



VISUAL STORY

A visual story is a guide that helps visitors plan their trip. This visual story tells you what to expect when you visit the MECC.

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What is a Visual Story?

Visual stories are picture based narratives that help people to prepare for a new environment or situation.

Visual stories help me to become more familiar with a place or event, and know what to expect before I attend.

Being prepared and knowing what to expect can help to reduce my anxiety and stress.

Visual stories are written in an easy-to-read format and use pictures to provide greater accessibility for everyone.

This Visual Story has been developed in collaboration with Autism Spectrum Australia.

I can find out more about Autism Spectrum Australia on their website:

<https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/>

Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which the Mackay Entertainment and Convention Centre (MECC) stands, the Yuwi people, and pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Inclusion Statement



We want you to know that you are welcome to be your authentic self here without judgement.

Please let us know if there is anything we can do that would make you feel more comfortable – for instance show you to a quieter area.

You are also welcome to use your own strategies to help you feel engaged and relaxed.

About the MECC

The Mackay Entertainment & Convention Centre (MECC) is the largest convention and banqueting facility between Cairns and Brisbane.

Our venue includes an Auditorium, 2 Plenary Halls, 4 Meeting Rooms and a 100-seater studio space.

Our venue hosts a variety of events each year, including live performances, trade shows, exhibitions and gala dinners.

The MECC is located on the corner of Alfred Street and Macalister Street.

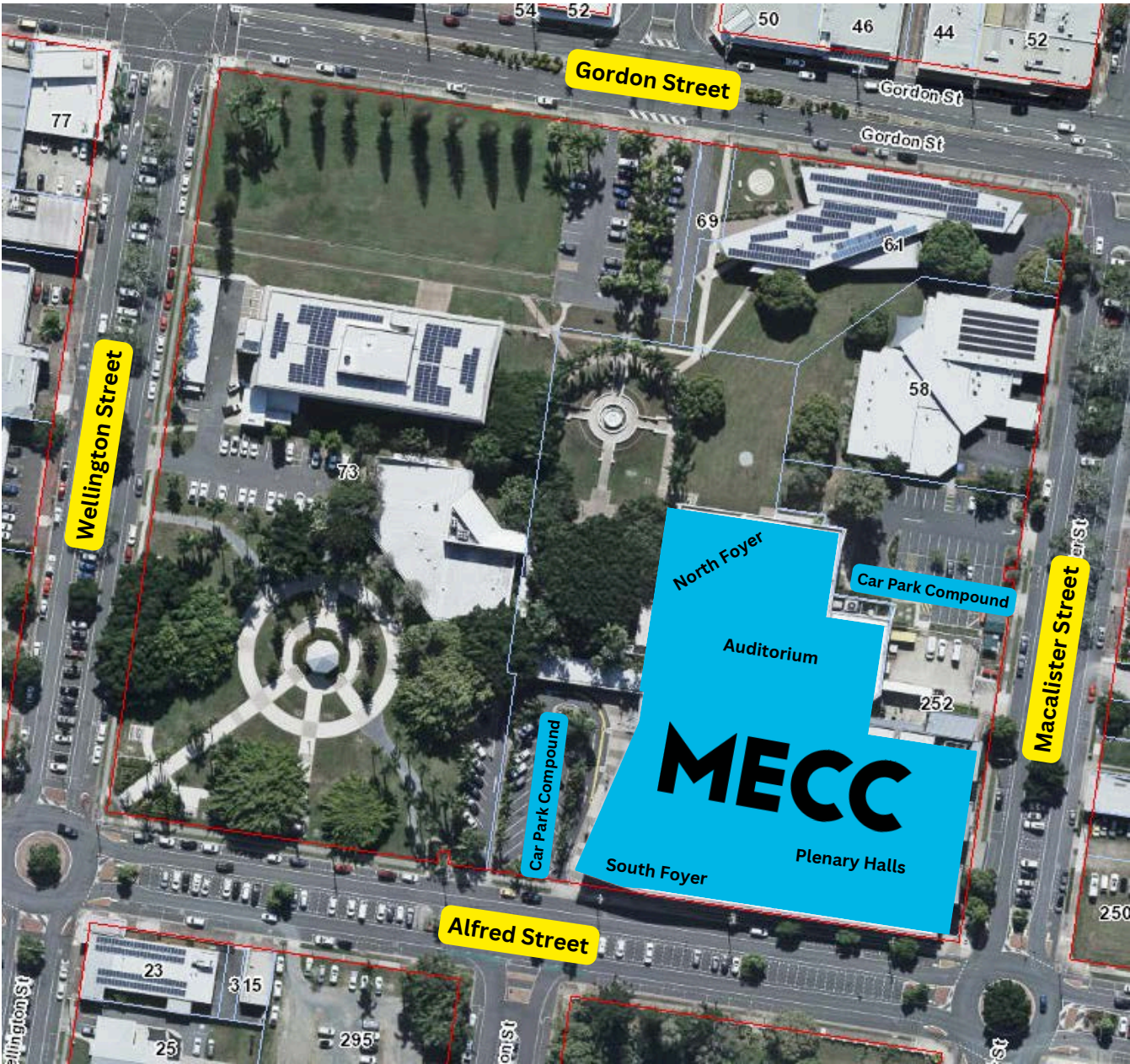
The MECC is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 4.30pm.

