

TOURISM VICTORIA'S ACCESSIBLE
TOURISM PLAN 2010-2013



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tourism Victoria's Accessible Tourism Plan 2010-2013 focuses on the importance of accessible tourism and the strategies that we will adopt to address accessible tourism issues.

Accessible tourism enables people with access requirements to function independently and with equity and dignity through the delivery of universally designed tourism products, services and environments.

Tourism Victoria's Accessible Tourism Plan 2010-2013 is needed to provide a consistent approach to accessible tourism issues. It recognises the social responsibility of providing accessible tourism and aims to encourage businesses to see the economic and social benefits of offering accessible product.

The Plan articulates our role in:

- increasing industry awareness and understanding of the accessibility needs of tourists;
- encouraging new and existing products to capitalise on the business benefits of providing accessible tourism products; and
- increasing the dissemination of information on accessible products and attractions.

The Plan builds on the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012* and recognises the legal obligations of new developments to provide more accessible facilities. It is also in line with the *Tourism Victoria Business Plan 2008-2011* and the Victorian Government's *10 Year Tourism and Events Industry Strategy*.

Why do we need an accessible tourism plan?

Tourism Victoria's Accessible Tourism Plan 2010-2013 is needed to provide a cohesive approach to accessible tourism issues. It recognises the corporate social responsibility of accessible tourism and aims to encourage businesses to see the economic and social benefits of offering accessible product.

Although not easily measured, it is clear that this is a growing tourism market and as such, the tourism industry will benefit from a greater focus on this issue.

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STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

Tourism Victoria's Accessible Tourism Plan 2010-2013 builds on the Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012 and recognises the legal obligations of new developments to provide more accessible facilities.

The State disability plan takes a whole-of-government and whole-of community approach to disability and looks at a broad range of issues including disability support, health and community services, recreation, education, employment and transport. The State Plan aims to strengthen local communities by increasing opportunities for people with a disability to participate in arts, cultural, sport, tourism and leisure activities.

In October 2006, the Victorian Government released the *10 Year Tourism and Events Industry Strategy*. The Strategy contains a number of objectives to assist the Government to achieve its long-term vision for the Victorian tourism and events industry.

In February 2008, the Victorian Government released the *Tourism Victoria Business Plan 2008-2011*. The Business Plan aims to assist Tourism Victoria to improve workforce skills, visitor facilities, the accessibility of regional destinations, and to better understand the changing needs of visitors and how best to attract them. The Business Plan contains a number of priority activities that can enhance the promotion of accessible tourism, including product development and increasing skills and service standards.

To further define our role and activities within the accessible tourism market, *Tourism Victoria's Accessible Tourism Plan 2010-2013* has been developed.



MARKET OVERVIEW

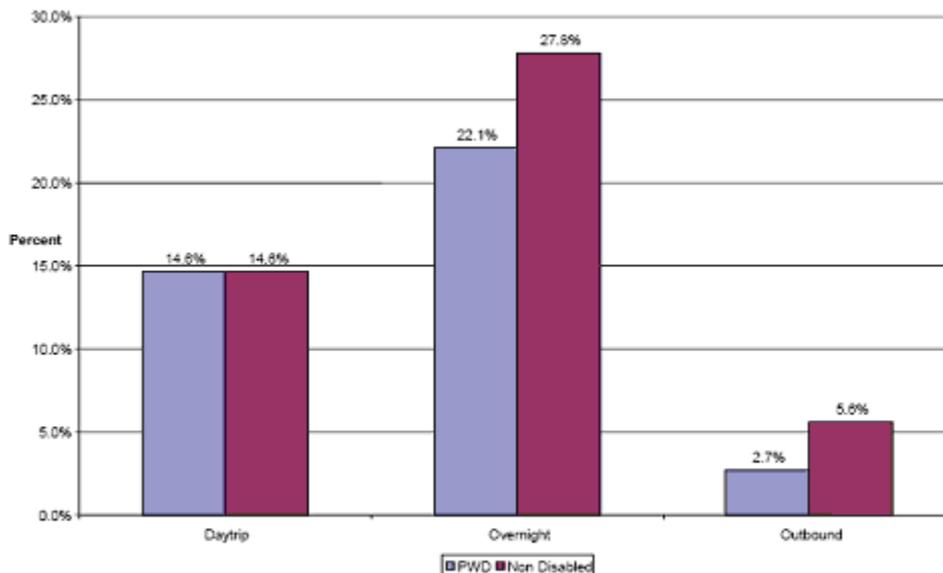
It is difficult to clearly define the extent of the accessible tourism market. Traditionally, tourism operators have focused on the needs of physically disabled travellers; however, increasingly the market includes our growing aging population, families with prams and travellers with vision and hearing impairments.

For the purpose of this plan, accessible tourism is defined as 'enabling people with access requirements to function independently and with equity and dignity through the delivery of universally designed tourism products, services and environments. This definition is inclusive of all people including those travelling with children in prams, people with disabilities and seniors¹.

There is an escalating need for increased accessibility within Australia and other international destinations. In 2008, a Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) study into accessible tourism stated that there has been recognition that the tourism industry needs to adopt universal design principles as a foundation of achieving greater social sustainability².

