

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras

2025

Parade
Audience

Visual Story



WHAT IS A VISUAL STORY?

- Visual stories are used to prepare a person for and increase the predictability of a new environment or situation.
- This helps bring familiarity to a process and helps to reduce anxiety and stress.
- This visual story is written in plain English and uses pictures to make it accessible for everyone.
- Developed in partnership with Autism Spectrum Australia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. About Sydney Mardi Gras
2. About Sydney Mardi Gras Parade
3. Festival Theme: Free to Be
4. When and Where is the Parade?
5. Booking Tickets
6. Free Accessible Viewing Areas
7. Accessible Facilities – Free Accessible Viewing Area
8. Changing Places Amentity
9. Quiet Space
10. Hidden Disability Sunflower Lanyard
11. Food and Drink
12. Planning my Trip
13. Parade Route Map
14. What Should I Bring?
15. What Not to Bring
16. What Can I Expect?
17. Where Can I Get Help?
18. Message From Mardi Gras

1. ABOUT SYDNEY MARDI GRAS

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras (SGLMG) is an LGBTQIA+ organisation that hosts the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade and Festival. There are also other events and supportive initiatives throughout the year.

SGLMG began in 1978 as a political protest for equality and now:

- celebrates LGBTQIA+ identity
- advocates for equality
- promotes diverse voices

Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras was established on the values of acceptance and inclusion. We are dedicated to making it an accessible and inclusive event for all visitors.



2. ABOUT SYDNEY MARDI GRAS PARADE

The Sydney Mardi Gras Parade is:

- A celebration of LGBTQIA+ people and allies
- An opportunity for LGBTQIA+ people to connect with each other
- Held on multiple streets in the city that follows some of the route of the original protesters



3. FESTIVAL THEME: FREE TO BE

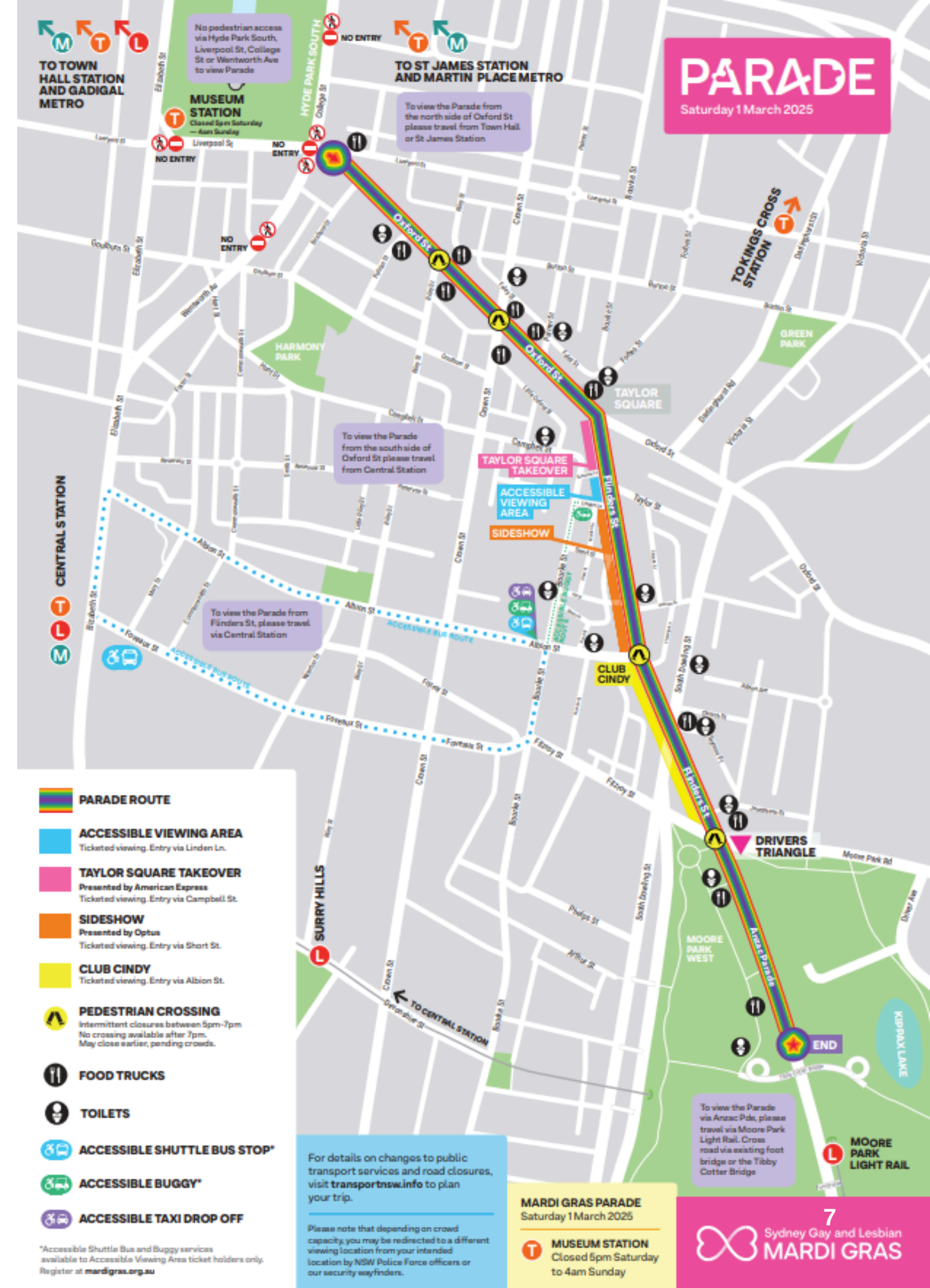
The 2025 Festival theme Free to be is a celebration of the strides toward true LGBTQIA+ equality while also acting as a global reminder that our fight is far from over, and that we are not truly free until we are all free to be.

