



# DESTINATION ACCESSIBLE ROADMAP

TOURISM GREATER  
**GEELONG** & THE   
**BELLARINE**



# One in five people in Australia has a disability.

That's nearly 5 million Australians.

This toolkit is designed to assist tourism operators to understand more about disability, to build their awareness and confidence, make positive changes within their business practices and strive to become 'Destination Accessible'.

We hope that these changes will in turn assist people with disability in the process of planning their travels right through to their positive experiences while in our region.



*People with disabilities, older people with mobility needs, parents with prams and many others will also benefit from improved access.*



# AUSTRALIANS LIVING WITH DISABILITIES...

**1.3 MILLION**  
HAVE TAKEN AT LEAST  
ONE DOMESTIC TRIP  
EVERY YEAR



£ SPEND  
**\$3.2 BILLION**  
ON TOURISM EVERY  
YEAR<sup>^</sup>



THE AVERAGE  
TRAVEL PARTY IS  
**2.5 PERSONS**



TRAVEL  
PARTIES SPEND  
**\$8 BILLION**  
ON TOURISM  
EVERY YEAR<sup>^</sup>



**75%**  
of people  
WITH DISABILITY  
are SEASONED  
TRAVELLERS



TRAVELLERS WITH  
DISABILITIES are loyal  
customers and have a much  
higher incidence of RETURN VISITS.  
Returning to a known  
destination allows a person  
with disability to MANAGE the  
STRESSES and UNCERTAINTIES  
of TRAVEL.



Australia  
has a rapidly  
AGING POPULATION which  
means GREATER NUMBERS  
of travellers who will  
NEED ACCESSIBLE  
OPTIONS.



<sup>^</sup> 'Accessible Tourism  
in Victoria and  
Queensland',  
Tourism Research  
Australia, Summary,  
January 2018.

# WHAT IS DISABILITY?

“ People with disability include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

*United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*

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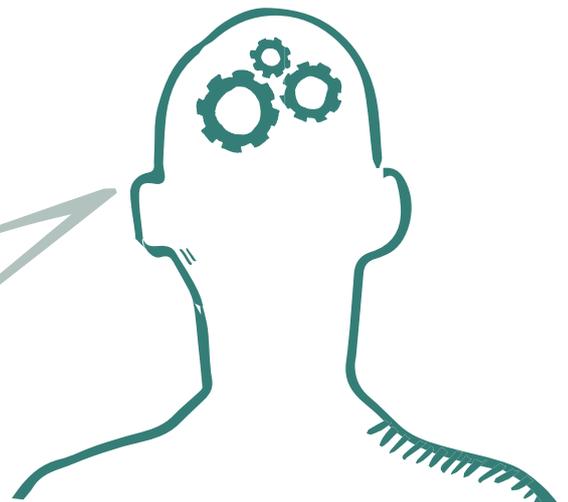
## Who are the one in five people with disabilities?

People with disability make up a large part of your market and come from all walks of life.

- **Some people may not tell you they have a disability as they do not identify as having a disability:**  
For example, an older person may find it harder to see or hear but would not feel the need to tell you.
- **No two people with the same disability experience their disability in the same way.**
- **Mobility issues are the most common type of disability.**
- **The profile of travellers with disability is diverse:**  
There can often be an overlap between mental, cognitive and physical conditions.
- **A disability can be temporary:**  
For example, a person may need to use crutches for a short time as a result of an injury or accident.

### DON'T FORGET

The majority of disabilities are not visible. Don't assume a customer does not have additional needs.





People with disability are part of our entire community, our family, friends, fellow travellers, colleagues, customers and neighbours.



## What are the common barriers preventing people from accessing your tourism business?

Common barriers can make it difficult or impossible for people to use your business. Removing these barriers will improve access to your tourism business.

- **Physical environment:**  
Steps, narrow or crowded spaces.
- **Information:**  
Signage that is difficult to read, information that is hard to understand, or publications only available in limited formats. Websites that are not accessible.
- **Communication:**  
Lack of awareness about how to communicate with customers.
- **Perceptions:**  
Negative or discriminatory attitudes create barriers.



