

ACCESSIBLE GIPPSLAND

TOURISM PLAN 2016-19



ACCESSIBLE
GIPPSLAND

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Gippsland recognises the importance and benefits of building the region as an accessible tourism destination. The Gippsland Accessible Tourism Plan is a collaborative approach between Destination Gippsland, all six Local Governments in Gippsland, Tourism Victoria and relevant partners to ensure Gippsland's diverse tourism product can be enjoyed by all. It will complement the Tourism Victoria Accessible Tourism Plan and be the first Accessible Tourism Plan in Regional Victoria. The 2013-2015 Plan was reviewed on October 27, 2015. This plan reflects the review process.

The Plan discusses the challenges and opportunities the Gippsland tourism industry faces in becoming more accessible and recommends future actions in the areas of tourism product, marketing, training, advocacy, policy and management. Implementation of the plan will be the responsibility of a proposed Gippsland Accessible Tourism Partnership led by Destination Gippsland and made up of organisations with a role and interest in accessible tourism. Please note funding and policy commitment are not confirmed at this point. Additional resources will be required for this plan to be fully implemented and achieve its stated objectives.

As outlined in Tourism Victoria's Accessible Tourism Resource Kit Accessible tourism benefits everyone. More people enjoy the opportunity to travel and the tourism industry gets more visitors, longer seasons and new incomes. Society as a whole benefits from new job opportunities, more tax revenue and an accessible environment for local communities and visitors.

- Australia's population is ageing and there is a growing market for travellers with accessibility needs.
- Almost one in five people has a disability and based on Gippsland visitation figures this translates to 900,000 visitors with some disability travelling to Gippsland each year.
- People with a disability account for some 8.2 million overnight trips and spend \$8 billion or 11 per cent of Australia's overall tourism expenditure (Victorian Employer's Chamber of Commerce).

When you consider parents travelling with children in prams and larger groups that include people with a disability the potential benefits of accessible tourism to your business are even greater.

Note: This plan refers to 'accessible' tourism which is a visitor experience that is welcoming and inclusive of people of all ages and abilities. In particular, the context refers to people who have additional access requirements when they travel. This is a broad definition that includes those with a recognised disability, seniors with restricted capacity or parents with young children. The term 'accessible' is used where others may use 'inclusive', 'universal', 'barrier free' or 'access' tourism.

Vision

Gippsland will be widely recognised as a region with a significant range of accessible tourism product that grow visitation and enhance the tourism experience for all visitors to the region.

Objectives

The following objectives guide our priorities and key goals:

- Communicate the 'Good Access is Good Business' message to the tourism industry
- Increase visitor numbers, expenditure and dispersal of visitors with additional access requirements
- Position Gippsland as a leader in accessible tourism experiences that aligns with State strategies
- Raise the profile and priority of accessible tourism in Gippsland amongst all government, industry and community stakeholders
- Increase visitor satisfaction and repeat visitation from people with additional access requirements in Gippsland

Key priority areas

To achieve our vision and guide our objectives and goals we will pursue five priority areas over the next three years:

- Accessible Tourism Product
- Marketing to Visitors with Additional Access Requirements
- Industry Success in Accessible Tourism
- Advocacy and Policy
- Governance and Management

Situation Analysis

Three challenges or barriers have been identified as the most important to address the key goals and actions:

1. The continued implementation of the 'Good Access is Good Business' benefits across the Gippsland tourism industry. There is a need to provide business owners with the tools to understand the link between providing good access and increasing their patronage and visitor experience.
2. Limited understanding of 'access for all' requirements. Many businesses are apprehensive about providing infrastructure and other business investments to cater for people with additional access requirements and instead do nothing to address access issues.
3. Communication between government, the community and tourism industry regarding access issues can be improved. There is a need to continue develop stronger partnerships between all stakeholders on accessibility issues to generate lasting change.

Opportunities for accessible tourism in Gippsland

Three opportunities have been identified as priorities to address the challenges above:

1. Improve the industry's confidence and standards of customer service to attract visitors with additional access requirements through co-ordinated and targeted education programs utilising the [Accessible Gippsland Inspiring Visitor Experiences](#) brochure.
2. Encourage businesses to take steps to become more accessible. We need to make it easier to start the process and overcome any barriers to become an accessible tourism business. Continue to utilise the existing [Visit Victoria resource kit](#) to educate businesses and encourage them to take the first step.
3. Maintain the accessible tourism network across Gippsland to include accessible tourism in industry policy and decision making.

