

# Australian Hotel Association Disability Inclusion and Access Award- Pubs & Restaurants

**GSA**  
Get Skilled Access



**“Real life disability experience  
delivered by real-life people with  
disability”**

# Introduction.

Get Skilled Access and Australian Hotels Association (AHA) have partnered to create an opportunity to increase disability access and inclusion across the membership of AHA by way of introducing disability access and inclusion as part of their annual awards. The intent is to educate and encourage members to aspire to increase and develop a better understand of what disability access and inclusion means for their pubs and restaruants.

The AHA represents more than 5,000 members across Australia serviced by a network of branches based in every state and territory, plus a Canberra-based National Office and is well placed to encourage and inspire their members to self-reflect on how they can enhance their access and inclusion practices.

According to the Understanding the Opportunity for Australia in Accessible Tourism Report it's estimated the Australian accessible tourism industry is worth around 8 billion dollars, and post Covid is expected to grow. Reconnection and unwinding are core needs for all Australian travelers, and this is just as true for people with a disability wanting an inclusive dining experience.

Planning is a key part of process for people with disability to ensure their experience is enjoyable and less stressful. For those with limited mobility, it's important to gain as much of and understanding of the environment as possible. Websites and information accessible on the internet is the number one tool used by customers with and without disability.

## **Award Aim:** (examples only)

- Gain greater understanding access and inclusion need for guests and customers who have disability
- Increase access and disability inclusion across our membership
- Increase the number of guests and customers visiting our members hotels, pubs and restaruants
- Increase the awareness of inclusive travel and dining

## **Disability Overview**

The Disability Discrimination Act (1992) defines disability as 'any impairment, abnormality, or loss of function, of any part of the body or mind'. This includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological, learning disability, physical disfigurement, immunological (the presence of organisms causing disease in the body).

## **Demographics**

- More than 4 million Australia have a disability.
- About 1 million are from a non-English speaking background.
- 37% of the national Indigenous population 15 years and older have a reported physical disability or a long-term health condition (102,900).
- At least 80% of disabilities are not visible.
- 15% or 2.1 million Australians of working age (15-64 years) have a disability.
- Mental health problems and mental illness are among the greatest causes of disability.
- The likelihood of living with disability increases with age.
- 40% of people with disability are 65 years or older.
- 2.1 million Australians of working age (15-64 years) have disability.
- 35.9% of Australia's 8.9 million households include a person with disability.

## **Types of disability**

- Only 4.4% of people with disability in Australia are wheelchair users.
- 1 in 6 Australians are affected by hearing loss. There are about 30,000 Deaf AUSLAN users with total hearing loss.
- Vision Australia estimates 357,000 Australians are blind or have low vision, and that this will increase to 564,000 by 2030.
- 45% of Australians aged 16-85 years, experience a mental health condition in their lifetime.

# What we heard.

During our discovery which included a desktop review and consultation with people with lived experience of disability, we heard that there's not a 'one sizes fits all' approach to accessible dining and everyone's needs are different. Our participants shared positive stories of their experiences which included:

- Staff asking politely if they needed any assistance
- Staff encouraging to assist throughout the duration of the dining or social experience
- Staff listening and accommodating the needs of the customer
- Menus accessible by a screen reader
- One on one descriptive tour of the pub or restaurant for someone who is blind
- Website accessibility, and the experience of booking online
- Layout of the pub or restaurant

There were also experiences shared that told us there are opportunities for growth and were encouraged that this award will bring more awareness to accessible dining and social experiences in pubs and restaurants that will lead to more inclusive experiences and an increase in a potentially untapped customer base for the future.

## Australian Hotel Association Disability Inclusion and Access Award

People with disability want the same thing from a pub or restaurant than any other guest, they want to enjoy a night out with friends and family and been included in the dining and social experience. All of us have different accessibility needs. A truly accessible and inclusive pub or restaurant goes above and beyond the built environment such as door width and stairs and considers the needs of the varying needs and greater inclusion of people with disability. This award helps the consumer and the AHA member consider criteria that addresses accessibility requirements many people with disability require on a daily basis.