“Free To Be is a manifesto of what our community has desired and fought for dozens of decades, and the reason why we will continue to be here, fighting, celebrating and being fiercely visible for the generations to come,” said Gil Beckwith, CEO of Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras.

“Our theme is about making a statement to embrace and rejoice in our unique individuality as well as our collective identity. It is about the bravery to rise for each other in the darkest of times and protect the progress we’ve made, using it as a springboard toward the progress we deserve.”

4. WHEN AND WHERE IS THE PARADE?

- The Mardi Gras Parade will happen on Saturday 1st March 2025 from 6:45pm to 11:00pm.
- The Mardi Gras Parade route is Oxford Street, Flinders Street and Anzac Parade.
- **6:45pm:** Smoking Ceremony and Dykes on Bikes
Before the parade, there will be a Smoking Ceremony. Then Dykes on Bikes will ride their motorbikes along the parade route.
- **7:30pm:** Parade starts
The parade will start at Hyde Park. Parade floats and participants will travel along Oxford St, Flinders St and Anzac Parade.
- **11:00pm:** Parade ends
All parade participants and spectators will leave.



5. BOOKING TICKETS:

HOW CAN I BOOK TICKETS TO THE PARADE?

1. The Parade is free to view from either side of the parade route, without a need for tickets. There are some sections that only people with booked ticketed can access.
2. There is a **Free Accessible Viewing Area** that I will need to get a ticket for.
 - I can book tickets for this area at this link: <https://www.mardigras.org.au/event/accessible-parade-viewing-area/>
 - I will need to fill out an online form to apply for the Free Accessible Viewing Area via the website link above.
 - I will then be told by Sydney Mardi Gras how to access tickets via Moshtix using a code provided.

5. BOOKING TICKETS:

HOW CAN I BOOK TICKETS TO THE PARADE?

3. There are three paid ticketed areas that include dedicated accessible viewing;

- **Taylor Square Takeover**
- **Sideshow**
- **Club Cindy.**

I will need to book and pay for my ticket.

I can book tickets for any of those areas at this link: <https://www.mardigras.org.au/parade-viewing-areas/>

If I need more information or assistance with booking accessible viewing tickets I can:

- Call 02 9383 0900 or
- Email tickets@mardigrasarts.org.au

6. FREE ACCESSIBLE VIEWING AREA

Entering the Free Accessible Viewing Area

- The Free Accessible Viewing Area is located on the **Corner of Bourke Street and Linden Lane.**
- **Look out for the sign in the image to gain entry:**
- To enter the Free Accessible Viewing Area, I will need to show my QR code ticket.
- The security guard will check my bag to make sure that I don't have any items that are not permitted to be brought in. **Refer to page 29 for what is not permitted.**
- Then I will be given a wristband. Once I have my wristband I can exit and re-enter the Free Accessible Viewing Area throughout the event.



7. ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES – FREE ACCESSIBLE VIEWING AREA

Sydney Mardi Gras have worked to ensure that the Parade is as accessible as possible.

Accessible services in the **ticketed areas** include:

- Dedicated wheelchair accessible seating in all viewing areas (Please contact Sydney Mardi Gras via email to accessibility@mardigrasarts.org.au).
- For paid ticketed areas, there will be a dedicated entry lane for accessible patrons. There are no pass-outs in the ticketed areas.
- Wheelchair accessible toilets in all ticketed areas.
- Hearing loops are only available in Sideshow. Hearing loops are not necessary for general parade viewing



7. ACCESSIBLE FACILITIES – FREE ACCESSIBLE VIEWING AREA

Accessible services in the **ticketed areas** (continued):

- The Hidden Disability Sunflower program is recognized at the Parade. Event staff are trained to identify and support people wearing the Hidden Disability Sunflower. This can be a lanyard, badge or wristband.
- A Quiet Space tent. Read more about this on –page 14.
- Changing Places amenity unit. Read more on page 13.
- Charging points for motorised wheelchairs.



