



**Backpacker Operators
Alliance of Victoria**

HELPFUL HINTS FOR ASSISTING PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

This fact sheet has been completed in conjunction with



Many people find it difficult or uncomfortable knowing how to communicate with a person with a disability as they don't want to offend or say / do the wrong thing.

Actions people might do without realising:

LOW OR NIL VISION

- Pulling people around when assisting a vision impaired person: the correct way would be to offer assistance by letting the person hold behind your elbow.

HEARING IMPAIRED

- Over exaggerating mouth movements or yelling when talking to a person that is hearing impaired: many people that are hearing impaired will watch the person's mouth, over exaggerating makes it difficult for the person to read lips and expressions.

PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

- Assuming a person in a wheelchair needs assistance being pushed around: always ask the person if they would like assistance, because to you they may look like they are struggling, however they may not be, and they may be offended if you just take over.
- Never assume that a person who has a physical disability also has an intellectual disability: this is a common misunderstanding, as most people that have a physical disability are very intelligent and understand completely.

COMMUNICATION METHODS

Communication Boards: A small board that has the alphabet and commonly used words and pictures that the person will use to point at.

Communication Computers: A small hand held device or laptop type computer that they can type in the sentence they need and the computer verbalises it.

Sign Language: Most people would have seen someone communicating using sign language; there are basic signs such as yes and no that are useful. We recommend that you have a note pad and pen ready to assist.

You could undertake a course through www.vicdeaf.com.au

TTY Phones: For people that are hearing impaired, they look like a normal phone that has a small screen on it. The person on the other end will speak and the TTY phone will convert their conversation to text on the screen.

MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS FOR AND TO PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY

A few hints from Vision Australia:

GUIDELINES FOR VISION

The following guidelines have been prepared using international standards and the guidelines adopted by the Round Table for the Print Disabled. These Guidelines should be used in conjunction with Readability Guidelines issued by Accessible Information Solutions.

FONT SIZE

Large print font size should be at least 18 point in size.

BOLD, UNDERLINE AND ITALICS

Bold and underlining should be used to highlight specific sections in the text such as headings, quotations or crucial areas that need identifying. Italics should not be used under any circumstances as this distorts the type face making information potentially difficult to read.

FONT TYPE

A typeface without serifs is the most readable. Sans serif fonts include Arial, and Swiss.

Contact Vision Australia for the Complete Guidelines: www.visionaustralia.org.au

Some specific problems found by people with a disability who travel:

- Lack of accessible airport transfers
- Lack of wheelchair accessible vehicles
- Lack of well-adapted hotel rooms
- Lack of professional staff capable of informing and advising about accessibility issues
- Lack of reliable information about a specific attraction's level of accessibility
- Lack of accessible restaurants and bars
- Lack of adapted toilets in restaurants and public places
- Inaccessible streets (e.g. cars parking in the stepwalk)
- Lack of disability equipment (wheelchairs, bath chairs, toilet raisers, electric scooters)



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Questions that a person with a disability may ask before making a booking

ACCOMMODATION CHECK LIST

- Will I have access to the check in office? Are there any steps? Could I open the door?
- Is there a curb/step between the car park and the room?
- Is there a step into the room?
- Can you park outside the room upon arrival (very handy if you are travelling by yourself)?

BED:

- Height of bed (recommended 470mm)? Am I able to get a hoist under the bed?
- Distance beside bed for transferring (800mm)?
- Are the light switches accessible from the bed?
- Bedside bed lamps often have push through switches that can be difficult to operate.
- Electric blankets can burn your skin or have ridges that can leave pressure marks.

BATHROOM:

- Is there enough room between the wall and toilet to fit a commode (150 - 200mm)?
- Is there enough room to self transfer beside toilet (800mm)?
- What is the height of hand rails in the shower and beside the toilet (800 - 810mm)?
- Are there any lips or dips into the shower recess?
- Is there a hand held shower hose?
- Is there a self-transfer fold down seat or shower seat with rubber non-slip feet?
- Note: Don't use plastic outdoor furniture as chair legs can buckle from the hot

water or even break whilst transferring.

- Has the hand basin got space underneath so you can get a wheelchair under it?
- Is the toilet door hinged or sliding?
- Is the mirror adjustable or low enough for a person in a wheelchair to use?

GENERAL:

- Is the door width 800mm or wider? Are the door knobs round or lever type?
- Will reception desk be manned to allow entry or can you have a key for an attendant to gain access to your room?
- Is the TV remote controlled?

USEFUL WEBSITES AND CONTACTS

These web pages are for contacts and information on different organisations that offer a service to assist in your improvement of your service.

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)

The Disability Discrimination Act can be found at www.austlii.edu.au

Charter of Human Rights

www.justice.vic.gov

Access Audits Australia

Ph: 03 9431 3472

Equal Access Ph: 1300 994 890 or www.accessaudits.com.au

- Arts Access - www.artsaccess.com.au
- Assistive Listening Devices - www.hearservice.com.au
- AUSLAN Company - www.auslan.net.au
- Australian Building Codes Board - www.abcb.gov.au
- Australian Communication Exchange - www.aceinfo.net.au
- Australian Heritage Commission - www.environment.gov.au

- Australian Standards - www.standards.com

- Institute of Access Training Australia www.accessinstituteaustralia.com.au

- International Day of People with a Disability - www.nican.com.au

- Victorian Government Disability Information Website www.disability.vic.gov.au

- Vision Australia - www.visionaustralia.org.au Ph: 1300 84 74 66

- Word of Mouth Technology - www.wom.com.au

- Work Place Modification Scheme - www.centrelink.gov.au

COURSES & TRAINING

- Access Audits Australia: Better Business Program: Ph: 03 9620 4199

- www.accessauditsaustralia.com.au - info@tourismaccreditationvic.com.au

- Disability Awareness Training: www.jobaccess.gov.au

- SCOPE: www.scopevic.org.au

- Vision Australia: offers courses to understand and assist people with low or nil vision www.visionaustralia.org.au

- Diversity at work: tailors courses to suit your business needs <http://www.diversityatwork.com.au>

- Basic sign language and extensive training can be conducted through: www.vicdeaf.com.au



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