



Out and About

# Accessibility Information Guide for Providers

People with disability currently make up over 20% of the Australian population ([ABS, 2024](#)). According to Tourism Research Australia's 2024 report, travellers with accessibility needs represented 23% of all domestic trips and 21% of total domestic spend, stayed longer on average than other travellers and made up 25% of spending on domestic day trips.

**“Accessible Tourism** ensures everyone, regardless of age or ability, can enjoy the same tourism products, services and experiences.” ([AusTrade, 2024](#)). The inclusion of travellers of all abilities meets an increasing customer demand (AusTrade, 2024).

Accessible tourism is a great starting point as businesses work towards **Inclusive Tourism**, which also creates an environment that welcomes people from all backgrounds and abilities ([Tourism Australia](#)). These principles of accessible and inclusive tourism apply equally to transport, hospitality, retail and other industries.

When getting out in the community, people with disability often face physical, social and systemic barriers and usually need to spend more energy on planning, information gathering and contingency planning. While you can make this process easier by ensuring accessibility information is easy to find, you may also receive enquiries about your business's accessibility.

When a customer asks about a particular accessibility feature, polite honesty is the best approach. State the facts of what you offer and allow your guests to make an informed decision and to plan alternative solutions if they need them.

If there are parts of your premises, vehicle or service that are not accessible for your guest, saying “no” is not necessarily a bad thing and doesn't always mean you will lose business. Giving honest, accurate information allows your guest to plan and source any additional services or equipment required, and they will appreciate the care and customer service.

## **What can you do as a provider?**

- Review the accessibility information you currently provide. Is it up to date? Easy to find? Easy to read?
- Consider whether your website provides clear links to accessibility information and explains how to book accessible rooms or services.
- Consider providing photos, site maps and floor plans, and clear information on how to navigate from the street or car park to reception or guest services. If you offer accommodation, provide photos showing all angles of rooms, including bathroom shots.
- Provide links and information for other local services and accessible activities.
- If you are interested in improving your understanding of accessibility and making your business more accessible, engage a professional Disability Access and Inclusion Consultant in your state or territory. If you employ people with disability, you can also ask if they would feel comfortable sharing their insights and offering suggestions for improvement.

## **Key Considerations**

- Ask your customers what they need for your product or service to be accessible.
- Consider how easy it is for customers to find accessibility information on your website.
- If you offer discounted or free options for a “companion” under the Companion Card program, provide this information wherever you provide booking and ticketing information.
- If you participate in the Hidden Disability Sunflower program, ensure you share this in your guest information.
- You may also wish to review your emergency plans to ensure they include accessibility considerations.
- Follow-up any bookings with written confirmation of what has been requested or booked.

## Possible Questions to Consider

Drawing on the experience of Assistive Technology users, we have developed some questions to assist you when thinking about the accessibility of your products and services. This is not an exhaustive list but are a 'kicking off' point to help you consider the information you can or are providing.

### Travelling - public and private transport

- What assistance do you offer? How do customers request assistance?
- Is there an assisted boarding point and how would a customer find it?
- Do you have a hearing loop system available at the station or platform and on the bus or train?
- Do you have tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs) to show customers the path of travel?
- Is there a portable ramp available?
- Do customers need to navigate stairs? How many? Is there a ramp or lift available?
- Are there any weight or size restrictions for motorised mobility devices?
- Do you offer priority seating?
- **Trains and Ferries:** Is the platform level with the train doors? What is the gap between the platform and the train or ferry?
- **Planes:** What boarding options do you offer customers? How do customers request assistance when making a booking and is there a booking code they need to use (e.g. WCHR)?



## Accommodation

- What visual cues can be seen from the road for customers to identify the accommodation?
- Is there step-free access from the street and carpark?
- Where is the nearest green space for guide dogs or assistance animals?
- Will your lifts accommodate large, powered wheelchairs and other bulky equipment?
- What is the width of the hallways, doors, and ramps?
- Is it possible for guests to specifically book a room either near or away from the elevator?
- What type of flooring is in guest rooms? E.g. hard flooring, high pile rugs?
- Does the bathroom have grab rails or a shower bench or seat?
- Is the shower a step-through shower or is there a lip or raised entry?
- What height is the washbasin and is there clearance underneath?
- What side are the grab rails in the toilet?