8. CHANGING PLACES AMENITY UNIT

In the **Free Accessible Viewing Area**, I will have access to a Changing Places Amenity Unit. Changing Places facilities are larger than standard accessible toilets, with extra features and more space,

This unit is located on Maiden Lane. **There is no hoist available in this unit.**

- Flat floor system with attachable ramp
- End door & side door access options
- Dorma door entry system
- Compliant powered "Para mobility" adjustable height change table.
- Compliant Toilet with adjustable handrail
- Compliant sink and taps with adjustable handrail
- Mirror
- Air Conditioning
- LED Lighting
- 2 × 15amp separate supplies
- Macerator pump for waste, connect to sewer or tank
- Height. 3m, Width: 2.5. Length: 6m (excluding ramp)
- Ramp: 2m length, 1m wide



9. QUIET SPACE IN THE FREE ACCESSIBLE VIEWING AREA

A Quiet Space is an enclosed space to provide a calm, sensory-friendly environment for individuals who may feel overwhelmed in noisy or visually stimulating surroundings.

What will be available in the Quiet Tent:

- Noise Cancelling Headphones
- Stimming Toys
- Bean Bags
- Fridge
- Ear Plugs
- Warm Lighting
- Chairs
- Staff from Autism Spectrum Australia are available to assist if required



10.HIDDEN DISABILITY SUNFLOWER LANYARD

Sydney Mardi Gras supports the Hidden Disability Sunflower.

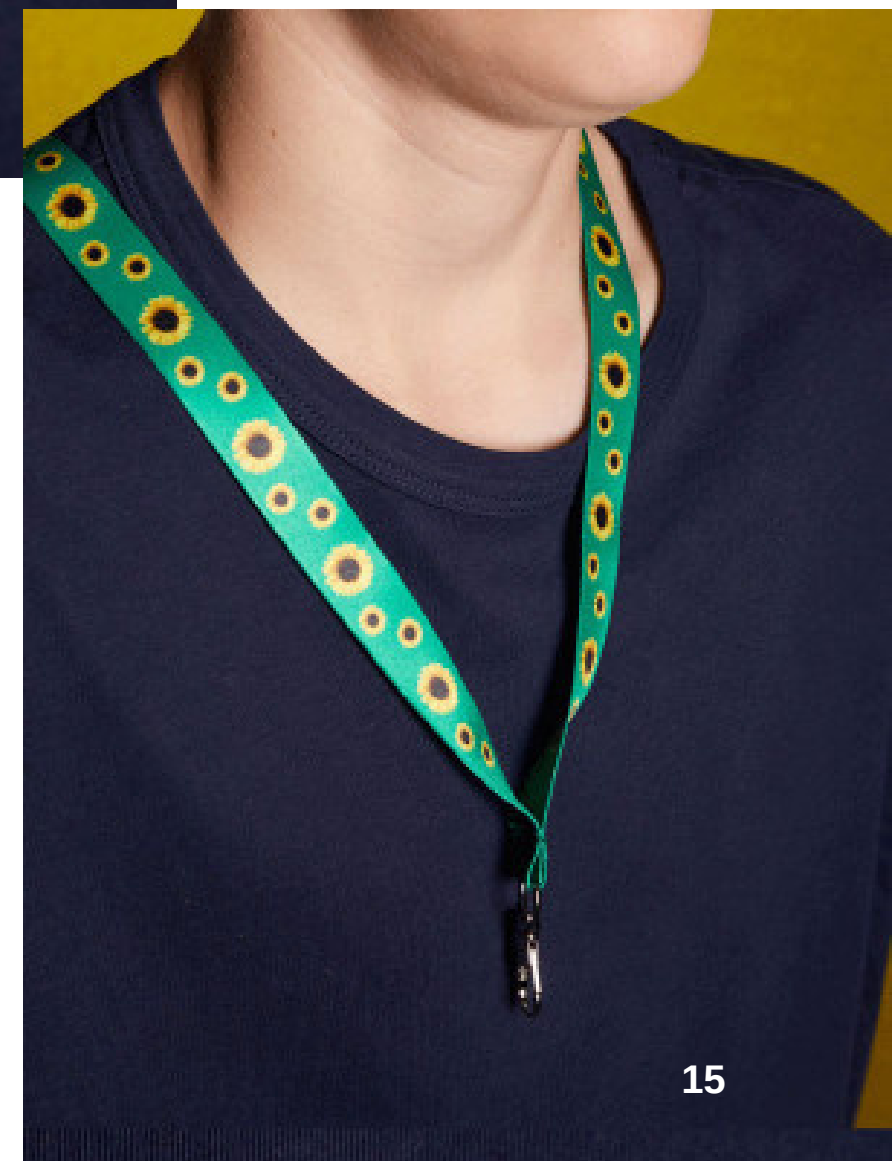
The lanyard is a way for me to indicate to Sydney Mardi Gras staff that I may need extra support, time, and understanding.

There will be limited number of lanyards available at the Accessible Viewing Area.