The MECC is also open 60 minutes before any event.

The MECC's website is: www.themecc.com.au



Map of Local Area



Accessibility Features

- Accessible entries
- Accessible parking
- Wheelchair seating
- Plus size seating
- Accessible restrooms
- Baby change facilities
- Hearing receivers
- Hearing loop T Switch
- Companion Cards
- Assistance animals
- Event warning and event information
- More information on accessibility here:

[Mackay Entertainment & Convention Centre - Accessibility \(themecc.com.au\)](http://themecc.com.au)



Rules and Expected Behaviours



Visiting the Theatre

I will need to arrive well before the start of the show. This will give me enough time to go to the restroom, have a drink and find my tickets (which will be on my phone or printed).

After I arrive to the MECC, I will hear announcements over the PA system. These announcements will include information that will assist me knowing what to do throughout my visit.

If I arrive late, I may not have permission to enter the Auditorium until there is a suitable break in the performance. This is to ensure less disruptions for people already seated and watching.

Rules and Expected Behaviours

Visiting the Theatre (continued)

I will turn my mobile phone off, or on 'Do Not Disturb'. I must not place it on silent, as the screen will light up if someone calls me, and this will impede other audience members experience.

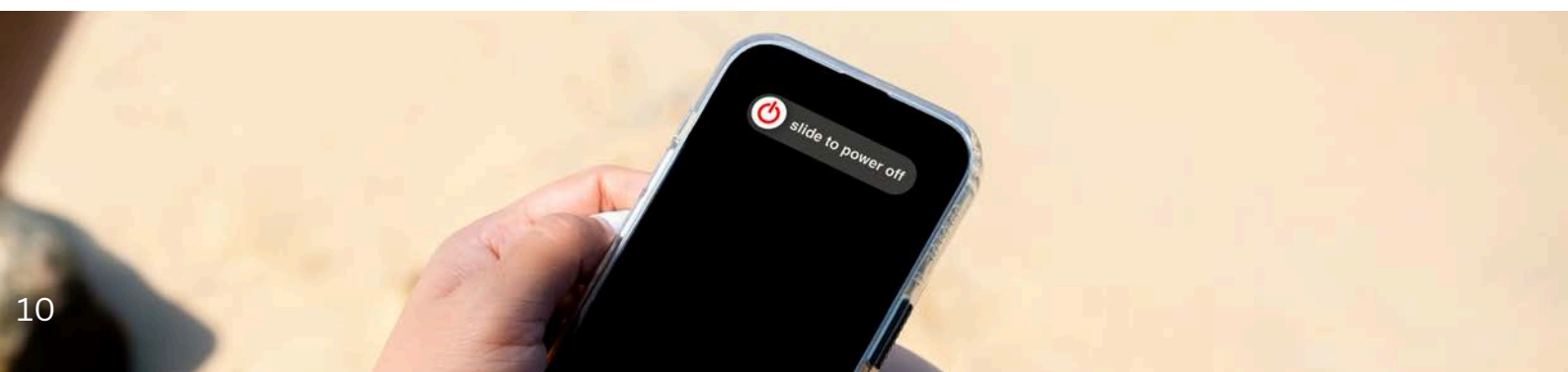
I can only take photos or videos of the performance, if the artist on stage invites me to do so, or if an announcement has been made. If I am invited to do this, I will turn the brightness of my phone down first, to help minimise the distraction from other audience members.

When the performance is taking place, I know not to speak or whisper. However, if the performance I am watching is musicians playing live music, I am encouraged to sing along and clap.

I will not put my feet up on the seats or kick the seats in front of me.

I can bring food and drinks into the theatre. If my drink is in a glass, I will need to pour the drink into a plastic cup first, the MECC bar staff will help me do this.

If I would like to have a cigarette or vape, I will need to go outside. The best time to do this is during intermission, or after the performance.



Rules and Expected Behaviours

Things I should do at the theatre

Laugh when it's funny!

Applaud when I think something is great!

Join in when the performers invite me to!

Stand and applaud at the end if I thought the performance was fantastic.

What should I wear?

If attending a formal dinner event like The Mayor's Charity Ball – I will wear a long dress or suit and tie. If attending a comedy show, smart casual wear will keep me comfortable and ready for a good laugh.