Priority Area 1 – Accessible Tourism Product

Key Goal: To ensure Gippsland is effectively positioned to encourage and facilitate investment in accessible tourism infrastructure and development

Action	Approach	Measures	Timing	Responsible	Update
<p>1. Distribute and review Accessible Gippsland printed brochure and Accessible Gippsland ebrochure</p>	<p>Implement the distribution strategy. Review content annually. Review potential for reprint. Review the potential for ebrochure to be updated</p>	<p>Remaining printed brochure stock is distributed to relevant organisations and operators. Stocktake is completed annually.</p> <p>Each LGA to review each section for accuracy prior to consideration for reprint</p> <p>Each LGA to review each section of the ebrochure for accuracy prior to consideration for update</p> <p>ebrochure link is distributed http://e-rochures.com.au/inspiredbygippsland/accessible-e-brochure/</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Gippsland Accessible Tourism Partnership (GATP)</p>	

2. Encourage investment in infrastructure to improve accessibility standards	<p>Promote the opportunities for businesses to invest in accessible infrastructure and improvements via the Community Building Grant Scheme.</p> <p>Seek future grant funds to broaden the approach for infrastructure investment.</p>	Six businesses supported across the LGA's and quality improvements made.	Annually	GATP	
3. Facilitate infrastructure improvements in key Gippsland National Parks	Support Parks Victoria to continue making parks more accessible with infrastructure improvements such as beach access ramps, pathways i.e. beach matting and all terrain wheelchairs such as those available at Wilsons Promontory.	Evidence of improved accessibility in key National Parks in Gippsland.	Annually	John Kenright	
4. Facilitate infrastructure improvements in key local government assets	Advocate for Gippsland Councils to improve accessibility to key visitor attractions and experiences such as museums, galleries, parks and Visitor Information Centres.	Evidence of improved accessibility at key attractions. LGA/RuralAccess Worker or Parks Victoria to report on progress in their local area.	Ongoing	GATP	
5. Monitor the integration of the 'Good access is Good Business' concept principles into the Gippsland Tourism Town Excellence (GTTE) Pilot program for Tourism Town Improvement	Include in the review process	Evidence that businesses have utilised the accessibility kit within the program	October 2016	DGL	
6. Foster the development of Accessible Tourism packages and itineraries	Connect accessible businesses to increase professional development opportunities and provide access	Networking opportunities such as the Gippsland Tourism	Ongoing	GATP	

	resources to develop complementary accessible products.	<p>Conference.</p> <p>Electronic Direct Mail out (EDM) to accessible businesses in the Accessible Gippsland brochure.</p> <p>Specific workshops if resources become available.</p>	<p>Bi annual EDM</p> <p>Annual</p>	<p>DGL</p> <p>GATP</p>	
7. Maintain partnerships and networks involving Access Workers and the tourism industry	Create opportunities and channels to meet and share information between Access Workers, Council Tourism Officers, Tourism Associations and Visitor Information Centres.	<p>VIC's are informed to answer all questions about accessibility in their town / region.</p> <p>Platform provided at the Gippsland Tourism Conference</p>	Ongoing relations hips between Councils and VIC's	GATP	
8. Maintain support and promote tourism events and educate event organisers in regard to accessibility requirements	<p>Incorporate accessible activities and services in existing events on the tourism calendar.</p> <p>Encourage Event organisers to use an Accessible Checklist for event organising</p>	<p>Research and confirm the most appropriate accessible checklist for events across Gippsland.</p> <p>Accessibility Events Checklist distributed to event organisers</p> <p>Accessibility Events Checklist is available on all relevant websites Monitor the number of tourism only related</p>	Ongoing	DG	

		events listed through ATDW that appear on Visit Victoria			
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Priority Area 2 – Marketing to Visitors with Additional Access Requirements

Key Goal: Develop marketing activities and communication tools which focus on accessible tourism as a means to increase visitor numbers, length of stay and dispersal for Gippsland

Action	Approach	Measures	Timing	Responsible	Update
9. Maintain the use of Accessible Gippsland tagline to be used in marketing	Leverage the 'Inspired by Gippsland' brand for Accessible Gippsland marketing messages.	Tagline used in Gippsland Accessible Tourism collateral The tagline is "Accessible Gippsland" and the hashtag is #AccessibleGippsland	Ongoing	GATP	
10. Educate & promote improved access of information, including information on accessible features on consumer websites and collateral promoting Gippsland	Utilise the Style guide to ensure that appropriate font size, layout, general content, event listings and images is used on websites and key collateral such as www.inspiredbygippsland.com.au and leading Council, VIC and industry association sites and information channels.	The number and prominence of accessible messages on key tourism marketing collateral The number of tourism experiences identified in the Accessible Gippsland Inspiring	Annually	GATP	