Award Area	Award Criteria	Example of meeting criteria	Opportunities for access and inclusion
<b>Pub, Club, Restaurant Facilities</b>	<p>Is accessible parking available at the pub or restaurant?</p> <p>In the entrance, foyer and pathways throughout the restaurant, were there impeding items such as plants or flower arrangements or other objects (impeding pathways, entrance areas or lobby area)</p> <p>Is the entrance to the pub or restaurant wheelchair accessible?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is the parking in a location that provides appropriate access to the venue?</li> <li>- Decorative items placed in areas that will be impeding for people with disability including, but not limited to low vision or blind and wheelchair users.</li> <li>- If there are stairs, are there alternative methods to access the venue, such as a lift or ramp.</li> </ul>	

	<p>Was the accessibility of the pub or restaruant environment easy to navigate?</p> <p>Was the height of the bar accessible? Or did the bar staff assist you with your needs whilst ordering?</p> <p>Was marketing and advertising of the venue accessible? Was it online, TV, print. Were there mediums that catered for a broad range of people?</p> <p>Was the pub or restaurant other facilities such as gaming, outdoor space, ATM machine, pool table or dart board accessible?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weight of the entry door</li> <li>- Placement and layout of or unnecessary furniture</li> <li>- Rugs</li>   <li>- The staff member recognised the barrier and change their approach to suit the situation. Such as move to the front of the bar to greet and serve the customer</li>   <li>- Where did you find out about the pub or restaruant?</li> <li>- Did this influence your reason for booking at the pub or restaruant?</li>   <li>- Were alternative options available to improve accessibliey. Eg. Is there another option for accessing cash out, is there quiet areas that are away from the sound and lights of gaming machines, if there is an outdoor space is it away from the allocated smoking areas.</li> </ul>	
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<p><b>Booking and Reservations</b></p>	<p>Were you able to access the website or phone number to make the booking you required?</p> <p>Did the reservation process allow you request any access needs, eg does the restaurant, pub or club have wheelchair access, is there a quieter space available to dine?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessibility of the website form a screen reader.</li> <li>- Information, including pictures that informed accessibility features of the pub or restaruant?</li> <li>- Were you able to book a table online, did the booking ask for any accessibility requirements?</li> <li>- Options for accessibility requests</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Pub or Restaruant services</b></p>	<p>Were staff trained to assist people with their access requirements?</p> <p>Did a staff member assist or offer to assist guest has low vision or is blind and explain the menu or dining space?</p> <p>Did staff understand different ways to communicate with people with disability?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Wheelchair user may need assistance with carparking removing a seat form the table.</li> <li>- Use of inclusive language?</li> <li>- Simple communication</li> <li>- Offer to assist or did the guest have to ask?</li> <li>- Communicate directly to the person with disability and not the interpreter, carer/support person</li> </ul>	



	<p>Did staff greet the person by name?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This is important particularly for people with low vision or blind. For example “good evening, its Tom speaking”</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Bathrooms</b></p>	<p>Was there an accessible bathroom? Was it functional and safe to use?</p> <p>Were bathroom amenities such as paper towel, soap, bin accessible?</p> <p>Was there incontinence or personal hygiene units available?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rails at the toilet</li> <li>- Toilet paper in reach</li> <li>- Rails in appropriate locations</li> <li>- Hand basin in an accessible location</li>   <li>- Amenities in easy reach</li>   <li>- Many people with disability require incontinence support. Bins are not a sufficient for disposable option of incontinence and personal hygiene products. It’s important to consider this when offering and accessibility in the bathroom.</li> </ul>	

<p><b>Food Services</b></p>	<p>Where you able to access the menu?</p> <p>Did the staff understand or ask about any access needs when you ordered your meal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Available in formats that can be translated from a screen reader, a copy in braille, Larger font</li> <li>- QR code option</li> <li>- When you ordered did they ask if you required any additional needs</li> <li>- Understanding your needs when delivering the meal eg. Placement, did they understand how to communicate</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Hotel Safety</b></p>	<p>Upon arrival did the hotel staff explain emergency management process, particularly if the pub or restaurant has a lift?</p> <p>Is there safety and evacuation information available in accessible formats?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For wheelchair users in multi-story building do they explain what to do if elevators are out of action.</li> <li>- If required will a staff member escort customers out of the building to safety.</li> <li>- If the fire alarm is activated, how do they inform people who are low hearing or deaf?</li> <li>- For people who have psychosocial disability how is safety communicated?</li> <li>- Safety information available other formats such as braille, large font, can it be accessed by a screen reader</li> </ul>	