Having a disability is just one characteristic of a person. It does not necessarily define who the person is. We should open our thinking so everyone is included.

# BUILD CONFIDENCE

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## Welcoming customer service



The tourism industry has an opportunity to become more welcoming to travellers with disability.

Educating your employees will assist in breaking down negative attitudes. Research shows that better training of staff is considered a top priority for improvement by travellers with disability.

**Follow this checklist to make your business more welcoming to everyone.**

- Make Disability Awareness Training part of Induction:**  
Free online Disability Awareness Training, could be included in your induction process. Just five short modules, it takes about an hour to complete and includes examples of anti-discrimination legislation in action. It is ideal for employees who have limited experience of disability.
- Hold workplace disability awareness training:**  
Workplace disability awareness training is provided by Australian Federation of Disability Organisations (AFDO) and Scope Australia and can be customised to suit specific disabilities.
- Put it on your agenda:**  
At your next staff meeting, provide your staff with basic tips for communication. There's fact sheets on our website that will provide your staff with general advice on communicating with a person with a physical disability, vision impairment, hard of hearing and an intellectual disability.
- Mental Health First Aid Training:**  
This is essential for managers dealing with employees as well as customers. Two-day accredited courses are provided by Mental Health First Aid Australia.
- Share the love:**  
Provide your staff with a copy of this Toolkit and encourage them to identify ways to improve access to your business.
- Use appropriate language:**  
Some people are unsure how to speak to a person with disability, which is understandable, as language has changed significantly over time. See some handy tips on the next page...



Speak to a person with disability the way you would anyone else, not to their support worker.

 Outdated language	 Preferred language
'disabled person', 'handicapped', 'the disabled'	'person with disability', 'person living with disability', 'person with lived experience of disability', 'people with disabilities'
'non-disabled', 'able-bodied'	'person without disability'
'suffering from...', 'struck down by', 'afflicted by/with...' 'mental health problem'	'Michael experiences depression', 'Philippa developed Multiple Sclerosis', 'Jarrod has autism'
A person confined to a wheelchair	A person who uses a wheelchair or wheelchair user
Hearing impaired	Hearing loss, or hard of hearing



Why not Invite a person with disability to visit your business and provide feedback on their experience



# MAKE LOW COST CHANGES

Small changes have a big impact and often cost very little. They can be done now.



Before your visitors arrive, complete these tasks.

- If you've got it, talk about it:**  
Ensure your business listing outlines the accessible features of your business accurately and in plain English. Research shows that travellers with disability want more detailed information when planning a trip. Make sure your information is accurate, misleading advertising will damage your business and is against the law.

*Is there ramp access?*

*Do you have a quiet space?*

*Are you located near public transport?*

- Ensure your website is accessible:**  
Internet searches are the number one tool used by travellers with and without disability. Ask your web developer if your site is accessible, and if not, what work needs to be completed to ensure that it is.

- Provide a range of contact methods:**  
Research shows a strong preference by people with disability to connect with a business or destination personally, either by phone or email. Text messaging is increasingly being used by everyone including people who are hard of hearing.

- National Relay Service:**  
This allows people who are hard of hearing or have hearing loss/speech impairment to make and receive calls. Do your employees know about this?

- Ask the question:**  
'Do you have any access needs?' Make this a required answer for the booking to continue.

- Familiarise your staff:**  
Make sure staff are familiar with your facilities and any barriers. If you do not have an accessible bathroom, make sure staff know how to direct a customer to the nearest bathroom. Do your staff know where the nearest accessible parking is located?

Understand and communicate the accessible features of your business

## When your visitors arrive

- Ask all visitors if they have any specific needs or anything you can help them with.
- Incorporate information on accessible facilities into basic information provided to all visitors upon arrival:  
*eg. Information on wheelchair accessible taxi services and public transport. Information on accessible refreshments, cafes, stops and tourist attractions close to your business may also be useful.*
- Make sure your entrance areas are clearly marked and well lit:  
Have another look, you are there every day, what would a new guest see on arrival?
- Provide clear signage with large text and high colour contrast.
- Provide seating close to reception or fast track people who can't stand for long:  
Ensure reception areas have chairs with and without arms.
- Have pen and paper in an easy to access position:  
It's always handy for people who may communicate better by writing.
- Offer to write down information or complete forms on people's behalf.
- If you can't lower the reception desk/table, offer to greet visitors in common areas, bedrooms or from their car.