If I would like to purchase my own Sunflower product, I can visit the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower website:

<https://hdsunflower.com/au/shop/sunflower-wearer.html>

It is ok if I don't have a lanyard, I can still get help when I need it.





11. FOOD AND DRINK



- I can go to shops like Woolworths nearby to purchase food prior to arriving at the free accessible viewing area.
- I can also ask a volunteer to assist with purchasing food and drink from vendors outside the free accessible viewing area when I apply through the Sydney Mardi Gras website.
- Food vendors are available within Taylor Square Takeover, Sideshow and Club Cindy.

12. PLANNING MY JOURNEY:

I will plan my journey to and from the parade before the event.

Driving

- There won't be any parking near the parade route. I can get someone to drop me off at a street nearby and walk to the Parade.

Public Transport

- I can plan my trip on the TransportNSW website: <https://transportnsw.info/>
- I will tap on and off when using public transport.
- It will be busy, with lots of people, so I might have to wait, or give myself extra time to get to the Parade.

12. PLANNING MY JOURNEY:



Light Rail

I can catch the light rail to Central and walk or wheel to the Parade.



Bus

I can catch a bus to Central or Albion Street and walk the rest of the way.

I can catch the free accessible shuttle bus from Central station to get closer to the Parade.

Details for this are on the next page.

12. PLANNING MY JOURNEY:



Trains:

I can catch a train to Central Station or Town Hall Station and walk or wheel to the Parade.



Metro:

I can catch the Sydney Metro to the below stations:

- Central Station
- Gadigal Station
- Martin Place Station

12. PLANNING MY JOURNEY:

ROAD CLOSURES:

Some roads will be closed and there will be new parking restrictions from 3pm until 3am in the morning.

There will be lots of traffic on the roads that remain open so I should allow extra travel time or I can catch public transport.

12. PLANNING MY JOURNEY:

Getting to Accessible Viewing Area - Accessible Shuttle Bus

If I am going to any of the ticketed areas, I can ride the free accessible shuttle bus to get there. I will get on the bus on the corner of Foveaux Street and Mary Street, next to Central Station.

I may need to show my QR Code Ticket or my sunflower lanyard/badge/wristband to get on the bus.

The bus will take me to the corner of Albion Street and Bourke Street and then I will walk the rest of the way to the ticketed area.

The shuttle buses run on a rotating schedule from 5:00PM – 8:30PM before the parade and 9:00 – 11:59PM after the parade.



12. PLANNING MY JOURNEY:

Accessible Buggy

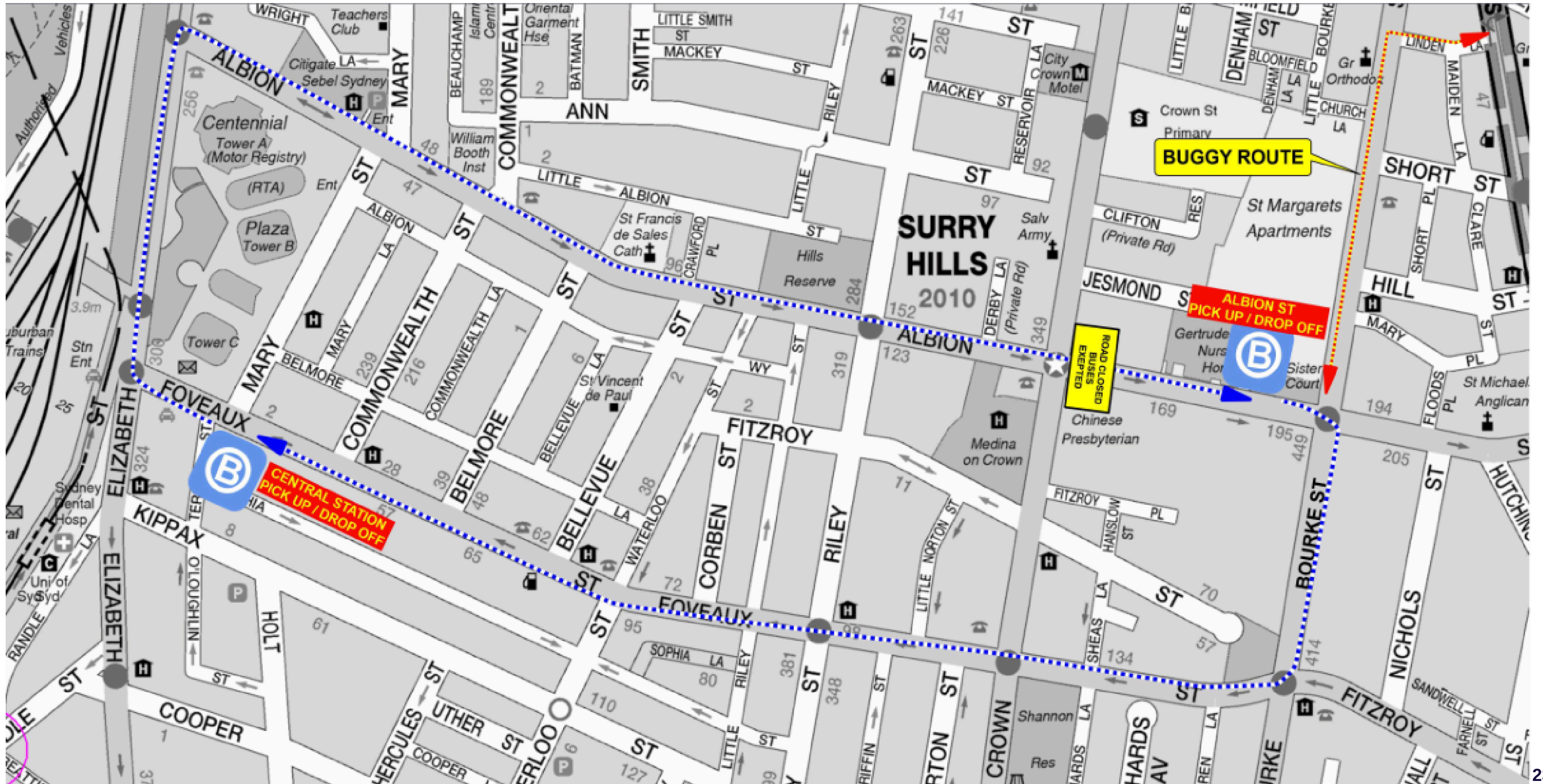
If I am unable to walk up Bourke Street to get to the ticketed area, I can wait to get a ride on a golf buggy which will take me to the entry gate.

