Occasional Paper No. 4.
An Economic Model of Disability

Changing the demand drivers for the provision of products and services in Inclusive Tourism. The Why and How.

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Preamble
What is Inclusive Tourism?

All sorts of terms have been used to describe this growing market from Barrier Free Tourism in the United Kingdom, Accessible Tourism in Australia, Access Tourism in New Zealand. All of those terms have their foundations based on the physical term of “access” More often than not those expressions also have a narrow interpretation as people think of them applying only to travelers with a mobility related disability. The danger in using those terms is that the mind set is not lifted beyond physical access and does not find its way into an organisation’s culture.

More correctly what we are describing in talking about basic cultural change within the Tourism industry is an “Inclusive” environment where people of all abilities are felt welcome and wanted as customers and guests.

We are defining Inclusive Tourism as:

“Inclusive Tourism” - “the application of the seven principles of Universal Design to the products, services, and policies of the tourism industry at all stages of their lifecycle from conception to retirement and introduction of a replacement”

After 20 years of disability rights legislation there is a plethora of accessible infrastructure around the world but a sad lack of information available to the traveler with a disability. This paper explores why the legislative and compliance models have failed to create, in the eyes of the Tourism Industry, a viable Inclusive Tourism sector.

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Introduction
In a number of previous articles we have examined why the variety of equal opportunity and anti discrimination pieces of legislation around the world have not created an inclusive society. Most of that legislation has been in place for over 20 years and while there is no denying that it forced built infrastructure to become more accessible by setting standards for minimum compliance, it has generally failed to change overall community culture towards people with a disability. Industries, particularly the tourism sector, regards access as a compliance issue managed by sets of rules and procedures designed to reduce exposure and risk. We must remember, however, that those standards were based on the principles of Universal Design, which at their heart were conceived to be innovative and set the standards to develop infrastructure that would be usable by people of all abilities.

Today the number of people who potentially benefit from enhanced accessibility exceed 31% of the population, a significant purchasing group. Despite the size of the potential sector, business attitudes remain unchanged. The commercial sector has failed to see the market significance. It has further failed to comprehend how the disability sector will grow over the next 15 years with the aging population and the retirement of the Baby Boomers. Peter Brook once wrote “In Mexico, before the wheel was invented, gangs of slaves had to carry giant stones through the jungle and up the mountains, while their children pulled their toys on tiny rollers. The slaves made the toys, but for centuries failed to make the connection.”

The disability sector faces a major issue today. Generally the private service sectors, as the slaves in Mexico did centuries ago, have not made the connection between accessible infrastructure and the growing market demand. Access is enshrined as a compliance issue, not a market issue. People with a disability are regarded as problems and part of a risk management solution, not as a valued customer. Like the slaves’ children’s toys, the accessible infrastructure is in place but it is seen as a cost not a competitive advantage.

\[\text{In Mexico, before the wheel was invented, gangs of slaves had to carry giant stones through the jungle and up the mountains, while their children pulled their toys on tiny rollers. The slaves made the toys, but for centuries failed to make the connection.}\]
Peter Brook

History
The Medical to Social Model of Disability.
In order to understand the current context, the evolution of thinking towards disability needs to be understood. The first model of disability was the Medical Model. Here disability was defined as an individual problem and it was that individuals problem to adapt to their circumstance. It was very much based on medical care, individual treatment, professional help and individual adjustment and adaptation. The social model took the model of disability from the concept of an individual problem to one of social context. Disability was defined as a function of the environmental and social constraints. A disability would not be a disability if the barriers of the society in which we live did not exist. The paradigm however relied on a social conscious to implement the necessary structural changes to remove the barriers. The shortcomings of the social model is that the change has been driven as a rights issue and one of compliance that has been seen as a cost that society demands of a business. The implications are that it is all about access and not the person. It is driven by social expectations and translated by rule makers. At that point it ceases to be inclusive and just becomes another problem for organisations to deal with and is handed across
to their risk management departments. What started as a model to change the issue of disability away from the individual has only succeeded in transferring into a problem to be dealt with for a group of individuals.