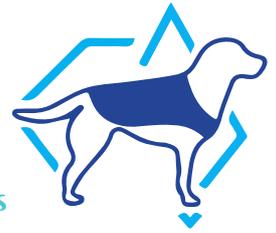
*Tip. You will know they require this from asking the question about access prior to arrival.*

"If you're not sure, just ask the visitor what their needs are."

- Welcome visitors who use assistance dogs:

This is required by law.

*Tip. Provide water bowls*



- Use communication boards that use images instead of text.  
*Tip. This can also be useful for people where English is not their first language*
- Make sure your document text uses a sans serif font such as Arial, is high contrast and is at least 12 point.
- Menus, product information or guides could also be available in large print, or consider having a voice recording available.
- Be willing to move furniture around.
- Provide quieter areas with no background noise in areas that are typically loud.
- Enable captions on TV's or introduction videos.
- Ensure phone numbers are visible at the entry into your business for visitors who need assistance getting in.



## WHERE CAN BUSINESSES GO FOR MORE ASSISTANCE?

The City of Greater Geelong have an Access and Inclusion Plan that will be working towards an accessible environment that supports participation and promotes social inclusion.

*You can also organise a Disability Friendly Premises Check with AFDO, they'll send out one of their Business Inclusion & Diversity Officers to do an assessment on your business.*

# MARKETING & COMMUNICATION

## Attracting visitors in the first place

- Create Content:**  
Add simple, useful and detailed wording on your website/marketing collateral to describe your location, layout, facilities in addition to Google
- Maps:**  
Ensure you're on Google maps, it's accessible and widely used.
- Use images:**  
For people with disability, knowing the layout of the accommodation/restaurant/attraction helps with planning travel and results in a less stressful trip.
- Keep Tourism Greater Geelong & The Bellarine up to date.**  
**Tip:** Adding something new? Tell us about it...
- Use websites and other digital means to promote your accessibility:**  
Don't forget all your listings on third party websites eg. Booking.com, ATDW and TripAdvisor.
- Make sure your website is accessible.**  
**Tip:** Ask your web designer if it is currently accessible. If not, start making some changes. If you're building a new website, ask the question prior to development of your website, as it will be much easier than retrofitting accessibility. It's cheaper too.

**You can't be everything to everyone.** Just make sure you highlight and promote the accessible aspects of your business and what it is you can cater for. Even if some parts of your business aren't accessible, explain why and include any plans for future improvements. It's all about inclusion!



**A picture is worth a thousand words.**  
*Tip: Include photos of your entry, transportation, accommodation rooms, bathrooms and communal areas such as your office reception, restaurant or grounds and gardens.*

**Include specific venue or accommodation floor plans and measurements where possible.**

**Communicate any potential barriers such as steps or bedrooms on upper levels not accessible by lift:**  
Highlight location of accessible bathrooms.

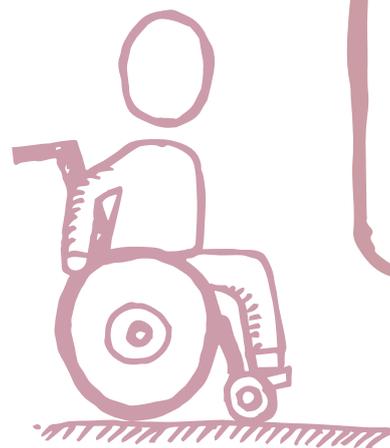
**Don't misadvertise:**  
There are legal implications for false advertising. Make sure the information you provide is accurate.

**Consider providing discounts for the carer/support person.**

**Have you provided a positive accessible experience? Ask for feedback:**  
Nothing beats positive comments from your actual clients, share their experiences.

