Accessible Tourism
- Far from a niche
What is Accessible and what is Inclusion?

**Accessible means to:**
- caters for all (aged, temporary impairment, ID, physical dis, autism, )
- **What is universal accessibility?**
- Universal design (close relation to inclusive design) refers to broad-spectrum ideas meant to produce buildings, products and environments that are inherently accessible to older people, people without disabilities, and people with disabilities.
- **What is accessibility in tourism?**
- **Accessible tourism** is the ongoing endeavour to ensure tourist destinations, products and services are accessible to all people, regardless of their physical limitations, disabilities or age. It encompasses publicly and privately owned tourist locations.

**Inclusion means to:**
- Embracing diversity
- Acceptance
- **Inclusion** means to include everyone, not leaving anyone out because of their race, gender etc.
- Inclusive society - A socially inclusive society is defined as one where all people feel valued, their differences are respected, and their basic needs are met so they can live in dignity.
Market size and definition

- Almost one in five Australians reported living with disability (18.3% or 4.3 million people).

- The majority (78.5%) of people with disability reported a physical condition, such as back problems, as their main long-term health condition. The other 21.5% reported mental and behavioural disorders.

- Australia has an ageing population. There were around 3.5 million older Australians in 2015, representing one in every seven people or 15.1% of the population.
Business / Owner’s mindset

- Must be committed to opening your business to the entire community
- Be invested financially to actually achieve accessible compliance
- Need to ‘put it out there’ that you embrace inclusion
- Demonstrate in practice
- Inherent belief that everyone in the community deserves a great holiday
Inclusion cohorts

- Physical
- Intellectual
- Sensory - Autism
- Aged care
- Behavioural
- Overseas cultures
- Religious groups
- Cultural groups
- Extended family groups (3 generations)

**TAKEAWAY** - every guest will have a family member or friend who fits into one of these cohorts.
The Ripples n Tonic Story

- The vision - An Excellent accommodation environment and experience for all to enjoy.
- The Ripples n Tonic service setting aims to enhance positive lifestyles and well-being using an inclusive approach.
- We bought a Beachstay on Phillip Island, then expanded to include a Farmstay both of which had to be accessible and inclusive.
- Integral to our business plan was accessibility
- Annual increase on profits year on year
- Increase customer base year on year
- Challenge -> disability, tourism, farmstay, where to we fit in the tourism market? Where to focus our energies and not stereo typing ourselves into one or another

TAKEAWAY - inclusion & accessibility must be factored into your business plan.
So you have decided to be accessible... how to make it happen

**Physically accessibility requirements**

- General lay out - open design. Compliance and common sense
- Bathrooms
- Specialised equipment, eg hospital beds (hi-low adjustable)
- Mobile hoists
- Shower commodes
- Air beds / compression mattresses
- Beach wheel chairs
- Mobility aids / scooter
- No stairs -> flat surroundings
- Spacious (no clutter)
- Power point height
How to be inclusive for guests with Intellectual Disabilities

- Be mindful of proximately to roads
- Use lots of visuals, less words and language. Keep it simple

How to be inclusive for guests with ASD

- Plenty of space
- Offer differing sensory options
- Consider lighting
- Have quiet areas/spaces (noise levels)
- Consider water and how this is used within your property
Marketing strategies and promotions

- Develop an inclusive website / booking system package
- Photograph all disability equipment and specifications
- Attend disability service expos - targeted geographic areas
- Contact and promote directly with disability and mental health sector
- Invite their representatives to attend your facility
- Ensure you are linked in with local Council Visitor’s Centre
- Multiple booking systems
- Networking within the local tourism industry
- Establishing rapport and credibility
- Word of mouth - never underestimate
- Practice what you preach - to ensure repeat business!
Relationships

Discuss with guests prior to their stay what their specific needs/requirements are
- this eases their minds
- allows them to understand that you are non judgemental
- gets the holiday planning off to a positive start
- decreases anxiety for the guest/s
- demonstrates to the guests that you value them for who they are
- Offer advise and own experiences - positive dialogue builds relations

**TAKEAWAY** - add into online registration ‘additional needs/requirements’ to invite individuals to let you know what their specific needs are. This tells them that you want to listen and try to accommodate them.
What does that market actually want

- To be treated with respect
- To be treated as anyone else
- Acceptance
- Good time
- Not to be judged
Feedback

- Social media (Clickability)
- Facebook, Instagram
- Travelling Chair
- Word of mouth
- Trip Advisor
- AirBNB
- Direct feedback - people wish to maintain their privacy. They often inbox us.

**TAKEAWAY** - register for Clickability, TripAdvisor, Instagram etc.. And generate some real time feedback!
Our family stayed at the Ripples n Tonic ‘Alvina Farm Stay’. It was a fantastic and relaxing experience. Our boys really enjoyed feeding the animals and we saw how confident they were with them in the lovely environment that has been created here. We loved being able to go and visit and feed the animals at any time and they were so friendly.

The house we stayed in was great - all the comforts of home. Being on the farm you could get farm fresh eggs. Recommend you try these. We brought gum boots which for being on a farm were ideal at this time of year - be prepared - as you will be walking around the paddocks to see all the animals ranging from cows, goats, pigs, sheep, alpacas, peacocks, a turkey and a pony. The chickens are free ranging and are only too happy to come inside, so look out. The place is so much fun.

Our hosts were so welcoming and made the boys really part of the farm with the feeding, explaining all that went on and would help out with even the smallest thing. Nothing was too much trouble.

Our boys also enjoyed the trampoline and swings to help burn off their energy. There was a great outdoor entertaining area with a table tennis table, television, bbq, oven, etc which we used. We had a fire in the fire pit and toasted marshmallows. As if that wasn’t enough there is a spa which allowed for a relaxing evening after the farm and visiting attractions on Phillip Island during the afternoon.

