

## **ACCESSIBLE CINEMA – QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

### **What is Audio Description?**

Audio description is the auditory narration of visual representations such as television programs, films and live performances. During gaps in dialogue, it describes visual elements such as scenes, settings, actions and costumes.

Audio description is found on TV and DVDs as a separate language track or is accessed by using audio description equipment at a cinema or live performance.

It is particularly beneficial to people who are blind and vision impaired and people with print, learning and physical disabilities.

### **What is Captioning?**

Captioning is the text version of speech and other sound that can be provided on television, DVDs, online videos, and at cinemas and theatres. It is usually displayed on the bottom of a video screen or on a separate screen and in some cases is positioned to show which character is speaking or where the sound is coming from. Colouring may also be used to distinguish between sounds.

Captions are either selected as desired (closed captions), usually by turning the captions function on or off, or they are included so that they automatically appear on a screen (open captions). You may see the 'CC' symbol for closed captions or the 'OC' symbol for open captions on TV program guides, DVDs and cinema session guides.

Captions are particularly useful for people who are Deaf or hearing impaired, as well as those who are viewing content in a noisy environment.

### **What is the Cinema Access Implementation Plan?**

The Cinema Access Implementation Plan (the Plan) is an agreement by Australia's four major cinema chains (Hoyts, Village Cinemas, Event Cinemas (Greater Union, Birch Carroll and Coyle) and Reading Cinemas) for the roll-out of accessible technology.

The Plan aims to "fast track" Closed Captioning (CC) and Audio Description (AD) technology, to improve cinema access for people who are deaf or hearing impaired, blind or vision impaired.

Under the Plan, CC and AD will be available in at least 242 screens by the end of 2014.

### **Is subtitling the same as captioning?**

Subtitling and captioning are quite different. Subtitles are placed on films where foreign language is spoken and where it is exported to markets outside of the language that it was created with. Subtitles are a translation of what is spoken on screen whilst captions are a combination of what is spoken as well as a descriptive text of what is happening on screen that a hearing impaired individual may not be able to pick up, for example, a door slamming.

### **Do all films have CC and AD?**

The four main cinema chains have been given a commitment from all major studios in the US, which produce the majority of mainstream films, that a CC/AD file will be included as part of the digital hard drive. There are going to be exceptions to this, mainly when a film's production has run late and the process to add the CC/AD cannot be completed in time for its release. There are also a number of cases where films are produced by independent studios in the US which have not made a commitment to include CC/AD files on the hard drives.

This does limit what is available in any given week, as the exhibitors are wholly reliant on the files for CC/AD being produced by the international film making studios. Additionally, there is no advance knowledge of which films will or will not carry CC/AD which restricts the exhibitor's ability to forward plan and schedule films into the complex's accessible screen(s).

### **Where can I find accessible movie sessions for my location?**

Patrons should check the details of accessible movie sessions from the relevant cinema chain website.

### **Will there be enough units for a group to attend the one movie session?**

Each accessible screen will have five CC and five AD units. If the cinema complex has more than one accessible screen, then CC/AD units can be moved between screens to accommodate cases where more than five units are required.

### **Can I use my own headset with the AD system?**

All AD systems require headphones to plug into a standard phone jack, so patrons may bring their own headphones (or ear buds) to connect to the system at the cinema.

### **Can I book the CC or AD unit when reserving my ticket?**

The current on-line booking system used by cinemas does not have the facility to book CC/AD units. Units are available at cinemas on a first in, first served basis.

### **Are there any additional costs applied to patrons for borrowing CC or AD units?**

There are no additional costs applied to cinema patrons (on top of the movie ticket price) for borrowing CC or AD units.

### **What deposit system/identification is required to borrow CC/AD units?**

The requirements for deposit and/or identification will vary from cinema to cinema.

When collecting the CC or AD units some cinemas may request patrons provide a form of identification. The current acceptable ID required by the four cinema chains is any licence issued under law which contains a current address (i.e. driver's licence). This ID will be

retained until the unit is returned. The four cinemas will also accept the Blind Citizens Australia identity card and school photo ID for students as deposit/ID for the loan of the accessible equipment.

### **What is the process for considering other forms of technology?**

Cinemas have agreed to consider other technologies as they become available.

Further information on accessible cinema technology is available on the Media Access Australia website at [www.mediaaccess.org.au/cinema-the-arts/access-to-cinema](http://www.mediaaccess.org.au/cinema-the-arts/access-to-cinema).

### **Feedback for cinema patrons**

Feedback Cards have been provided to all cinemas with accessible screens and will be provided when you borrow CC or AD units. These cards provide the address to email feedback - [accessible.cinema@dss.gov.au](mailto:accessible.cinema@dss.gov.au). Alternately you can provide feedback to the cinema directly.