

## CASE STUDY

# ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE EVENTS

Gender and Disability Experts by Experience  
Advocates & Safe and Equal – PreventX  
Conference 2024

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A case study on the importance of continual consultation and its impact on improving events' access and inclusion for women and gender diverse people with disabilities.

"A really big thank you to all the Experts for sharing their deep knowledge and wisdom. This group provides an important forum that all organisations – regardless of sector or industry – should be proactively engaging in. Learning from those who have diverse lived experience of disabilities and applying these lessons to everything from work practices to learning environments to the design of physical spaces, can radically transform the world we all live in for the better"

(Safe and Equal staff).



# Overview

The Gender and Disability Experts by Experience Advocates (the Experts) are a team of women and gender diverse people with disabilities who use their diverse lived experience, knowledge and skills to consult with organisations on how their projects, programs and services can be more gender and disability inclusive.

Following on from the success of the 2022 PreventX Conference's consultations with the Experts, Safe and Equal continued their commitment to accessible and inclusive events and returned to consult with the Experts for the 2024 PreventX Conference. They consulted the Experts twice, in October 2023 (seven Experts) and in July 2024 (8 Experts).

## Purpose

For the group to provide insights regarding the accessibility of the design and structure of the conference and what improvements could be made.

To provide perspectives on how the theme of the conference, 'Messaging for a Movement', could be explored within the context of disability inclusion and violence prevention.

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## Consultation and Event Planning

In response to feedback from the 2022 consultations, Safe and Equal consulted with the Experts earlier in the 2024 PreventX event planning process to ensure they had sufficient time to adequately implement the Experts' feedback. While maintaining focus on the importance of physical and virtual accessibility, this consultation touched on practicing disability pride as a prevention principle, and that it should be woven throughout the conference.

The key message was that women and gender diverse people with disabilities should be in positions of power and leadership, they should be represented in non-tokenistic ways, seen and actively involved. To weave this through the conference, Safe and Equal included representation of women and gender diverse people with disabilities as speakers and workshop leads across a variety of themes and topics.

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## Closing the Loop


After the 2024 PreventX Conference, Safe and Equal followed up with the Experts to report on the actions taken in response to the group's initial feedback. This allowed Safe and Equal to reflect on and identify their strengths and opportunities for future improvements.

# Outcomes

The post-conference survey conducted by Safe and Equal suggests that consultations with the Experts contributed to another successful, accessible and inclusive PreventX Conference.

## Online Component

- Improved accessibility of the online platform.
- Reducing and streamlining conference emails to make sure they only came from one source.
- More support for logging in; including a single point of contact for attendee support before and during the conference with options to call or message for assistance.
- A less busy agenda to reduce confusion of what was happening across the day.
- A virtual quiet space for attendees to remain in the conference but take time out if needed.
- Breaks scheduled every hour throughout the day, in addition to morning tea and lunch.
- A speaker briefing pack was developed to inform and encourage inclusive, plain language and reduce jargon.
- Inclusion of Support staff such as support workers, live captioners and Auslan interpreters.
- All shared resources for the conference were available in Word format.



"It is always a pleasure to hear from the Experts about how they think about prevention and they make the space so safe and informative. It also reinforced to me as a non-disabled person how integral access is for projects, a fundamental element, not an add on"

(Safe and Equal staff).

## In Person Component

- The venue was accessible and included a prayer room and quiet space.
- A designated support person was available for those wanting to reach out and talk to someone.
- Comfy chairs available upon request.
- A large screen with live captions displayed.

Overall, the 2024 event showcased Safe and Equal's commitment to making improvements in their approach to disability access and inclusion in event planning, delivery and evaluation.

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## Future Considerations

Safe and Equal plan to consult the Experts on PreventX regularly to refine their approach with a focus on continual improvement. Lessons learned from PreventX will also inform Safe and Equal events ongoing, including those run through the Partners in Prevention Network.

Safe and Equal are hoping to include more people with disabilities at the next conference, specifically, having more disability representation in the planning, content creation, and delivery of the 2026 event.

If you or your organisation is interested in learning more about the Experts, please contact on the Gender and Disability team at [GandD@wdv.org.au](mailto:GandD@wdv.org.au)