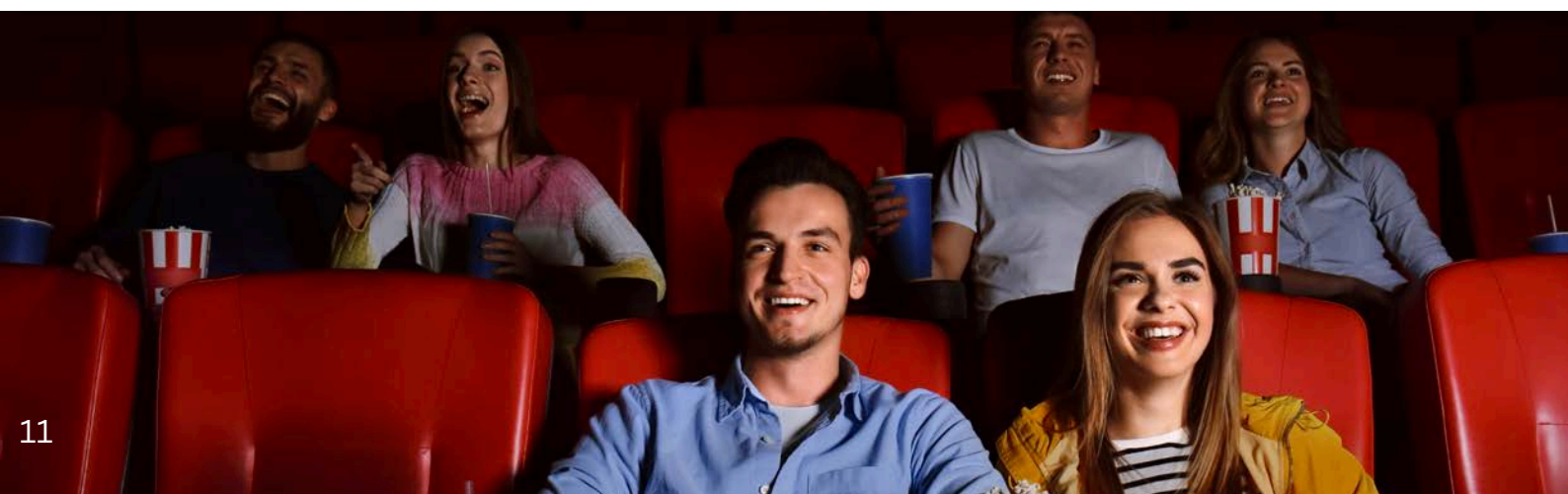
The temperature in the Auditorium can feel cold at times, so I am encouraged to bring a light jacket or throw to put on if I need.

If I am ever unsure on what to wear, I can ask the MECC Box Office staff the question. I can contact them via:

Phone: 07 4961 9777

Email: mecc@mackay.qld.gov.au

Facebook Message: @themecc



Sensory Information

North Foyer

The North Foyer often smells like fried foods, coffee and fresh sandwiches that they serve at the bar and cafe.

There are lots of colourful lights in the North Foyer. Sometimes the lights move and change colours.

There can be lot of people visiting the MECC at the same time, which can make the foyer area very busy.

The television screens in the foyer often have images of upcoming performances. These screens will change every 10 to 15 seconds.

Soft foyer music will be playing. On busy nights with crowding, I may not hear this music, as it is not played very loudly.



Sensory Information

Auditorium

The auditorium sometimes smells like cleaning solutions that the staff use to disinfect the chairs.

There are bright lights/glare/flashing lights/strobe lights during a lot of performances.

The lighting will change for each event.

If I am worried about strobe lighting, I will find warnings on the MECC website and warning signs on the doors when I enter. If I have a sensitivity to strobe lighting, I may not be able to attend certain performances.

Sometimes during a performance, the stage will appear hazy, or foggy - this is a special effect used by the staging staff and I do not need to worry if I notice this.

Sometimes the Auditorium will be very dark, however this darkness will not last for long. The door ushers carry small torches on them, if I need help.

Most performances will signal the beginning of a performance by darkening the room. This is my cue to settle, as the show is about to begin.

Loud music and microphones are used for most events. I can bring my noise cancelling headphones to help me feel comfortable.



Sensory Information

Plenary Halls

The MECC Halls have a neutral smell – there are no noticeable or unique aromas.

There can be a lot of people visiting the MECC at the same time, which can make the foyer area very busy.

The lighting will change for each event.

For an exhibition or trade show I can expect simple house lights.

For a gala dinner and live music show I can expect moving, colourful lights.

For a theatre performance I can expect spotlights, darkness, moving colourful lights and more.

The seating plan will change for each event.

For a gala dinner I can expect banquet round tables with chairs placed around them.

For a live performance I can expect rows of chairs set up.

If I am unsure what seating plan is being used, I can find this information on the website when I go to purchase a ticket.



Sensory Information

Plenary Halls

Most events will have two projector screens on each side of the stage.

When in use, these projector screens may have:

- A running live stream to help me see what is happening on stage, or
- A PowerPoint presentation with information.

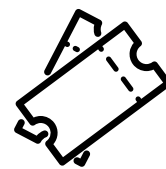
These projectors aren't used for all shows.

Soft foyer music will be playing. On busy nights with crowding, I may not hear this music, as it is not played very loudly.

Loud music and microphones are used for most events. I can bring my noise cancelling headphones to help me feel comfortable.



Planning a Visit



Booking Tickets

I can book my tickets in person, online, by email or via the phone.

- 258 Alfred Street, Mackay, QLD, 3730
- Email mecc@mackay.qld.gov.au (Free to purchase)
- Phone: (07) 4961 9777 (Phone booking fee may apply)

My companion card will provide my carer a complimentary ticket to the show. I can book companion card tickets at the Box Office.

I may use the National Relay Service, who will help process my booking over the phone, if necessary.

My wheelchair will be placed in the wheelchair spaces while watching a show. I cannot book wheelchair spaces online. If I use a wheelchair, I will book tickets by phone or by visiting the box office.

If I require a larger seat or more leg room, I can book tickets in Row L. These seats are wider and have more space.

