



Out and About

An AT Chat Conversation Guide for AT Users

As Assistive Technology Users (and people with disability), it can be challenging navigating some of the geographic and societal barriers to do everyday activities: getting around in our local community, going to restaurants, going on holidays, and travelling for work.

Planning for Success

Investing time in planning can help make getting Out and About easier and more enjoyable. Think about what the trip or activities will involve and how you will get to your destination and get around while you are there. Then, take some time to think about your needs:

- What does accessible mean for me?
- What types of accessibility information do I need? (e.g. mobility, sensory, cognitive, physical)
- What AT am I planning to take with me? What can I hire at my destination?
- What consumables do I need to pack?
- Will I be taking 'dangerous' or 'restricted' items and how will I transport these? (e.g. controlled medications, sharps, lithium batteries)
- Will I need to allow for rest periods between activities, so I can fully enjoy them.
- What has worked well previously? What has presented challenges in the past?
- Who are the members of my support team? This could be people travelling with you or helping you with planning.



Key considerations

- Ask travel and tourism providers clear and specific questions about their accessibility.
- When booking accommodation, contact the provider before booking and request any further information, including photos of the room.
- When hiring equipment, check the specifications closely, for example, the weight capacity of hoists or the types of slings.
- Ask about emergency plans including evacuation procedures and alternatives to lift access.
- Follow-up any bookings with written confirmation of what has been requested or booked.
- Plan for contingencies.

Asking Questions

Drawing on the experience of AT users, we have developed a 'Conversation Guide' which includes some sample questions you may wish to ask. These are not exhaustive but are a 'kicking off' point to help you to start to think about what you might need for successful travel.

An editable 'Conversation Planner' can be downloaded from our website, so you can create your own list of questions to use next time you are planning a trip – whether it is overseas, interstate or in your own community.

Whenever possible, ask questions that need more than a 'yes' or 'no' answer. This will help you to get more detailed responses, so you can make informed choices.

General Questions

- Can I use a Companion Card?
- Where can I find your accessibility information?
- Is there accessible parking?
- Are you part of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program (hdsunflower.com/au/)?
- Do you offer familiarisation and orientation tours or programs?
- Is there an accessible toilet or change room?
- Is there a Changing Places toilet? Will I need a MLAK key to access it?

Travelling – public and private transport

- What assistance do you offer? How do I request assistance?
- Is there an assisted boarding point and how do I 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 me the path of travel?
- Is there a portable ramp available?
- How many stairs are there, and 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/ferry?
- Planes: What boarding options do you offer? How do I request assistance when making a booking and is there a booking code I need to use (e.g. WCHR)?



Accommodation

- What visual cues can be seen from the road that 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 lifts accommodate my wheelchair and equipment?
- Are the public spaces such as pools, restaurants, bars, meeting rooms accessible?
- Where are the accessible bathrooms located in foyer, restaurant and other public spaces?
- How wide are hallways, doors and ramps?
- Is there enough space (e.g. in the room, elevator or restaurant) to enter, turn and navigate?
- (Mobility) Is it possible to book a room near the elevator?
- (Sensory) Is it possible to book a room away from the elevator?
- Does the bathroom have grab rails or a shower bench or seat?

Accommodation (continued)

- Is the shower a step-through shower or is there a lip or raised entry?
- Is the shower head on a flexihose?
- What height is the wash basin, and is there clearance underneath?
- What side are the grab rails on in the toilet?
- What is the height of the bed? Is there enough space for transfers and equipment?
- Will I be guaranteed an accessible parking space with room to enter and exit my vehicle?
- What are the operating hours for reception?
- Can I have hired equipment delivered and placed in my room prior to check-in?
- Is there natural air ventilation? Do the windows open?
- Do all rooms have air-conditioning? How often are the filters cleaned?
- Are there mosquitos or other biting insects at this time of year? Do you provide insect repellent?