I may need to ask Mardi Gras staff/security at the bus stop to call the golf buggy for me. Look out for signage and staff in hi-vis.

The buggies run on a rotating schedule from 5:00PM – 8:30PM before the parade and 9:00 – 11:00PM after the parade.



ACCESSIBLE BUS AND BUGGY ROUTE



12. PLANNING MY JOURNEY:

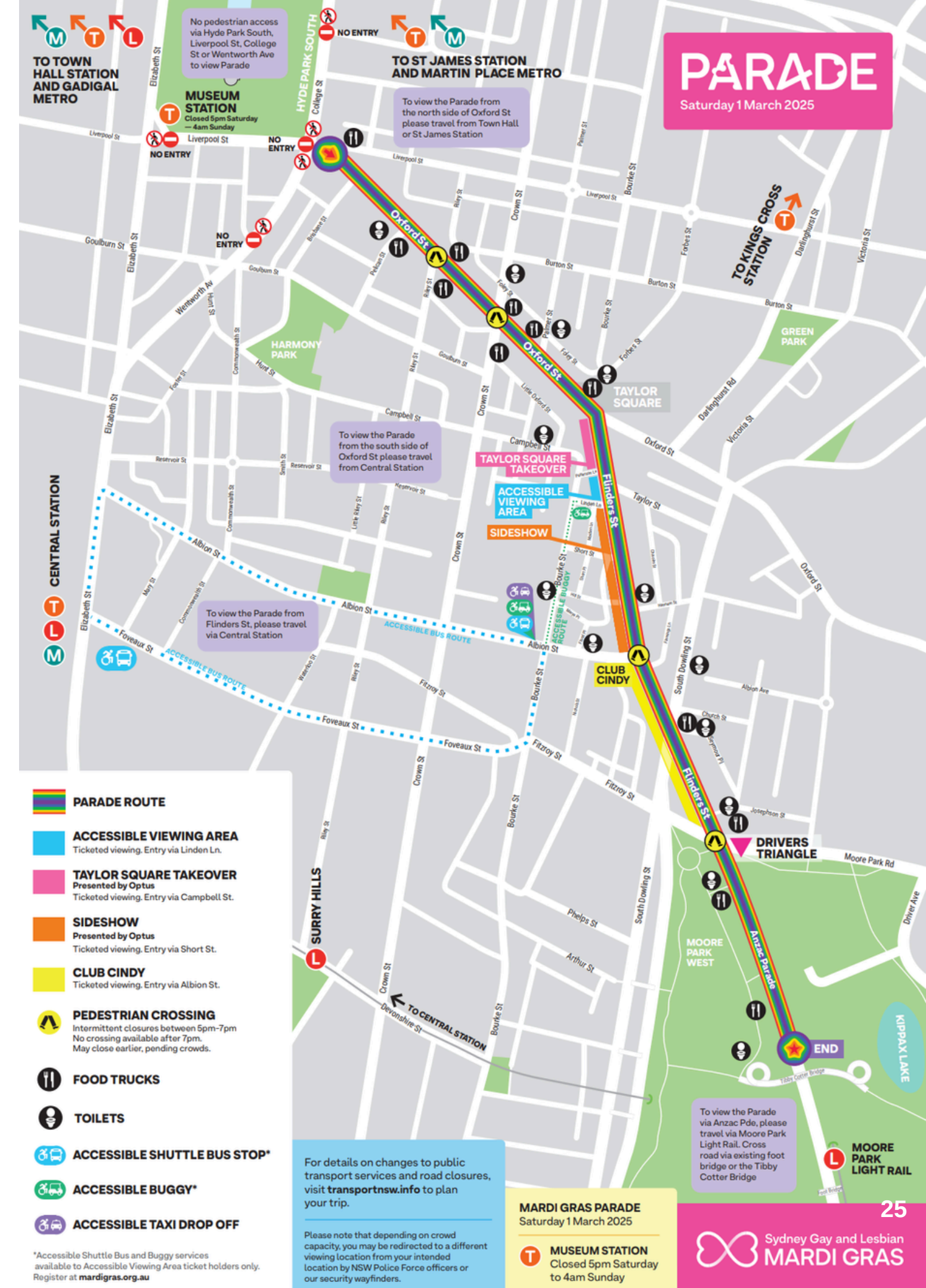
Leaving the Free Accessible Viewing Area at the end of the parade

