

Accessible Tourism - Case Studies

Gold Coast City Council

The Gold Coast City Council has been actively involved in addressing accessible tourism on the Gold Coast, along with the needs of the approximately one hundred thousand people with disabilities living on the Coast.

Currently, the Council is working on multiple projects, which are taking access requirements into consideration. This includes the making of the 36km Oceanway accessible. In order to do this the Council is ensuring that all facilities along the Oceanway, including toilets and viewing platforms, are accessible.

Extensive master planning of the Council's major parks, including Cascade Gardens and Kurrawa Pratten Park at Broadbeach, and Macintosh Island at Main Beach, is also being conducted in order to provide equitable access to the parklands and facilities.

The Council is also working on the development of the Southport Broadwater Parklands, which will be a similar development to that of The Strand in Townsville. In developing this site, the Council will take into consideration the requirements of accessible tourists in the design and construction of the site.

Finally, social planners in the development assessment area of the Council are currently trying to identify Class 2 and Class 2 buildings in development applications in order to increase the supply of accessible tourist accommodation in the region.

Hervey Bay City Council

The Hervey Bay City Council, working in conjunction with Tourism Hervey Bay are striving to make Hervey Bay one of the most accessible tourism destinations in Australia.

Hervey Bay boasts modern, thoughtfully designed accommodation, along with tourism operators committed to offering a high level of physical accessibility and service. Fourteen kilometers of paved pathways wind through parkland and border the Bay's calm, clear waters and easily accessed beach access points. Facilities along the foreshore offer accessible tourists the ability to enjoy these pristine areas.

Curramore Country Cabins - <http://www.malenycabins.com.au/>

Curramore Country Cabins first began in January 2003 when Jenny and Kevin Santin purchased a 25 acre property at Maleny, on the top of the Blackall Range. The couple decided to build cabins on the site for tourist accommodation purposes. During the development stages, it was suggested that the cabins be designed to be able to cater for people with disabilities.

Jenny and Kevin undertook research and found that there was a whole market not being catered for, and decided to change their designs, making two of the three cabins totally accessible, not just wheelchair friendly. In doing so, this allows a wider range of people to be catered for.

The cabins were officially opened in February 2005, becoming the only purpose built accessible accommodation on the Blackall Range. The biggest challenges that Curramore has faced is convincing people that the facilities they have are actually real, while retaining the look and feel of 4 ½ star luxury accommodation. Most people involved in finding suitable accommodation for the disabled will tell you that what is advertised is generally not what you get. Word of mouth is increasing business for Curramore, and along with website placements, mail outs and e-mailing, increased enquiries are being seen.

Another interesting point which has emerged from Curramore's participation in accessible tourism is that they have regular guests who look after severely disabled persons 24-7 who have put carers in place to look after them while they come away for a break themselves.

Hervey Bay Whale Watch - <http://www.herveybaywhalewatch.com.au/>

Hervey Bay Whale Watch first started conducting whale watching tours in 1987. During their 21 years in the business, Brian and Jill Perry have operated their tours on a number of different vessels.

In 2003, the Quick Cat II took over as the primary tour vessel. The Quick Cat II was designed specifically to be accessible for all people, including those people in wheelchairs, and people with prams. The vessel is a wide-bodied super catamaran that has 3 deck levels. With the use of ramps running from the main deck to the fore deck, both able-bodied and accessible passengers are able to move around the decks with ease. The positioning of such things as anchors, chains, and anchor winches under the deck has also freed up extra room for passengers to navigate.

The Quick Cat II is the most awarded whale watching vessel in Australia, winning 10 Fraser Coast South Burnett Tourism Awards for excellence, has been awarded Advanced Eco Tourism Accreditation, and has been entered into the Fraser Coast Hall of Fame for its achievements in Access Tourism and Whale Watching.

Brad Holmes Surf Coaching – <http://www.bradholmessurfcoaching.com>

Brad Holmes first started surf coaching in 1992. In June 2001, Brad Holmes graduated as the first surfing coach in Queensland to be qualified to teach people with disabilities how to surf. His surf lessons are open to people with varying types of disability.

Brad utilises special craft to work with paraplegics, and sign language to communicate with the hearing impaired. Brad's classes are offered to people with disabilities aged from 4 year old to 66 year olds, in both one-on-one and group sessions.

In July 2003, Brad was involved in a tour of international deaf surfers. This tour involved surfing in various locations throughout Australia including the Gold Coast and Perth.

Brad is also a qualified Tai Chi instructor with the Australian Academy of Tai Chi and Qigong. Brad incorporates Tai Chi as a warm up exercise in each of his surf lessons, and also conducts sessions for other groups, including persons with disabilities.

Brad has been nominated three times for the Gold Coast Awards for his work with the disabled.

The Sebel Harbour Lights Cairns – http://www.mirvachotels.com/hotel_detail.asp?hotel=31

Situated on Cairns' waterfront with amazing views over the marina, The Sebel Harbour Lights Cairns offers fully self-contained apartments with furnished balconies that make the most of the stunning views of the marina, Marlin Parade or parklands.

Harbour Lights provides many wheelchair accessible facilities. Of the 114 apartments available, 4 are completely wheelchair accessible. Harbour Lights also has an outdoor swimming pool facility, which includes a wheelchair hoist for use by guests to enter and exit the pool.