It is widely understood that with Australia's aging population, there is a growing market for travellers with accessibility needs. Studies show that people with a disability make up approximately 20 per cent of the Australian population with 88 per cent of these taking a holiday each year. This does not take into consideration seniors or travellers with other special needs.³

Figure 1: Rates of travel by people with and without a disability



Source: Bureau of Tourism Research. (2003). National visitor survey: travel by Australians.

¹ Darcy, S and Dixon T (2009). A Whole-Of-Life Approach to Tourism: The Case for Accessible Tourism Experiences. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 16(1), 32-44

² The Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre, (2008) Accessible Tourism- Challenges and Opportunities, www.crctourism.com.au

³ Darcy, S et al, (2008). STCRC Developing business case studies for accessible tourism CRC for Sustainable Tourism Pty Ltd, Gold Coast, Qld. Tourism Victoria's Accessible Tourism Plan 2010-2013

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

What do we want to achieve?

As the State Tourism Organisation, our role is to disseminate information on accessible tourism products and experiences to industry and tourists and encourage tourism operators to provide for all, including those with accessibility needs. The strategic directions in this plan outline how we will contribute to the development of the accessible tourism market.

Our aim is to assist the Victorian tourism industry to increase the accessibility to Victoria's tourism products for people who have specific access requirements.

Increasing industry awareness and understanding of the accessibility needs of tourists

Why is this issue important?

There is a significant lack of industry awareness of organisational benefits that flow from accessible product supply in tourism. Industry needs to gain an overall understanding about the type of issues that tourists with accessible needs face in order to provide a better product and service. Tourism Victoria will play an active role in increasing industry awareness of the requirements of consumers with accessibility needs.

Future actions

Action	Timing
Include fact sheets about Accessible Tourism and meeting the needs of accessible tourism in the Tourism Excellence Program.	2010
Update information on the visitvictoria.com website, relevant to accessible tourism experiences and product.	March 2011
Feature website links to accessible tourism collateral and other information on the visitvictoria.com website, including City of Melbourne and Travellers Aid.	November 2010

Encourage new and existing product to capitalise on the benefits of providing accessible tourism

Why is this issue important?

There are significantly less travellers with accessibility issues staying in hotels, resorts, motel or motor inns, compared to all visitors to Victoria (refer to Figure 2). Possible reasons may include fewer options for assistance, cost, inaccessible premises or difficulties in obtaining information about accessibility.

Figure 2: Visitors with a disability by accommodation type (%)⁴

Accommodation	Visitors with a disability	All visitors to Victoria
Hotel, resort, motel or motor inn	18%	30%
Caravan park or commercial camping ground	10%	8%
Friends or relatives property	49%	44%
Other	23%	17%

There are opportunities to increase the proportion of people with accessibility needs travelling to Victoria's tourism destinations.

Many businesses meet their legislative requirements including accessible parking and toilets, but do not consider the issue further. It is important that the industry recognise the service standard benefits of providing accessible tourism and the flow on social implications.

The Victorian State Disability Plan 2002-2012 identifies the Government's support of RuralAccess, MetroAccess and Deaf Access strategies, including promoting accessibility in arts and cultural development, sport and recreation. The State plan also aims to improve the recreational opportunities and the inclusion of people with a disability in arts and tourism by strengthening the Access for All Abilities program.

RuralAccess workers are located in 25 local governments and community health services across rural and regional Victoria. These workers plan and develop strategies across the full range of community infrastructure including education and training, transport, health, accommodation and housing, physical access planning, sport, recreation and the arts.

Future actions

Actions	Timing
Encourage new and existing products to consider accessible tourism in the planning or development of tourism infrastructure.	2010-2013
Develop case studies on accredited accessible tourism products to demonstrate the benefits of accessible tourism to operators and consumers. Disseminate case studies on the Tourism Excellence website.	2011
Facilitate relationships between Regional Tourism Boards and RuralAccess workers to build on the existing strategies of RuralAccess and facilitate a consistent whole of region approach to accessible tourism.	2011
Consider accessible tourism in the assessment of event funding proposals.	2010-2013

⁴ Tourism Research Australia (2003) National Visitor Survey

Disseminate information on accessible tourism products and attractions

Why is this issue important?

The lack of both accurate and easily accessible information is a significant barrier to visitors with accessibility issues and therefore to business development in this area. While some regions and destinations have developed a range of information products in a systematic way, access to this information is not consistently available at the point of enquiry.

An STCRC research report found that the lack of information available regarding accessibility is a key constraint for travellers.⁵

Accessible information for tourism experiences should be a consideration for the Victorian tourism industry in order for it to compete with other states in this market.

Future actions

Actions	Timing
Provide website links to accessibility organisations around the State including Travellers' Aid and City of Melbourne websites.	2010
Update accessible tourism imagery on visionsofvictoria.com website.	2011
Distribute information about new accessible tourism product to key media via <i>Pieces of Victoria</i> and other relevant databases.	2010-2013
Produce a Frequently Asked Questions document outlining our role in promoting accessible tourism. This document will be disseminated via Tourism Victoria corporate website.	September 2010

⁵ www.ossate.org

REPORTING

A report card detailing Tourism Victoria's progress against the actions in this plan will be completed at the end of the plan period (December 2013).