If stairs are difficult to use, I can request seats in Row G. Booking in Row G means there will be no stairs for me to walk up, or down. I can book Row G seats either online, via the phone, or at the Box Office.

Ticket prices vary for each event, these details are on the MECC website.

The Box Office staff will allow me to visit the space before the show. Box Office staff will simply need to organise a time when there are no other events on in that space.

Once I book tickets, I understand there are no exchanges or refunds.

Planning a Visit

What to Bring

Sometimes it is busy, noisy, bright and loud at the MECC.
I can bring things to help me enjoy the day.

Things I might want to bring include:



Sunglasses



Headphones



Waterbottle



Sensory Tools



Planning a Visit

Food and Drink

The MECC is a fully licensed venue. I cannot bring any alcohol into the venue.

The café and bar is open for all live events. I can purchase hot and cold drinks and foods from the bars and café.



The bars and cafes accept both cash and card.

The North Foyer has a vending machine available which I may use. This vending machine includes drinks and snacks.

The North Foyer has a cool water bubbler with plastic cups. I can get a drink or fill up a water bottle from here.

The South Foyer has a cool water bubbler, however there are no cups at this bubbler. I can ask the bar for a cup, if I need one.

Commercialised foods are not permitted in the venue. I am not able to bring any outside takeaway into the building like McDonalds or Pizza Hut.

If I have dietary requirements, I am welcome to bring a lunch box from home.

I can eat and drink in all parts of the venue.

If I prefer to eat elsewhere, there are other nearby food options, such as:

- Foodspace Mackay - [Artspace Mackay – Foodspace](#)
- YAW Food - [YAW – Mackay Cafe & Takeaway \(yawfoods.com.au\)](#)
- Zambrero (Mackay CBD Store) [Zambrero Mackay CBD | Mexican Restaurant | Feel Good Mex](#)

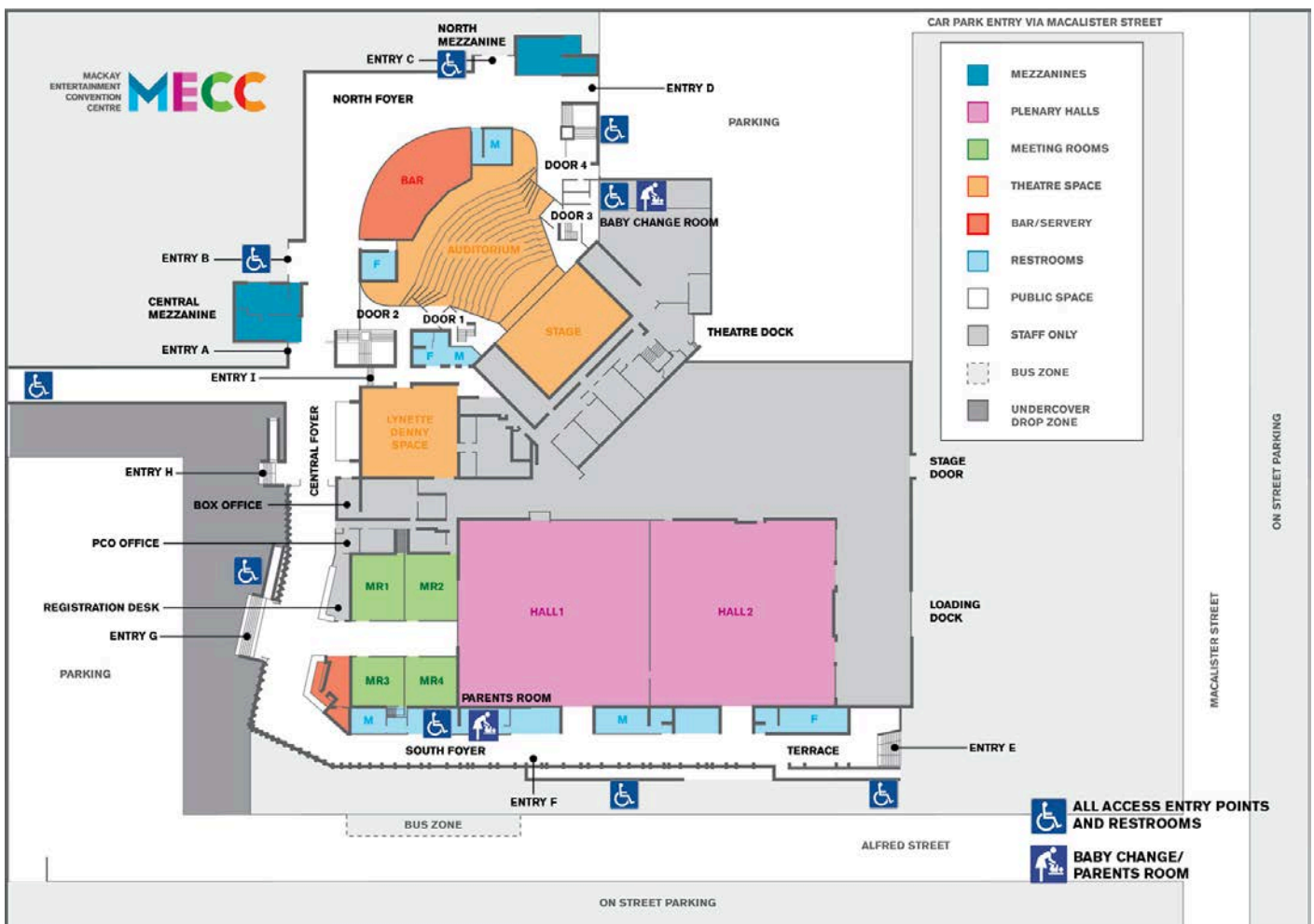
Planning My Journey

PARKING

If I am driving to the MECC, the nearest designated accessible parking spaces are:

- Main MECC carpark via Alfred Street: 2 accessible parking spaces
- MECC/Senior Citizens carpark via Macalister Street: 3 accessible parking spaces
- Mackay Regional Council/Artspace carpark via Gordon Street: 3 accessible parking spaces

Parking spaces are free, however some are timed. I will need to be aware of how long I can park my car in certain areas. All timed car parks are a minimum of two hours.



Planning My Journey

ACCESSIBLE ENTRIES

Most entries to the MECC are accessible via a ramp however most entries are closed during non-event times. When accessing the building during non-event times, I will need to use Entry H (which is directly next to the South Box Office).

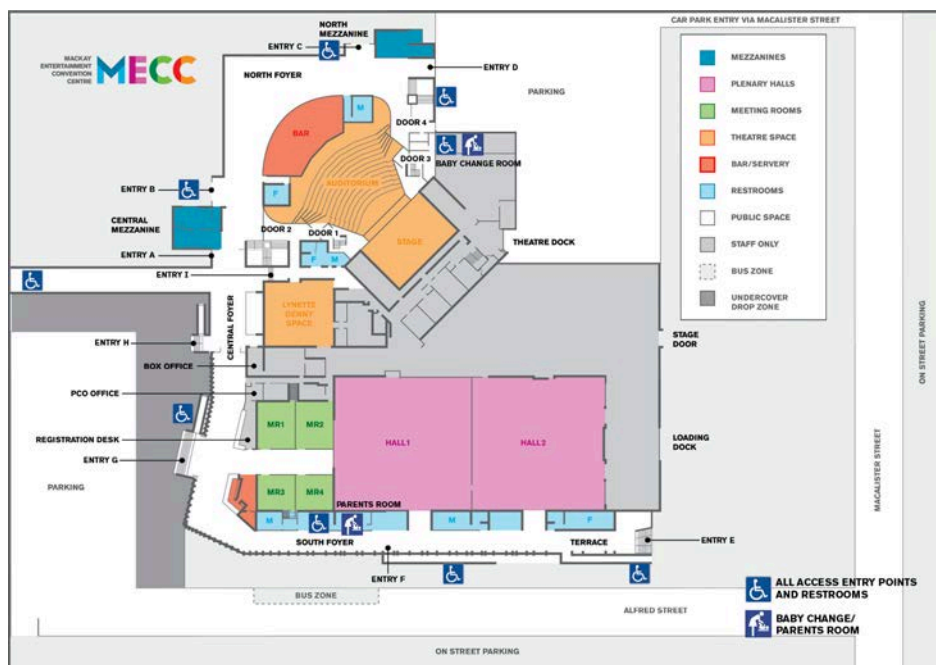
Convention Centre via Alfred Street (Entry F): The wheelchair ramp is along Alfred Street, opposite to Central State School.

Convention Centre via corner of Alfred Street and Macalister Street (Entry E): The wheelchair ramp is on the corner of Alfred and Macalister Street, near the 'MECC' sign.

South or North Box Office (Entry A and H): The wheelchair ramp is at the drop off zone in the Alfred Street Carpark.

North Foyer via Macalister Street (Entry D): When using the MECC/Senior Citizens carpark on Macalister street I will find there are no steps.

North Foyer via Gordon Street Car Park (Entry A and B): Mackay Regional Council's car park at Artspace Mackay has no steps. I can access the MECC from here, also.