		Visitor Experiences e-brochure, with an Access Statement on their website. (Each LGA would responsible for their supporting and reporting on their development in their own patch)			
11. Develop ambassadors to promote accessible tourism experiences	Identify potential Gippsland ambassadors such as Paralympians, returned servicemen, community leaders, young mothers etc., to be included in <i>Inspired by Gippsland</i> collateral, imagery and interviews to increase awareness of Gippsland as an accessible destination and encourage visitation.	Develop guidelines for Accessible ambassadors Accessible ambassadors selected to promote Accessible Tourism in Gippsland (Ideally 1 ambassador per LGA)	Ongoing	GATP	
12. Expand the available imagery and video footage of accessible experiences	Incorporate accessible experiences and products into future photo shoots and video projects. Examples could include visitors in a range of locations with mobility aides, assistance animals, with children in prams, senior citizens etc.	Representative imagery has been produced – at least 1 piece of imagery per LGA Imagery is shared across the GATP	Ongoing	DGL	
13. Promote and package accessible businesses on inspiredbygippsland.com.	Promote opportunities for accessible tourism businesses to have features on the web deals page of	Establish three accessible packages Web	Ongoing	GATP/DG	

<p>au and other digital channels</p>	<p>inspiredbygippsland.com.au/ visitvictoria.com. Distribution channels include using a dedicated email direct mail reaching 30,000 consumers.</p>	<p>Deals to consumers on Inspired by Gippsland/Visit Victoria</p> <p>Build Travel and trade business partnerships in the industry to include Gippsland accessible itineraries and packages</p>			
<p>14. Continue to explore and reach new target markets with digital and database marketing Generate PR and media campaigns supporting accessible tourism experiences in Gippsland</p>	<p>Implement ongoing distribution of the plan.</p> <p>Promote our 'best of accessible experiences' content in mainstream and travel media.</p>	<p>'Generate 10 social media posts with Accessible content'. One per month on industry Facebook, Inspired by Gippsland and Instagram. These will also feed through to Twitter. Use the Hashtag #AccessibleGippsland</p> <p>Promotion through relevant and existing target markets such as Disabled Motorists, Disability Service Organisations,</p>	<p>Annually Ongoing</p>	<p>GATP</p>	

		Divine Website etc. 4 Media coverages obtained per annum in print, radio, television and online			
15. Communicate to the Gippsland tourism industry the 'Good Accessible Business' message	Continue to increase awareness amongst the Gippsland tourism industry of the importance of accessibility	Communicate key messages via industry newsletters, website, industry Facebook, the Gippsland Tourism Conference, meetings and local PR channels. Use case studies and local examples to demonstrate practical steps and outcomes. Encourage an accessibility category in local tourism and business awards or the inclusion of access criteria in the award process.	Ongoing	GATP	
16. Conduct research to understand the profile of accessible visitors to Gippsland and the economic value they contribute	Include accessible questions in visitor survey responses	Research has been conducted and information is analysed and reported to industry to inform future	December 2016	DGL	

		marketing and industry development activities.			
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Priority Area 3 - Industry Success in Accessible Tourism

Key Goal: Ensure the Gippsland tourism industry is aware of the benefits of becoming an accessible tourism business and provide them with the tools to develop their businesses to cater for this market.

Action	Approach	Measures	Timing	Responsible	Update
17. Educate the industry on incorporating accessibility into their digital strategy communication	Distribute information on how to make your website more accessible. - share iPhone apps that assist people with additional access needs, such as people with vision or hearing impairment. - Explore the opportunity to create further video case studies such as the MARU Koala Park video	Tourism websites have increased the use of accessibility principles	Ongoing	GATP	
18. Victoria – ‘Accessible Tourism; it’s your business’ Resource Kit	Educate and encourage tourism businesses to take the first step to becoming accessible. Post the resource kit and other materials on the www.destinationgippsland.com.au industry website and include links to it via newsletters and other industry communication channels.	Resource is distributed in Gippsland (minimum 25 from Gippsland over 3 years) Review annually	Annually	DGL & GATP	

