

New partnership aims to enable Australians living with disability to enjoy holidays

- **With one in six people in Australia, 4.4 million, living with disability, accessibility is a real and ongoing issue**
- **In fact, new research reveals over three-quarters of Australians agree the majority of places in Australia remain inaccessible**
- **People with disability have to plan longer, research harder and hope more than other Australians while planning holidays**
- **Spinal Life Australia and the Australian Tourism Industry Council are announcing a new national partnership to change this**

One in six (18%) people in Australia – or about 4.4 million – live with disability¹. These consumers are underserved in the tourism industry, and it is time for this to change.

Living with a disability adds challenges to a person's life that those who don't have a disability take for granted. In fact, new research from Spinal Life Australia reveals over three-quarters (76%) of Australians agree the majority of places in Australia remain inaccessible to people living with disabilities.

This comes as over half of Australians believe accessibility in public places (59%) and businesses (49%) needs improvement for people living with disability (49%). We need to work towards a more accessible, inclusive, and just society for all Australians.

This **Disability Action Week (25 November – 2 December)**, a leading voice in the disability sector, Spinal Life Australia, and the national representative body of Australia's tourism industry councils, Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC), have today announced a National Partnership to assist tourism businesses of all sizes in their journey towards a more inclusive and accessible Australia.

Evan Hall, Chairman of the Australian Tourism Industry Council, welcomes the partnership, describing it as a natural fit.

"We understand the value of accessible tourism and how vital it is to strive towards improved inclusion for all Australians. We're proud to be working with Spinal Life Australia to continue our shared advocacy for better outcomes for all."

The partnership will see the development and promotion of accessible tourism for Australian and international visitors, as well as assisting tourism businesses to identify improvements they can make to the accessibility of their offerings.

"Through our Accessible Tourism program businesses will undertake a comprehensive accessibility assessment to provide detailed information to visitors with a range of accessibility needs."

"In partnership with Spinal Life Australia, we will provide ongoing advice and advocacy to the Australian Government for new policies to improve the accessibility of Australia's tourism industry," Mr Hall says.

Mark Townend, CEO of Spinal Life Australia, says the partnership is a great example of improvement in accessibility when it comes to the travel and tourism sector.

MEDIA RELEASE



“People living with disabilities love to travel and explore like every Australian does. Tourism and travel businesses are critical parts of the Australian economy and have a key role to play in making Australia more accessible and inclusive, not only for our domestic market, but also our international visitors.

“Through our work with tourism businesses in various tourist hotspots across Australia, we’ll be highlighting the importance of access and inclusion to encourage meaningful change and look forward to working with ATIC to build on the great work that has already commenced,” he says.

The national partnership highlights both organisations’ commitment to the future development of accessible tourism for domestic and international visitors and to encourage businesses to improve their accessibility and inclusion.

For more information go to <https://www.qualitytourismaustralia.com/home/accessible-tourism/>

About Spinal Life Australia

For more than 60 years, Spinal Life Australia’s mission has been to empower people with a disability to live the life they choose and create a more accessible and equitable Australia for all.

The organisation began when a group of people living with paraplegia and quadriplegia met and decided they would advocate, together, for what mattered most to them.

Since then, Spinal Life has grown to offer a range of essential support services to help people with spinal cord damage and other physical disabilities at every stage of their lives.

This includes an Access and Inclusion Consulting service, supporting businesses, community organisations, State and Local Governments to make their venues, products and services accessible for everyone.

About Australian Tourism Industry Council (ATIC)

ATIC represents the State and Territory Tourism Industry Councils (TIC) and advocates on behalf of the tourism Industry. ATIC operates the Quality Tourism Framework (QTF) including the Australian Tourism Awards, Sustainable Tourism Accreditation and the Accessible Tourism Program.

The Australian Government has granted \$8M in funding to support ATIC’s suite of programs to assist small and regional tourism businesses enhance their quality, accessibility, sustainability, and international distribution.

About the Citations

The research by Spinal Life Australia was carried out on a national representative sample of 2000 Australians aged 18 and over in August 2023. Methodology: The data sample was weighted against ABS data for age, gender and location using an online survey that is independently conducted and verified PureProfile.

1. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/disability/people-with-disability-in-australia/contents/people-with-disability/prevalence-of-disability>