Planning My Journey

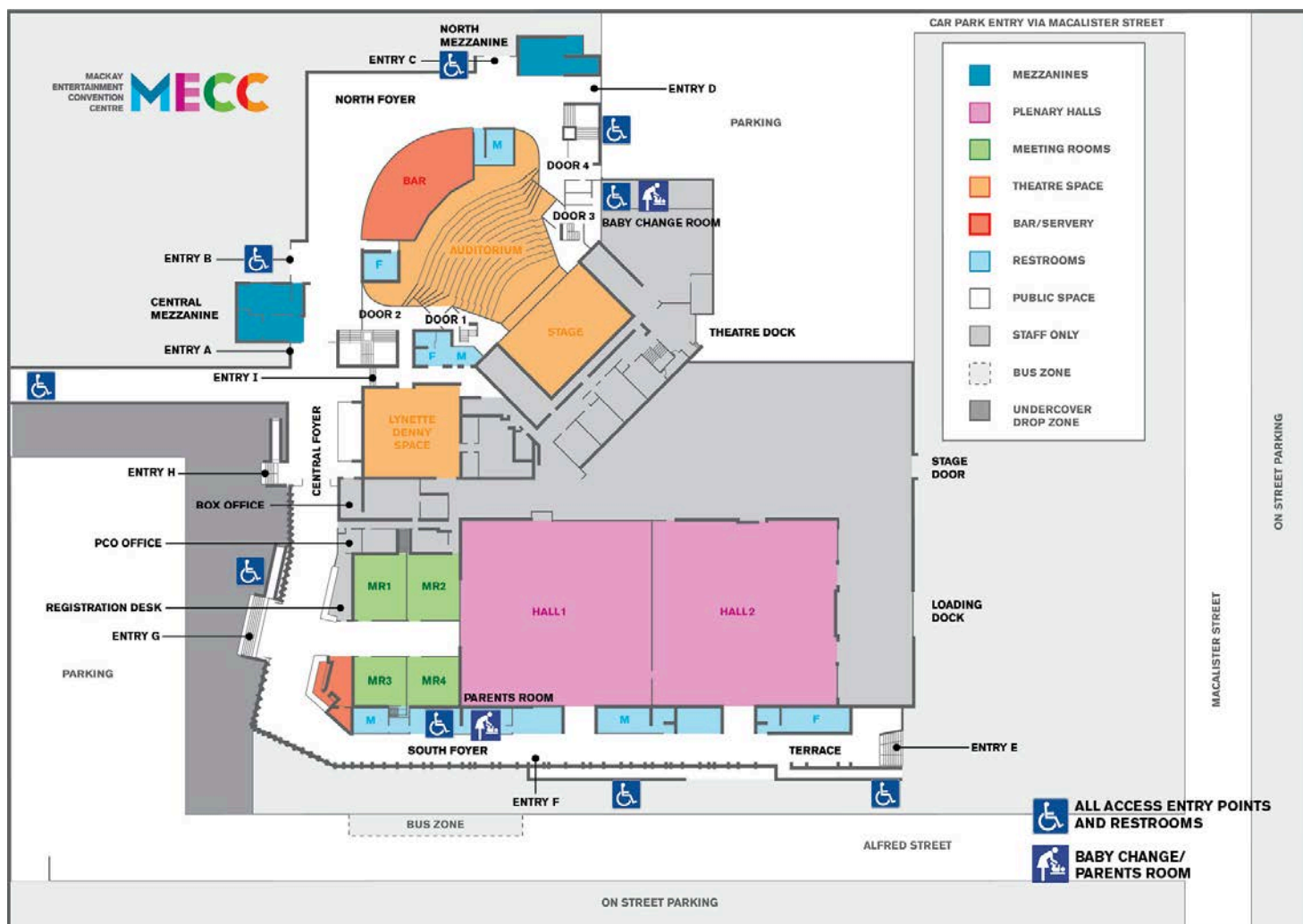
BUS

I can plan my visit via bus, using the Translink website:

<https://translink.com.au/>

TAXI / UBER

Taxi and Uber drop off zone is located in an accessible position, in prime location for both North and South access.



Arriving

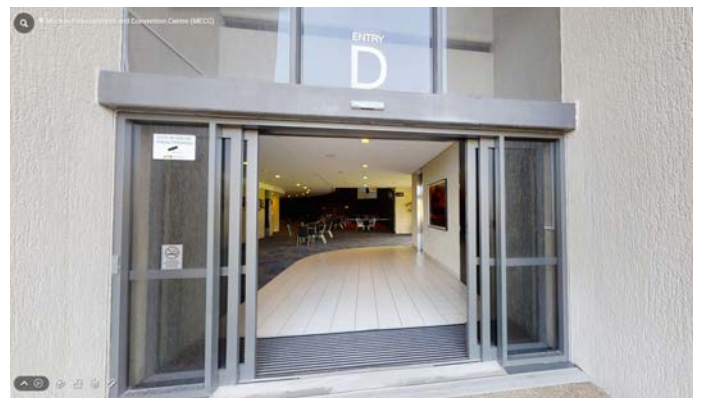
An event in the Auditorium

When attending an event in the North side of the building (Auditorium), there are two main entrances :

ENTRY A



ENTRY D



Arriving

An event in the Auditorium

The doors to the MECC are open 1 hour before a performance. This gives me the option to arrive early and get settled before the event begins.

If I choose to arrive early, I may enjoy the tables and chairs provided, and relax in the North Foyer.

When doors into the Auditorium open, there will be an announcement over the speaker system. These doors typically open 30 minutes before the performance begins.

There will be additional announcements at 15, 10 and 5 minutes before the performance begins. This is to provide me with plenty of notice that the show will begin soon, and the time to find my seats.

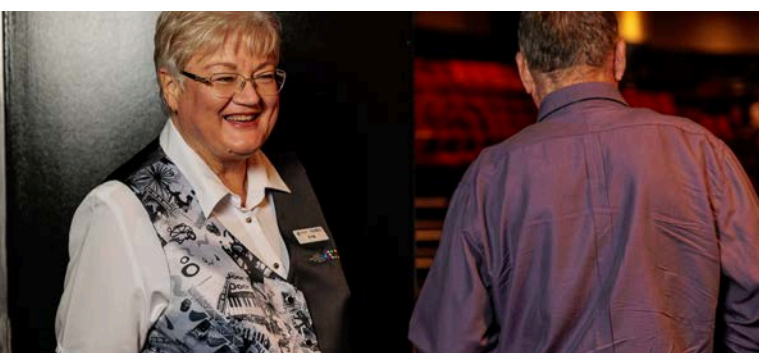
My ticket will tell me which door to enter from.