<p>20. Continue to provide access awareness training to Council Tourism Officers & Business Tourism Associations to champion the promotion of Accessible Tourism and Universal Access</p>	<p>Provide experiential learning opportunities for the tourism industry. This could include workshops featuring role playing with participants experiencing the challenges facing people with additional access requirements such as using mobility aides and wearing blindfolds. Explore ways to incorporate into other local government training programs to maximise attendance.</p>	<p>Number of participants attending training and associated workshops (The aim is for a minimum of 2 workshops with 10 businesses)</p>	<p>2016/2017</p>	<p>GATP</p>	
<p>21. Gather survey data to understand access issues for Gippsland</p>	<p>Include accessibility measurements in Tourism Town Improvement Kits and subsequent Town audits.</p> <p>Assess individual businesses as a pre requisite for inclusion in accessibility marketing within Gippsland as per the guidelines for the Accessible Gippsland brochure</p>	<p>Questions and responses are included in the Tourism Town Improvement Kits. A baseline is established for accessibility across Gippsland Individual businesses as per the guidelines for inclusion in the Accessible Gippsland brochure.</p>	<p>2016</p>	<p>DGL & GATP</p>	

Priority Area 4 - Advocacy and Policy

Key Goal: Effectively advocate for policies and strategies to promote the benefits of accessible tourism in Gippsland.

Action	Approach	Measures	Timing	Responsible	Update
22. Review the Accessible Tourism Plan 2016-2019	Consult with the Gippsland Accessible Tourism Partnership and stakeholders to develop advocacy plan and priorities.	Plan Reviewed annually Advocacy Plan developed	May 2017	GATP	
23. Encourage tertiary education institutions to include accessible tourism components into course curriculum	Approach - Partner with councils Economic Development departments to approach training and university tourism departments to include content on accessible tourism in existing events and tourism courses.	An increased number of tourism graduates with an understanding of accessibility	Annually	GATP	
24. Influence other Gippsland plans and policies	Advocate for accessible tourism information to be included in strategic plans such as the Gippsland Regional Plan and individual Gippsland Local Government Plans. Encourage each Gippsland Tourism Association to address accessible tourism in their Strategic Plans.	Inclusion in all of these external plans	Ongoing	GATP	

Priority Area 5 – Governance and Management

Key Goal: To build an accessible tourism group with sector representatives and set goals and actions for building a more accessible Gippsland

Action	Approach	Measures	Timing	Responsible	Update
25. Maintain The Gippsland Accessible Tourism Partnership (GATP)	There is a need to expand the current partnership to continue the collaborative approach to support accessible tourism in Gippsland. Opportunities include invitations to all Councils, Parks Victoria, Tourism Victoria, Arts Victoria, business and community representatives and the transport industry including VLine.	Representatives selected and Group meeting held	Ongoing	GATP	
26. Management of the Gippsland Accessible Tourism Plan	Destination Gippsland will lead the management and implementation of the plan in partnership with the GATP. This role is dependent on appropriate long term resources being committed to both Destination Gippsland and the plan itself.	Annual review of goals and actions	October 2016	DGL & GATP	
27. Pursue funding opportunities to execute the goals of the Gippsland Accessible Tourism Plan	Identify suitable projects and apply for relevant local, state and federal government grant programs to support the actions of the Gippsland Accessible Tourism Plan. Sourced funding from Tourism Victoria to produce MARU accessible case study https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gP2qpYZ3V8	Successful applications for funding and priorities set	Ongoing		

Key Accessible Tourism Resources

To complement the Gippsland Accessible Tourism Plan please note there are a range of accessible tourism resources available which include:

- Tourism Victoria's *Accessible Tourism Plan* aims to encourage the Victorian tourism industry to see the social and economic benefits of offering tourism products and services for people with access requirements. The plan can be found by visiting www.tourism.vic.gov.au.
- The Tourism Victoria Accessible Tourism Resource Kit will assist Gippsland's tourism businesses to tap into this important growth market. The kit is a comprehensive guide which will help many tourism businesses through the process of becoming an accessible business. The toolkit will be released in May, 2013 and available at www.tourism.vic.gov.au <http://www.tourism.vic.gov.au/business-tools-support/accessible-tourism.html#toolkit> and www.destinationgippsland.com.au
- The Victorian Office for Disability www.dhs.vic.gov.au
- Divine www.divine.vic.gov.au
- Vision Australia www.visionaustralia.org
- To view *Good Access is Good Business* www.destinationgippsland.com.au
- Travability www.travability.travel
- Travellers Aid Australia www.travellersaid.org.au
- Arts Access Victoria www.artsaccess.com.au
- Liveable Housing Design resources www.livablehousingaustralia.org.au
- Travelling Chair: Making your community accessible www.travellingchair.net

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