 16 | 31 Mar 17 | Survey circulated to all on ACO database who identify with a disability |
| Accessibility | Review all national performing venues for ACO subscription concerts and document their access features.  | Inclusion Coordinator, DAC | 30 Jun 16 | Annually  | Venue Access Guide document updated and shared with ACO stakeholders |
| Performance / Programming | Initiate a creative collaboration with a disability arts organisation or artist with disability | Artistic Director, Artistic Administrator, Inclusion Coordinator | 31 Dec 16 | 2017 | Creative collaboration with a disability arts organisation or artist is initiated and performance outcome scheduled for 2017 |
| Performance / Programming | Explore alternative ways of making ACO performances more accessible to people with disability | Inclusion Coordinator, Artistic Administrator | 30 Sept 16 | 31 Dec 16 | One ACO performance is made more accessible to people with disability |
| Performance / Programming | Commission a new work in which students with disability can engage in the creation and presentation | Inclusion Coordinator, Artistic Administrator | 31 Dec 16 | After performance (2017) | A new work in which students with disability can engage in the creation and presentation is commissioned |

**9.3 2017 Outcomes**

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| **Goal** | **Action** | **By Whom** | **By When** | **Review**  | **KPI** |
| Leadership | Develop a Disability Employment Strategy, in conjunction with the ACO’s existing EEO policy | Inclusion Coordinator, IR Manager, General Manager | 31 Dec 17 | In the context of the 2018 – 2010 DAP | Disability Employment Strategy developed  |
| Accessibility | Review all national performing venues for ACO subscription concerts and document their access features.  | Inclusion Coordinator, DAC | 31 Dec 17 | Annually  | Venue Access Guide document updated and shared with ACO stakeholders |
| Accessibility | Conduct accessibility gap analysis of all national performing venues of ACO subscription concerts; present to ACO Management and share results with fellow Major Performing Arts Board companies and disability organisations as appropriate | Inclusion Coordinator, DAC | 31 Dec 17 | Biennially  | Biennial review of all national performing venues of ACO subscription concerts undertaken and results shared with the Australian Major Performing Arts Group (AMPAG) and disability organisations as appropriate through a Venue Guide document |
| Performance / Programming | Perform the creative collaboration with a disability artist or ensemble  | Artistic Director, Artistic Administrator, Inclusion Coordinator | 31 Dec 17 | After performance | Creative collaboration performed |
| Performance / Programming | Explore alternative ways of making ACO performances more accessible to people with disability | Inclusion Coordinator, Artistic Administrator | 31 Dec 17 | 31 Dec 17 | One ACO performance is made more accessible to people with disability |
| Performance / Programming | Present a commissioned work in which students with disability can engage in the creation and presentation | Inclusion Coordinator, Artistic Administrator | 31 Dec 17 | 31 Dec 17 | Our commissioned work in which students with disability can engage in the creation and presentation is presented |
| Performance / Programming | Present an example of our disability practice at an international venue  | Inclusion Coordinator, Artistic Administrator  | 31 Dec 17 | 31 Dec 17 | An example of our disability practice is presented at an international venue |

**9.4 Ongoing Annual Outcomes**

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| **Goal** | **Action** | **By Whom** | **By When** | **Review**  | **KPI** |
| Leadership | Continue supporting fundraising events for disability organisations by providing concert tickets and merchandise as requested | Box Office and Marketing staff | Ongoing | n/a | Requests for concert tickets and merchandise for disability organisations’ fundraising events supported as appropriate.  |
| Leadership  | Continue to provide ticketing incentives with Disability Organisations  | Inclusion Officer and Box Office  | Ongoing  | Annually  | Provide ACO concert tickets at the lowest price.  |
| Leadership | Continue to promote the ACO’s Disability Action Plan and celebrate access achievements to date through communication to members of the arts, education and disability sectors as well as to the broader Australian community via social media and publicity | National Publicist, Marketing Coordinator, Inclusion Coordinator and Disability Advisory Committee | Ongoing | Annually  | The arts, education and disability sectors are aware of the ACO’s DAP and access achievements and the broader community is aware of flagship activities within the DAP |
| Leadership | Provide formal briefing on the DAP and its implementation along with disability awareness training to all new ACO staff and musicians as part of ACO induction process | Inclusion Coordinator, IR Manager | Ongoing | Annually | New ACO staff and musicians provided with formal briefing on the DAP and basic disability awareness training as part of ACO induction process |
| Accessibility | Review website to ensure it is compatible with recommendations outlined by Inclusive UX’s website audit report 2013 | Inclusion Coordinator, Marketing Manager, Systems & Technology Manager | Ongoing | Annually | Website achieves targeted Accessibility Issues as stated in the audit report.   |

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| **Goal** | **Action** | **By Whom** | **By When** | **Review**  | **KPI** |
| Performance / Programming | Hold ACO MOVE Program | Inclusion Coordinator, Education Manager | June – July each year | August each year | ACO MOVE Program scheduled and 5 x 3 hour workshops take place, 3 of which involve a quartet of ACO Musicians and students with disability, and positive feedback received from participants and carers |
| Performance / Programming | Hold one open rehearsal especially designed for students with disability | Inclusion Coordinator, Education Manager  | December each year | Annually within artistic and operational planning process | An open rehearsal is held for students with disability and positive feedback received from participants and their carers |