- Door 1 and 3 are located downstairs at opposite sides of the North Foyer.
- Door 2 and 4 are located upstairs at opposite sides of the North Foyer.

When I show my ticket (whether on my phone, or that I have printed out) to the door ushers, they will use a scanner to scan the ticket and allow me entry.

Door Ushers will show me to my seat.

Once I have taken my seat, I turn my phone off, or on 'Do Not Disturb'.



Sequence of Events

An event in the Auditorium

Once everyone is seated, the performance will begin.

The beginning of a performance is usually signalled by the dimming of lights and music.

Some performances will have an 'interval'. This is a small 20-minute break halfway through the performance. During this time, I may use the restrooms, bar facilities and stretch my legs. I may also remain seated, if I prefer.

During the interval, there are announcements made over the speaker systems informing me how much time is remaining. This is so I do not miss out on any of the performance.

Once everyone is seated again, the performance will resume.

When the performance finishes, I may stand and applaud if I thought the performance was fantastic.

Once the house lights are turned on, the performance has ended. I will now leave the venue.



Getting Home / Leaving

An event in the Auditorium

The MECC closes shortly after a performance ends. The bar café will not be open after the event.

I will exit the building via the same doors that I entered.

If I need assistance calling a taxi – The friendly staff members will assist me. The taxi rank is located outside entry A.

I am welcome to wait in the North Foyer while I wait for my transport home. The North Foyer will empty quite quickly, and will be a quiet, safe space for me to wait.

If I would like to skip the crowds and leave early, I can leave the Auditorium before the show finishes. If I would like to know approximately when the performance will finish, the Door Ushers or Box Office staff will provide me with this information.



Frequently Asked Questions

An event in the Auditorium

Where are toilets/accessible toilets/changing places located? Accessible toilets and baby change facilities are located at Door 3.

Where can I get help? If I require assistance, any MECC staff member will be able to assist. Box Office staff are located at the Box Office, near Entry A. Box Office staff will assist me with any ticketing issues or concerns I may have.

How can I identify MECC Staff? All MECC staff wear black uniforms with the MECC logo on the front. All Door Ushers will wear a collared white shirt, with a vest.

Where can I go if I feel overwhelmed or need somewhere quiet? I can walk outside to sit by the water fountain. The water fountain is located outside entry B. If it is night time, I may also sit in the foyer. During the performance, the foyer will be quiet as the audience will be in the auditorium.

How will I find out about any disruptions or changes? Our Box Office team will contact me via phone and email with any important information.

Who should I contact for more information? If I would like more information on disability and inclusion at the MECC, I am encouraged to contact the MECC on (07) 4961 9777.

Where/how can I provide feedback? An anonymous feedback survey will be sent to my email address, following the performance. If I would like to provide additional feedback, I can contact the MECC via:

Email – mecc@mackay.qld.gov.au

Phone – (07) 4961 9777

Facebook - @themecc

Arriving

An event in the Plenary Halls

When attending an event in the Plenary Halls, there are four main entrances.

ENTRY E



ENTRY F



ENTRY G



ENTRY H



Arriving

An event in the Plenary Halls

The doors to the MECC are generally open 1 hour before a performance or an event. However, this sometimes will change for a Gala Dinner or Trade Show. I can find specific information for each event on the MECC website.

If I choose to arrive early, I may enjoy the tables and chairs provided, and relax in the South Foyer.

Doors into the Plenary Halls open generally 30 minutes before the performance begins. There will be an announcement over the speaker system when this happens.

My ticket will tell me which Hall Door to enter from. Hall Door 1 and Hall Door 2 are located along the foyer.

Once I have taken my seat, I turn my phone off, or on 'Do Not Disturb'.



Sequence of Events

An event in the Plenary Halls

Events in the Plenary Halls vary significantly.

Gala Dinners – These events begin with an opportunity to network and mingle with other guests. There will be time to obtain a drink and socialise with other patrons at my table. Once all guests have arrived and the event organisers are ready – an emcee will then take the stage to welcome everyone to the event.

Trade Shows – These events begin from the moment the doors open. At trade shows, I have the opportunity to walk through and browse the different booths, speak with professionals about the products they are displaying, at my own pace.

Exhibitions – These events begin from the moment the doors open. I have the opportunity to walk through and enjoy the exhibition displays, at your my pace.

Live Performance – These performances are similar to those in the Auditorium. Once I enter the Plenary Halls I will find my seat to prepare for the performance to begin. When the lights and music dim, this is my cue to settle, as the performance is about to begin.

Live Performance (Cabaret) – A ticket to a Cabaret Live Performance typically includes a seat at a table. During these performances, I am encouraged to enjoy the available catering options while watching the show. Because of this, there is time before the show begins, to purchase any desired catering selections and find my seat. The bar also will remain open during the performance.