It was a wonderful family holiday that had only one fault - it had to end! (dated 12 July, 2017)
Servicing your business - roles and responsibilities

- Front of office person must have empathy
- All staff members must treat people with dignity and respect
- All staff members must demonstrate inclusion (personality, manner, facial expressions, language and gestures...)

**TAKEAWAY** - consider inclusion and accessibility in your recruitment and marketing and promotions.
Disability, Mental Health and Aged holiday market share

- These cohorts have serious dollars to spend.
- They all want, need and desire getaways, holiday and or respite breaks.
- They would like the option to choose where they could holiday Eg, “Peter’s story - has tried other venues and locations, but they have always let him down and been unsuitable, so he returns to Ripples n Tonic each year.

**TAKEAWAY** - There is a big opportunity for new operators to embrace inclusive accommodation and cash in by setting up or adapting their current business practices in different tourism destinations.
Who you partner with to promote your properties to the accessible market

- Carer services
- Disability providers - NDIS
- Mental Health service outlets
- Ageing sector providers (Care Connect, Villa Maria Catholic Homes etc..)
- Councils - Metro and Rural Access workers
- Respite services

**TAKEAWAY** - don’t limit yourself, but go in slowly - strategically and committed while building those relations that could realise a reliable steady income stream.
Ripples n Tonic ‘TripAdvisor’ Feedback

“Wonderful place”
Reviewed 25 April 2017 via mobile

Have been coming here for a couple of years with a friend and always enjoy our stay. The facilities provided for people requiring disability equipment is the best around and makes your stay comfortable and most of all possible. Owners are very friendly and do all they can to make your time there fun and memorable. All of the animals are wonderful and you get to experience life on a farm. The guinea pigs are awesome too especially the babies which two of are now our new family members. Thanks for a wonderful time as always!

“Farmstay”
15 Mar 2017Reviewed by jarrod299

Visited first time with my family and friends family for a couple of nights in Nov 2016. Children ranged from 6 to 17. All ages loved feeding the animals during the morning feed. Cottages are large enough to comfortably accommodate both families during lunch and dinner. Perfect set up for families to be constantly entertained. Subsequently returned in Jan with sisters family and made the most of the communal kitchen. Met other families and kids made new friends in a very safe and friendly environment. Children never wanted to leave. Dianne and Michael have made it such warm and welcoming environment, we tried the beach house in March. All places were very family and disabled friendly. Really enjoyed each stay.
"Great Farm Stay"
8 Mar 2017 Reviewed by claudetteschokman

40 Seniors from Operation Hope spent 4 wonderful, relaxing days at Alvina Farm. Thank you Michael & Diane for going the extra mile in making our stay a very happy and Memorable one. The rooms were clean and comfortable. Also loved the fresh eggs and frozen meats.

"Perfect family get away for all ages and abilities"
24 Sep 2016 Reviewed by lynhock

A really pleasant safe place to spend time with the family in a quiet and safe setting with a variety of farm animals to see and interact with. The place is well set up for children and adults of all abilities and provides options to barbecue or do wood fire pizzas outside. Cottages are open and airy and cater for all. Will be returning.

“Wonderful”
8 Jun 2016 Reviewed by Julie M

We require disabled access accommodation for my husband, and this is the best we have stayed in. Great for all of us from 64 to 3. So much to see and do. Animals galore, and farmer Mik, and Di are so welcoming, as is Bella the sheep dog. We will be back.
Our Ripples ‘n’ Tonic farmstay was an absolute wonderful experience. Our family of 4 children were well catered for in every respect of their (and our) activity engagement. There was plenty to do (or not do, if you chose) for everyone. It’s a great lifestyle choice of farm-life that we could all experience for a holiday. The stay was a “salt of the earth” experience for us city-slickers, where we could get our hands dirty and taste a reality that we don’t normally have the opportunity to do. Feeding goats, helping with the calves, moving stock from the paddocks, pulling nettles, tending to the vegetable patches, throwing a stick with Bella the sheepdog, chopping wood, feeding chickens and cows, roasting marshmallows, trampoline jumping, chasing the llama (alpaca) was all in a day’s work/play. The cottage was perfect and although purposefully setup for disabled persons, they had added bonuses for our “able bodied” family. The cottage was very well appointed and very spacious …just like a large regular three bedroom home. Everything we needed was there for us and so it made packing for our large family a breeze. The fact that everything is also accessible for disabled person, opened up new appreciations of “difference” for our children…another life-learning bonus. We mingled with the other guests as we shared our farm-life together. We stayed at the farm in winter and were never cold, or wet, or muddy! I can imagine that there is cool comfort in summer, as there is plenty of shading and the aircon is great. We loved the playground, bbq area and hot-tub! The meat-pack is a must get! The tastes of the fresh farm meat cuts is still memorable….you have got to experience a farm bbq in Australia. Thanks Mik and Di for your hospitality and excellent advice for our sightseeing excursions on the island. 422 Ventnor Rd. is easy to find and was a great base to see the island sights from. The farmstay was a relaxing extension to our tourist visit of seeing the penguins, koalas, and kangaroos. We walked along real Aussie beaches and feel that we experienced the best of an Aussie farm with our fantastic and very memorable stay. We have booked again for a Christmas (December 2016) visit. Ripples ‘n’ Tonic is FARM-TASTIC.
Ripples n Tonic Beach house illustrations
Ripples n Tonic Beach house illustrations
Farm stay illustrations - a typical cottage
Farm stay illustrations - common areas
Farmstay - everybody loves baby animals!