Events (Concerts, Movies, Plays, Conferences)

- Can I use a Companion Card to book a complimentary ticket for my 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 I arrange for captions?
- Do you offer a quiet room or sensory space? Where is this located and how do I find it?
- Do you provide allergy information for catering?
- Will haptics be used for this performance?
- Will there be flashing or flickering lights?
- 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 offered?
- Where is the nearest green space for guide dogs or assistance animals?
- If I need assistance, where should I go and who should I speak to?

Activities (e.g. going to the beach, restaurants, galleries, museums and science centres, zoos, national parks etc.)

- 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 I can 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?
- Do you have designated accessible walking trails? What accessibility features do they have?
- Do you provide social stories?
- Where can I find a site map or floor plan?
- Are you able to offer pre-cut food?

Ideas for Accessible Activities

- ["Access Friendly Walks" by Tasmania Parks & Wildlife Service](#)
- ["Naturally Accessible" bushwalks for mobility disabilities - National Parks Association of NSW](#)
- [Disabled Surfers Association of Australia Inc](#)
- [Nature Freedom's Inclusive Bushwalks](#)
- [Sailability QLD](#)
- [Wheelchair Accessible Walks in QLD National Parks](#)

Problem solving

Despite our best efforts to gather accurate information and plan, travel can present unforeseen problems whether you have a disability or not. Travelling with a disability can make these challenges more significant. Having contingency or back-up plans will help to reduce some of the stress when encountering unexpected issues:

- **If the bed isn't the correct height:** ask if the hotel has bed raisers.
- **If the bed placement restricts access:** ask the hotel to move the bed or remove any furniture you don't require.
- **If there are lips or stairs in unavoidable places:** ask whether the hotel has a portable ramp?
- **If the shower isn't accessible:** is a bed bath a feasible alternative?



Some helpful resources include

- [Accessible Australia app](#) - Spinal Life's free app provides first-hand reviews of hotels, restaurants, cafés, bars, shopping centres, public bathrooms, beaches, parks and more.
- Accessible Bathrooms: [National Public Toilet Map](#) and [Changing Places Toilet](#)
- Accessible Beaches: accessiblebeaches.com
- [AnyTrip.com.au](https://anytrip.com.au) allows the user to track public transport vehicles around their location on a live map. It can be accessed through a web browser or as an app on App Store & Google Play.
- [Pavely social planning app](#) for inclusive venues in South Australia.

Accessible Parking and Mobility Maps

NSW

- [Park'n Pay app](#)
- [Blue Mountains Mobility Map](#)
- [City of Sydney Mobility Map](#)
- [Kiama Council Mobility Map](#)

QLD

- [Brisbane City Council map of Disability Permit Parking locations](#)
- [Sunshine Coast Mobility Map](#)
- [Townsville Mobility Map](#)

SA

- [BlueBay \(accessible parking spaces\)](#)

TAS

- [Hobart City Mobility Map](#)

VIC

- [Bayside Council Accessible Parking Spaces](#)
- [City of Melbourne Mobility Map](#)

WA

- [Perth's Interactive Parking Map](#)



Accessible Public Transport

While there is federal legislation in relation to accessibility of transport ([Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002](#)), what this looks like may vary across Australia. For example, each state has different rules for travelling with motorised mobility devices, including when you need to register the mobility device and whether you can use it on public transport.

- ACT: <https://www.transport.act.gov.au/travel-options/bus/accessible-travel>
- NSW: <https://transportnsw.info/travel-info/using-public-transport/accessible-travel>
- NT: <https://nt.gov.au/driving/public-transport-cycling>
- QLD: <https://translink.com.au/travel-with-us/accessibility>
- SA: <https://www.adelaidemetro.com.au/using-adelaide-metro/access-and-disability>
- TAS: <https://www.metrotas.com.au/travel-tips/disability-access/>
- VIC: <https://www.ptv.vic.gov.au/more/travelling-on-the-network/accessibility/>
- WA: <https://www.transperth.wa.gov.au/about/accessibility>

We hope this guide helps you plan your next adventure – big or small! Please contact us with any suggestions for future updates to this resource.

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