Getting Home / Leaving

An event in the Plenary Halls

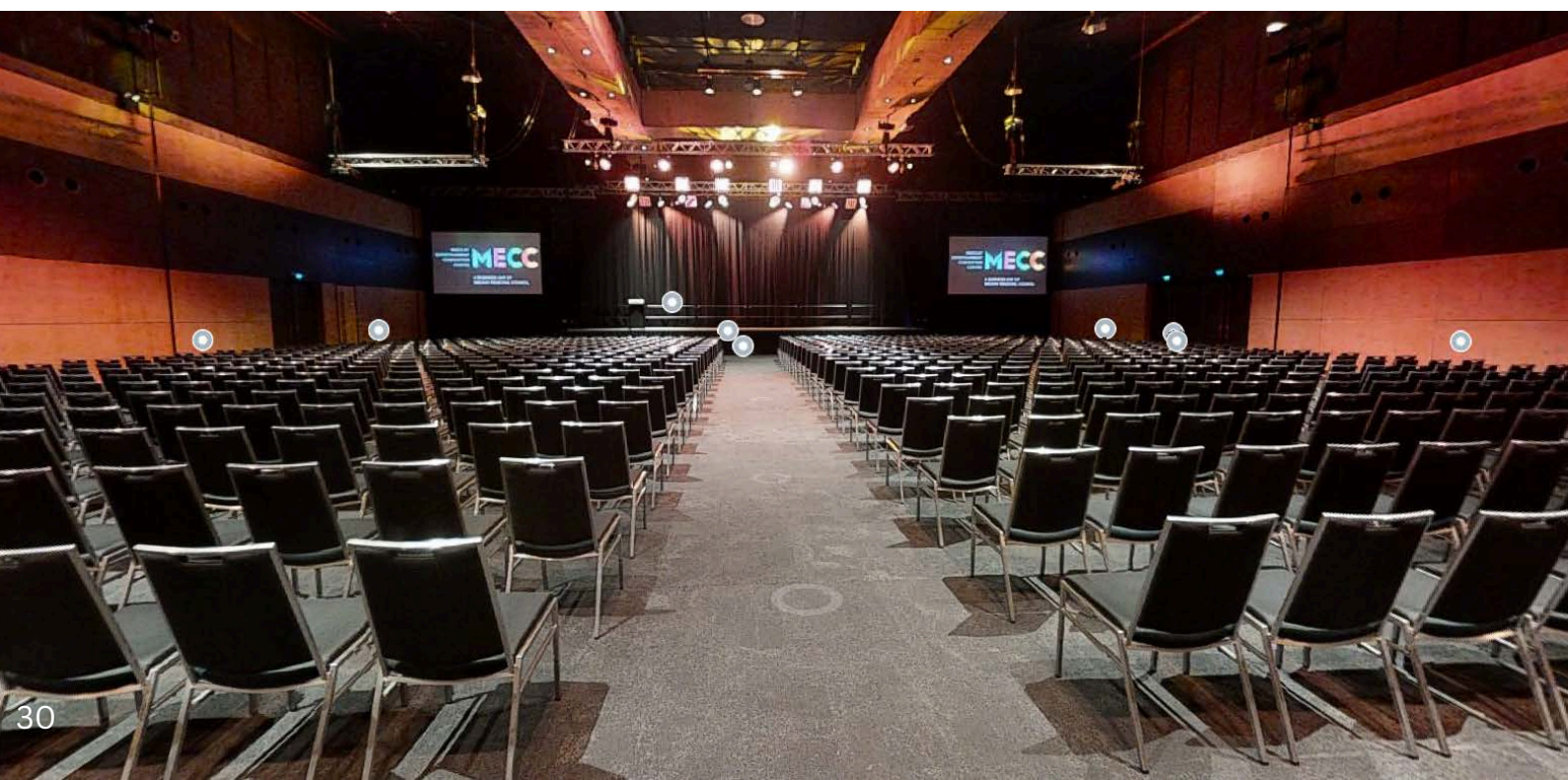
The MECC closes shortly after a performance ends. To signal the end of an event, the house lights will be turned on and the music will end.

I will exit the building via the same doors that I entered.

If I need assistance calling a taxi – The friendly staff members will assist me. The taxi rank is located outside entry H.

I am welcome to wait in the South Foyer while I wait for my transport home. The South Foyer will empty quite quickly, and will be a quiet, safe space for me to wait.

If I would like to skip the crowds and leave early, I can leave the Plenary Halls before the show finishes. If I would like to know approximately when the performance will finish, the Door Ushers or Box Office staff will provide me with this information.



Frequently Asked Questions

An event in the Plenary Halls

Where are toilets/accessible toilets/changing places located? Accessible toilets and baby change facilities are located outside Hall Door 1.

Where can I get help? If I require assistance, any MECC staff member will be able to help. Box Office staff are located at the Box Office, near Entry A. Box Office staff will assist me with any ticketing issues or concerns I may have.

How can I identify MECC Staff? All MECC staff wear black uniforms with the MECC logo on the front. All Door Ushers wear a collared white shirt, with a vest.

Where can I go if I feel overwhelmed or need somewhere quiet? If I feel overwhelmed and need somewhere quiet, the space near entry H (both inside, or outside) is ideal. This area is a distance from the entry points, and is away from crowds and noise.

How will I find out about any disruptions or changes? The Box Office team will contact me via phone and email with any important information.

Who should I contact for more information? If I would like more information on disability and inclusion at the MECC, I may contact the Box Office staff on (07) 4961 9777.

Where/how can I provide feedback? An anonymous feedback survey will be sent to my email address, following the performance. If I would like to provide additional feedback, I may contact the MECC via:

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