

PANNZ Pitch accessibility recommendations

Arts Access Aotearoa Putanga Toi ki Aotearoa, our purpose is to increase access to the arts for everyone in Aotearoa, particularly people who face access barriers. The national disabled-led [Arts For All Network](#) connects individuals and organisations committed to making the arts more accessible and inclusive to Deaf and disabled people as artists and audiences, by providing free information, advice and resources to anyone involved in Aotearoa's arts and culture sector.

Below are a few tips from the Arts For All Network for increasing the accessibility of your PANNZ pitches.

Captioning

- Captioning increases the entire audience's ability to understand your pitch, and can protect against poor sound quality and tech glitches to make sure your information comes across. They increase access for Deaf and hard of hearing people, but also increase access for English as second language users, folks who benefit from information coming in two formats, and overseas programmers who can't tango with the Kiwi accent
- Captions vs subtitles
 - Captions provide dialogue and sound effects and music
 - Subtitles are just the spoken language
- Captioning tips
 - Pull Zoom, YouTube or other transcript file and edit the .txt file before uploading to software, to correct misspellings especially te reo. This can be a lot quicker than editing directly on the film
 - You can save word files as a plain text .txt files, if you have a script you want to turn into a caption file
 - For uploading, experiment without time stamps as clear dialogue can often be matched with exact timings by the software, and edits you make to the transcript might throw out your timing
 - You can remove timestamps from your transcript with search and replace in a word file, or with AI

- Or try uploading with time stamps- try a few ways before committing to writing the script right into the software
- Software options
 - Premiere Pro now does auto generated captioning
 - YouTube can auto-caption quite well, and YouTube premium allows the download of captioned films and caption files. YouTube also does well with uploading time-stamp free .txt files and matching the timings well
 - Amara is a free not-for-profit platform good for videos where you need to write the captions from scratch
 - Subtitle Edit is more advanced feature-wise but also has a free platform

Other accessibility tips

- When onstage, use the mic- don't be a wanderer. People might be using a hearing assist system or just need the sound coming from the speakers; no one ever speaks as loudly or as clearly as they think they do
- Consider high contrast and easy to read titles and text information on your videos
 - Avoid light/tricky text over a busy background, like white on orange
 - Use a [contrast checker](#)
 - If you are putting font over an image, consider placement. Rather than putting it over a busy part of the image, put it into the most solid background you have available, or place it in a solid box.
- Put captions over a solid background, or semi-transparent background, to make sure they stand out; and make them large enough to be seen
- Use sans serif font for your captions
- Be spottable- consider wearing something so people who can't see/recognize your face from stage can find you based on outfit/accessory after the session

Audio description

- Audio description is making the visual verbal, describing the visual information of your video so blind and low vision viewers can follow the key points without accessing visual info.
- You can briefly describe the visuals of your film before it begins or after it plays.
- Use your words carefully, so you are giving interesting artistic/production information as well as visual description
- Example: "Under the dialogue is a montage of scenes from the performance at Whangārei Fringe Festival, interspersed with shots of our director Susan speaking to the camera from a yellow armchair."

- Example: “Video shows scenes from The Valentina’s 2024 premiere in Herald Theatre mixed with text of rave reviews from audience and names and photos of the cast alongside photos of the real-life astronauts and cosmonauts their characters are inspired by.”
- Better yet- consider if your pitch video can be inherently accessible without needing additional description
 - Spoken quotes with captions/vox pops rather than text only
 - Considering where you might use clips from your show where the sound is an asset to the piece, rather than having a purely silent/soundtracked film
- No need for self-descriptions, unless you’d like to, apart from maybe “grab me afterward, I’m wearing a sparkly red hat”
 - If speaking to camera on your film, wear the same thing on pitch day as you do in your film, to be spotted easily

Arts For All Network

- The Arts For All Network can support you with the accessibility of your pitch and your show
- We offer free resources, advice and connections to network members, to help you increase accessibility in the way that works for you
 - Suits your timeline, budget, and creative direction
 - It’s always possible to be more accessible
- Check out this [independent artists workshop](#) for a good baseline of what you might consider for your shows
- PANNZ is putting on a Deaf and disabled artists networking session for us before the pōwhiri on Tuesday 3 March. It’s a casual mix and mingle for creatives who identify as Deaf or disabled, experience impairment, are neurodivergent, use mental health services, have chronic pain or illness- if this catch up feels like it’s your community, you are welcome to come, whatever language you use. Connect with Arts Access Aotearoa team and each other before the excitement begins!
- Connect with Katie at afa@artsaccess.org.nz or 04 802 4349