## Accommodation (continued)

- Do you have accessible parking spaces? Can guests book one of these?
- What height are the beds in the guest rooms? E.g. top of mattress to the floor? Do you have bed risers available if needed?
- What are the operating hours for reception?
- Can guests have hired equipment delivered and placed in their room prior to check-in?
- If requested, do you have bed raisers available to adjust the height of the bed if needed?
- Are you able to move the bed or remove furniture to create more space for customer's equipment and for your guest to move around the room?
- Is there an option to order room service without using the telephone? Do you provide large print and braille versions of restaurant or cafe menus? Or digital versions that are screen reader compatible?
- Do you have information on accessible local activities?



## **Events** (Concerts, Movies, Plays, Conferences)

- Can guests use a Companion Card to book a complimentary ticket for their support worker?
- Is your venue accessible for people using mobility aids? Is there a clear, step-free continuous path of travel from the entrance all the way to my seat, and to other spaces such as the bar or the bathroom?
- Do you offer open captions or closed captions? How do guests arrange for captions?
- Do you offer a quiet room or sensory space? Where is this located and how can it be located?
- Do you provide allergy information for catering?
- Does the performance use haptics?
- Will there be flashing or flickering lights during the performance?
- Is there an Auslan interpreter available?
- Where are the accessible bathrooms located?
- Do you have a hearing loop system available and which seating is best to access it?
- What accessible seating options do you provide? E.g. close to stage (low vision), wheelchair accessible, away from speakers, away from air-conditioning ducts.
- Is there seating available during the event (including during networking events)? What type of seating is available? As a consideration bar stools make interactions difficult for most wheelchair users and are a safety risk for people with mobility difficulties.
- Where is the nearest green space for guide dogs or assistance animals?
- If guests need assistance, should they go and who should they speak to?



## **Social, Cultural and Nature Activities** (e.g. going to the beach, restaurants, galleries, museums and science centres, zoos, national parks)

- Is there step-free access from the street or carpark?
- Are there beach mats available? What days and times are they available?
- Is there Beach Wheelchair or Beach Walker availability? What type of wheelchair is it? Are they adult or child sized? Is there somewhere nearby to loan or hire one?
- Where are the public toilets located?
- Where are accessible showers and accessible bathrooms located?
- Are there accessible shaded areas?
- Can you provide path width and gradient or incline information for your walking paths?
- Are there designated accessible walking trails available? What accessibility features do they have?
- Where can customers find a site map or floor plan? Do you provide social stories?
- Are you able to offer pre-cut food? Do you offer a range of portion sizes? Do you provide allergy information?
- Do you have a quiet or sensory space available?





## Problem solving

Getting out in the local community or travelling further afield can present unforeseen problems, whether you have a disability or not. It is important to recognise that sometimes these challenges can have a more serious impact for people with disabilities. Having contingency or back-up plans will help to reduce some of the stress for you and your customers when encountering unexpected issues.

## Futher Resources for Providers

- [“Accommodate Us: An Inclusive Tool Kit for Tourism Accommodation”](#) by Autism Queensland Limited: A co-designed resource to increase tourism accommodation providers’ capacity to offer informed, inclusive experiences for autistic and neurodivergent visitors.
- [“Five Rings for Inclusive Tourism for Low Vision and Blindness”](#) by Guide Dogs Queensland Ltd: Through co-designed resources, this project addresses travel and accommodation challenges faced by people with low vision and blindness. It guides the tourism industry to become accessible and inclusive for those with vision impairment.
- [“Inclusive Tourism Toolbox”](#) by CPL – Choice, Passion, Life: Delivered as a free service to businesses, the Inclusive Tourism Toolkit offers video tutorials and accessible resources and templates. These tools help the industry address specific needs for including people with disability at events and tourism destinations.

## Further Resources for Providers

- “[Making Tourism Accessible for Blind and Low Vision Visitors](#)” by Queensland Braille Writing Association: A resource package that assists tourism operators in making their venues accessible to people who are blind or have low vision.  
  
It includes practical examples from the first point of contact to using large print, braille, tactile QR code indicators, and tactile maps. The package also offers ideas for marketing and advertising accessible tourist venues.
- “[4 things you can do to let the accessible travel community know they are welcome](#)” by Push Adventures.
- “[The Accessible Tourism Program](#)” by the Australian Tourism Industry Council.
- [Travellers with accessibility needs in Australia](#) (May 2024 report) by Tourism Research Australia. This report provides data and insights regarding travellers with accessibility needs in Australia.

**We hope this guide assists you in enhancing inclusive experiences for your customers! Please contact us with any suggestions for future updates to this resource.**

## References

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