**If your business caters for a particular group or demographic, consider ways to attract this market.**

*Tips: - If your business caters well for people with access needs, then consider advertising in 'seniors' magazines or make relationships with retirement villages or homes and talk to disability groups and organisations e.g. NDIS, GenU*



**Think outside the square. Tell people if you can provide information in large print or if your televisions can have captions (subtitles) enabled.**

Using positive images of people with disability will ensure that your marketing material reflects your customer base.

Use Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) to promote your business in Google search:

This will make sure your business comes up in the search list when certain words are mentioned, for example 'accessible' or 'disability'.

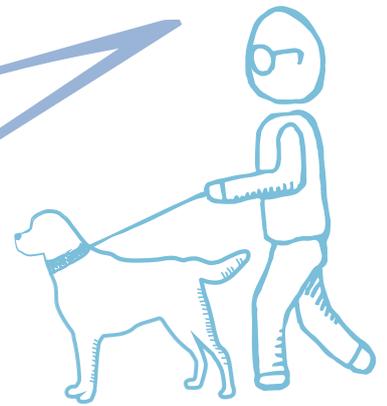
Utilise third party Accessible websites, such as Visit Victoria/ Accessible Victoria.

Build partnerships within the tourism industry:

Work with like-minded businesses to create collaborations that support accessible travel.

**TIP:** Why not create an accessible itinerary?

Think of marketing your accessibility in the same way as your current marketing strategy. For example, host a familiarisation with disability writers or bloggers, advertise on websites or newsletters that communicate with people with disability, use social media targeted advertising. The list is endless!



## DON'T FORGET:

1. Use plain English, avoid using jargon, long sentences and unfamiliar acronyms.
2. Use a minimum font size of 12 point and make information available in large print (18 point).
3. Use plain sans serif fonts such as Arial (without the small curls or decorative features).
4. Use dark text on a light background for the highest contrast.
5. Include photos and pictures to enhance the written information.
6. Do not place text over photos or other images as this makes the text hard to read.
7. Information in PDF format can be inaccessible to people with disability. Make information available in alternative formats, for example in Word or in HTML on your website.

# ASSESS YOUR BUILDING & FACILITIES

## Improving access to your buildings and facilities can have universal benefits.

Accessible tourism is about people and places. Here are some important things to consider when assessing your buildings and facilities.

➤ **Improvements to your buildings and facilities are not always costly:**

For example, changing the layout of a room can create more circulation space for people who use wheelchairs.

➤ **Improvements benefit many groups.**

*Tip: For example a step free entrance and automatic doors will benefit people with disability, parents with prams, people with heavy bags and older people.*

➤ **Why do it? It's not just good business, it's the law:**

Victorian and Commonwealth Government legislation exist to prevent discrimination against people with disability accessing public buildings.

➤ **Undertake your own premises evaluation:**

Follow the consideration table on page 13 - 14.



Ensure a clear and continuous line of travel from the car park and throughout the building.