- The parade will finish around 10:45pm–11:00pm.
- An accessible shuttle bus will leave at 9:00pm from the corner of Albion Street and Bourke Street – where I was first dropped off if I arrived on the shuttle bus.
- If I don't catch the 9:00pm shuttle bus, I will need to wait until the crowd has left to catch the next shuttle bus. This is because there will be too many people on the road for the shuttle bus to get through safely.
- I can wait in the Free Accessible Viewing Area until the buggy can pick me up. Security will stay at the Accessible Viewing Area until everyone has left, so I will be safe.
- The Quiet Space will close at 10pm.



13. PARADE ROUTE MAP:

- I can download a copy of the Parade Route Map from the website here: <https://mardigras.org.au/plan-your-parade-experience>
- The Parade Route Walking Direction Map will become available at the end of January 2025 at the website here: <https://mardigras.org.au/plan-your-parade-experience>

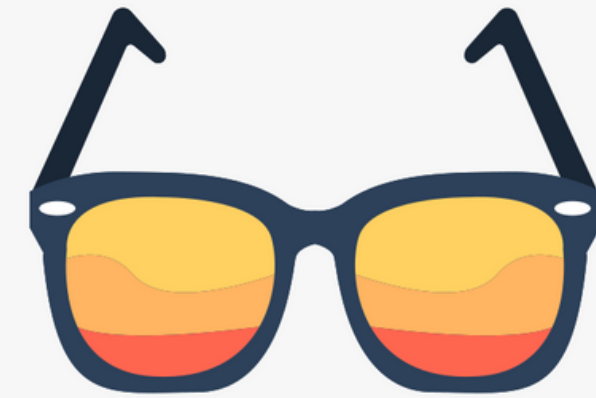
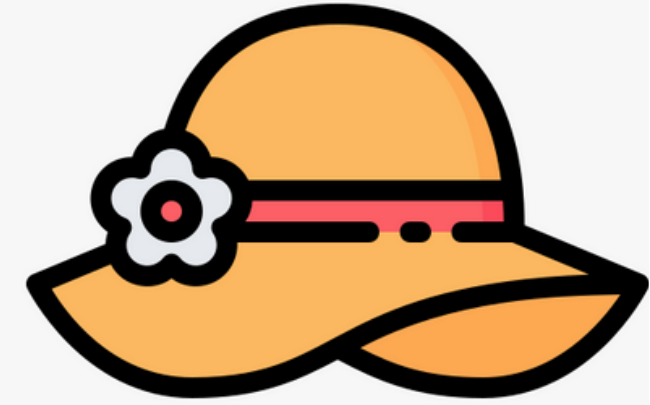


14. WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

The Mardi Gras Parade is an outdoor event. I will check the weather conditions on the day.

If it is going to be a sunny day, I could bring:

- A hat
- Sunglasses
- Sunscreen



14. WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

The Mardi Gras Parade is an outdoor event. I will check the weather conditions on the day.

If it is a rainy day, I could bring:

- Warm and weatherproof clothing
- Plastic ponchos
- Umbrella

If the Parade is delayed or cancelled due to severe weather conditions, Sydney Mardi Gras will let me know via social media.

I can follow Mardi Gras on Facebook , Twitter , or Instagram for the latest updates and information.