# Consider This...

Areas Of Attention	Points for Consideration
<b>Car Parking</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is at least one wider parking space (at least 3200mm) reserved for accessible parking identified with the international symbol for access (the blue wheelchair symbol).</li> <li>➤ The parking space is on a firm and level surface and is close to the front door.</li> <li>➤ There is good overhead height clearance (at least 2500mm) above the parking space including in the undercover car park.</li> <li>➤ There is a clear and accessible path of travel from the car park to the front door.</li> <li>➤ At a minimum have a drop off point close to the entrance that has an open curb at least wide enough to cater for wheelchair use.</li> <li>➤ Have signage near the front of your business that includes a phone number or instructions on how to get in touch with a 'real person', just in-case someone needs assistance.</li> </ul>
<b>Getting to your front door</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is a clear and continuous accessible path of travel to your front door.</li> <li>➤ There are no steps or steep slopes (maximum gradient 1:14)</li> <li>➤ The path is free of bollards or uneven and loose surfaces (such as gravel).</li> <li>➤ Your door bell and/or intercom are at an accessible height for everyone (900mm –1100mm). A mobile number is provided for people who can't use the intercom.</li> </ul>
<b>Reception Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ At least part of the reception desk is low enough to be used by a person using a wheelchair or someone with short stature (maximum between 830 and 870 mm).</li> <li>➤ There is seating in reception for people who have to wait, for example for someone with arthritis. Ensure chairs are available with and without arms.</li> <li>➤ There is a hearing loop available for people who use hearing aids and this is clearly sign posted and always turned on.</li> </ul>
<b>Getting around your building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There is a clear accessible path of travel from each accessible entrance to all areas and facilities used by the public, for example there are no steps or obstructions to get to the reception or toilets.</li> <li>➤ Passage ways are wide enough for people using mobility aids such as wheelchairs and there is space for people to pass by each other.</li> <li>➤ Floor coverings are slip resistant, firm and smooth.</li> <li>➤ Signage and layout makes it easy for people to find their way around. Signs are clear and text is large and high contrast enough to see from a distance. Step free routes are clearly sign-posted.</li> <li>➤ Where there is fixed seating there is still room for people using wheelchairs or people with prams to move around.</li> </ul>
<b>Doorways</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Doorways are 850mm or wider when open.</li> <li>➤ There is good circulation space so people using mobility aids such as a wheelchair can open and go through all doorways.</li> <li>➤ Doors are not heavy and are easy to open.</li> <li>➤ Door handles are easy to use. For example 'D shaped' handles are easier to use than round knobs.</li> <li>➤ Glass doors and surrounding glass have colour contrasting strips across the full length. This will assist people with a vision impairment to see the doorway.</li> </ul>



Areas Of Attention	Points for Consideration
<b>Lifts and stairs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There are handrails and enough space for people using a mobility aid to enter and turn around to use the lift buttons.</li> <li>➤ Buttons have raised tactile and Braille information next to them and are low enough for everyone to reach them (900–1100mm).</li> <li>➤ There is audible information and clear visual cues telling people which floor they are on.</li> <li>➤ Stairs require continuous handrails on both sides of the steps (with handrails continuing on landings) and colour-contrasting strips on the leading edge or nosings. Step risers are ideally closed.</li> </ul>
<b>Toilets and bathrooms</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All toilets have clear identification signs including raised tactile and Braille information. Signage should be on the wall, not the door.</li> <li>➤ There is a unisex accessible toilet close to other toilets. There is a blue wheelchair symbol and the sign is tactile with Braille.</li> <li>➤ The accessible toilet has good circulation space (minimum 2500mm x 1900mm). It is fitted out with rails, sinks, mirrors, taps, shelves, coat hooks and towels. These are at heights that can be reached by people using wheelchairs (900–1100mm).</li> <li>➤ The toilet door is easy to open and close with handles and locks that are easy to use.</li> <li>➤ The shower area is on a level floor surface free of any step, hob or sliding door track.</li> </ul>
<b>General</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ All facilities are at table height. For example, water coolers, kettles, phones, remotes and computers.</li> <li>➤ Common areas and bedrooms are well lit, which benefits people with a vision impairment and people who lip read.</li> <li>➤ Controls and switches are at an accessible height for everyone (900mm –1100mm).</li> <li>➤ Televisions in bedrooms and common areas (including digital televisions) have captions (subtitles) enabled for people who are hard of hearing.</li> <li>➤ There is an emergency evacuation procedure that addresses the needs of people with disability (for example people who can't hear the fire alarm). Assembly points are accessible and where possible sheltered.</li> </ul>

## Made accessible changes?

Tell us about it! We want to know so we can help you promote your accessible products to visitors.

[info@tourismgeelongbellarine.com.au](mailto:info@tourismgeelongbellarine.com.au)

# MORE RESOURCES

Handy Fact Sheets, Resources and websites can be found at

[www.tourismgeelongbellarine.com.au/access-toolkit/](http://www.tourismgeelongbellarine.com.au/access-toolkit/)

## References

- Australian Bureau of Statistics Survey of Disability, 2015, 'Ageing and Carers 2015'
- 'Accessible Tourism in Victoria and Queensland', Tourism Research Australia, Summary, January 2018.
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cwth)

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**Australian Federation of  
Disability Organisations**