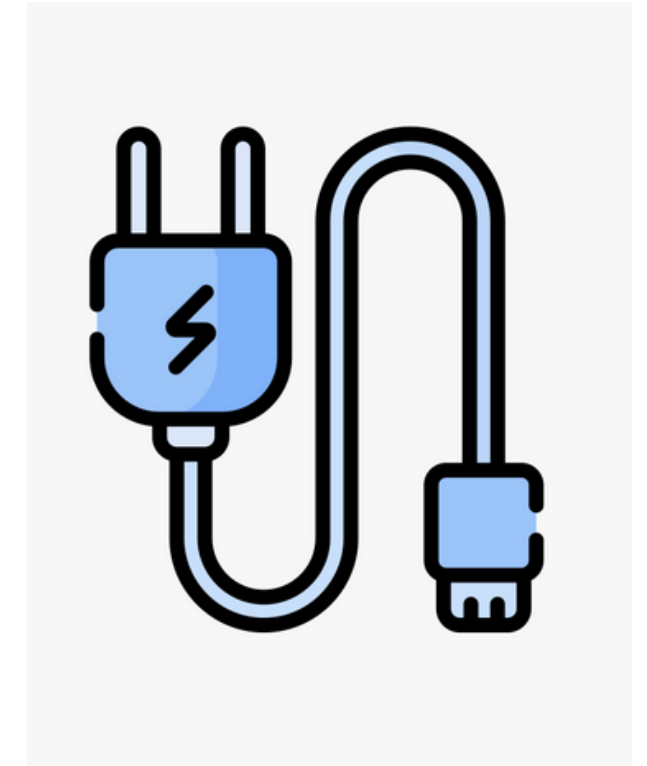
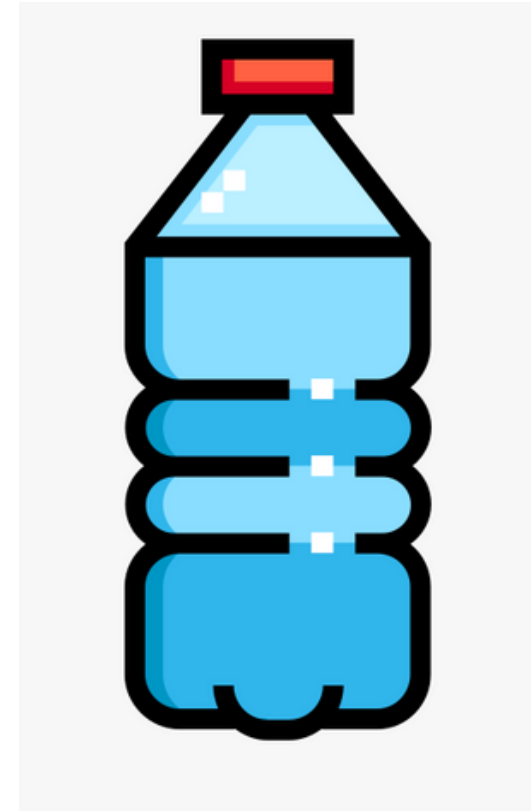


14. WHAT SHOULD I BRING?

The Mardi Gras Parade is an outdoor event. I will check the weather conditions on the day.

I should also bring:

- A phone with key contacts saved, and an “In Case of Emergency” (I.C.E) phone number stored
- Anything that may help me to cope with crowds, lights and noise (e.g. headphones, earplugs, visor/sunglasses, sensory items)
- A refillable water bottle, and preferred food and non-alcoholic drinks
- Something to do while I wait (e.g. a device, games or books)
- A Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard or wristband (if I have one)
- Phone charging cable



15. WHAT NOT TO BRING:

There are things that I am not allowed to bring to the parade.

This is to keep everyone safe.

Things that I am not allowed to bring include:

- Alcohol
- Fireworks or Explosives (includes flares and sparklers)
- Illegal Drugs or Substances of any kind (prescription medication is OK)
- Promotional Material including Banners, Stickers, Signs and Flyers
- Any materials that display racist, sexist or homophobic attitudes
- Weapons of any kind
- Glass bottles/items



16. WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

What I will see during the parade:

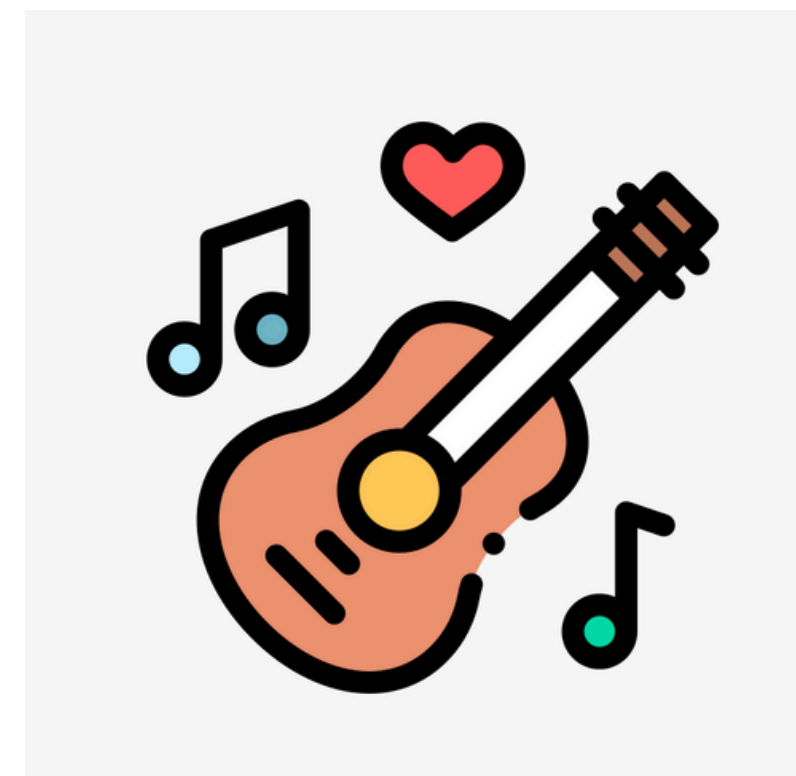
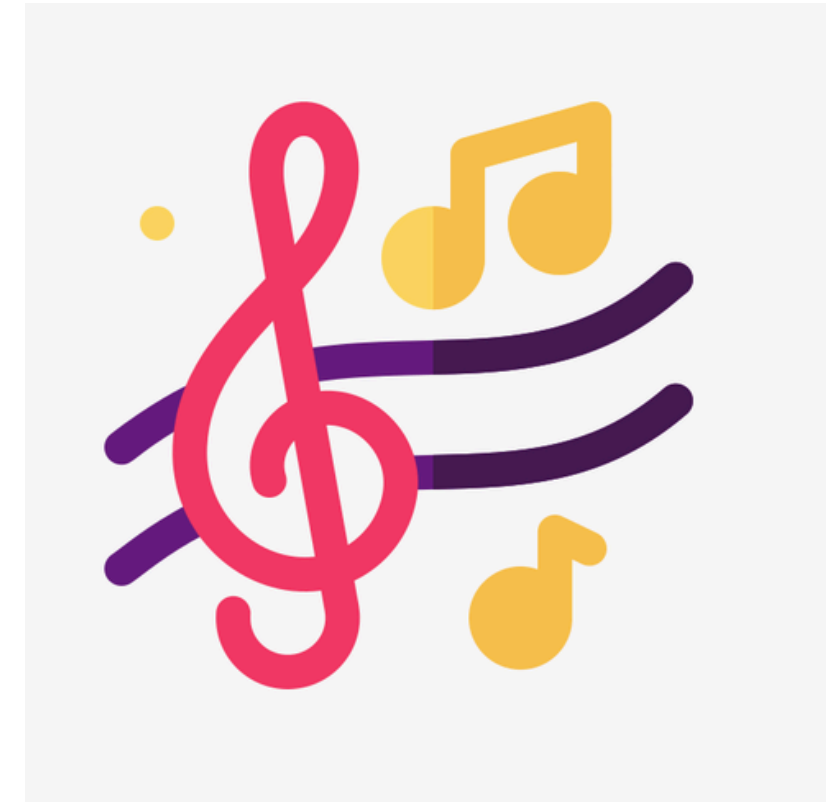
- People of all ages
- Same-sex or non-binary couples
- People who do not appear as either male or female
- Groups of people marching along the street
- Brightly coloured floats
- People in costumes (some might not be wearing much clothing)
- Some nudity
- People hugging and kissing
- People dancing, yelling and singing
- Drunk people
- Security, police and ambulance paramedics. They are here to keep me safe
- Cameras from the media and the general public taking pictures of the crowd



16. WHAT CAN I EXPECT?

Some sensory experiences I might notice during the parade include:

- Fireworks and bright lights
- Smoke effects
- Confetti
- Announcements over speakers
- Loud music and performances
- Sirens from emergency services vehicles
- Loud Helicopters
- Busyness and crowding, or people very close to me
- Smells from food vendors
- Standing for a long period of time
- Crowd noise (e.g. singing, chanting, cheering and shouting over the music)



17. WHERE CAN I GET HELP?

Parade teams and Parade volunteers:

If I feel sick, overwhelmed or tired, I should ask security or volunteers for help. They will be in all ticketed areas and along busy streets. I should not try to jump or break fence lines but should ask security or staff where I should go.

I should also listen to security and volunteers and follow their directions. They are here to keep me safe. Parade volunteers and staff will be wearing different coloured shirts, depending on their role. This includes:



First Aid:

If there is an emergency, or someone needs immediate medical attention, I need to notify Parade volunteers or security. They will help to organise medical teams who are located on site. If I request help, I must make sure that I can be easily found by medical teams.



Security: There will also be They are here to keep me safe. They are also trained to identify that people wearing a Sunflower Lanyard might need a bit of extra time, support or understanding.



Mardi Gras Volunteers: I can ask Mardi Gras staff if I need help, or if I am lost. These shirts will change for 2025. I can check the visual story before Parade to see the colour change for the t-shirt.

If I need more information about accessibility I can:

- Call 02 9383 0900 or
- Email: accessibility@mardigrasarts.org.au
- Visit the website:
<https://www.mardigras.org.au/event/accessible-parade-viewing-area/>

18. MESSAGE FROM MARDI GRAS:

HAPPY MARDI GRAS!