**Corporate Social Responsibility and the Triple Bottom Line**

CSR is often sited as a major driver of social inclusion. CSR is perhaps more misunderstood than environmental sustainability was 10 years ago. CSR does generate significant amounts of funds for social activities but does not always result in fundamental cultural change. Philanthropy does not equate to CSR. True social inclusion only comes from acting in a totally inclusive way to an organization’s customers and employees. Giving or supporting a local community group or running a charitable foundation is not the same. It may look good on the annual report or make the directors feel good about their organization but if it is being discriminatory in the way it treats it’s customers or employees then the motives do not lead to a change in corporate behaviour.

The fundamental question is why. CSR perpetuates the social model and the basic rights issues surrounding it. When change is driven by rights, government legislation and compliance then the outcome will always be procedures to ensure those obligations are met. Seldom is the associated expenditure on infrastructure, manuals and training seen as an asset that will lead to an economic return or a competitive advantage.

When it comes to accessible infrastructure we see time and time again great infrastructure with little or no marketing to inform people of it’s existence. The disabled community complain about the lack of infrastructure and industry bemoan the poor utilization and over regulation.

**Disability vs Ability**

People with a disability are present in all sectors in roughly the same proportion as the general population. They are not like the backpackers, adventure tourists, luxury travelers or the Gay and Lesbian sector. The common misconception is that the needs of all people with a disability are the same. In one sense that conception has been reinforced by the social model of disability which, in defining the social barriers, has concentrated on a narrow sub set of physical access requirements largely limited to car parks, toilets building access and hotel rooms. The broader aspects of outdoor and activity spaces were ignored by most codes as were the needs for interconnecting barrier free paths of travel. By concentrating on the narrow access requirements the social model of disability effectively created an artificial sector of people with a disability that ignored their actual aspirations. It didn’t change the culture away from looking at a person through their disability, it reinforced it.

A disability, in reality is just a different level of ability. We are not all equal in a number if ways. Physical ability is just one set in the total capability set of the human being. If we do take physical ability as the cornerstone of the push for greater accessibility then we need to put it into context. Looking at the travel industry as a case in point.

Travellers vary enormously in their physical capabilities and their holiday patterns reflect that diversity. Whether that holiday is climbing a Himalayan peak, walking New Zealand’s Milford Track, visiting the wine region of the Napa Valley or relaxing on a Caribbean Island that is a personal choice. The tourism industry is adept at discerning and catering for those wide ranges of choices, however, we have categorized a disability, through the medical and now social models as something different and around that built a set of preconceptions that shields it from a market view.

*Continuum of Accessibility Needs.*

[Image of a continuum chart with axes for Mobility Impairments, Visual Impairments, Hearing Impairments, Speech Impairments, Mental Impairments, Hidden Impairments, Elderly Population, Severe, Moderate, Mild.]

Adapted from Buhalis and Darcy 2011
Disability is often regarded as a homogenous concept. The opposite is true. As with the general population ability is on a continuum.

**How Significant is the Disability Sector.**

In June of this year the World Health Organisation and the World Bank released the results of the first ever global study on disability. The report estimates that more than one billion people experience some form of disability. Most studies and reports on disability stop there, however, from an economic point of view the raw data on disability numbers is not the true figure. Research done in Australia by Simon Darcy puts the multiplier effect at three when those directly associated with a person with a disability is taken into account. Those directly affected are family, friends and work colleges. If a person with a disability cannot access a business’s services, like a restaurant, resort or transport then the entire group cannot access those services. In economic terms over 4 billion people worldwide are directly affected by disability which is over one third of the world’s population.

There was significant Australian research done as part of the CRC on sustainable tourism the significant findings were:

- Some 88% of people with disability take a holiday each year that accounted for some 8.2 million overnight trips.
- The average travel group size for people with a disability is 2.8 people for a domestic overnight trip and 3.4 for a day trip.
- There is a myth that the inclusive tourism market does not spend because of economic circumstance. That is false as it is a significant proportion of each travel market segment.
- They travel on a level comparable with the general population for domestic overnight and day trips.
- The total tourism expenditure attributable to the group is $8bn per year or 11% of overall tourism expenditure.

There is one key point to the above statistic in that the $8 billion is expenditure by people with a disability only. If expenditure by people travelling in the group is factored in, it is $24 billion or 30% of the total tourism market.

Of more significance is the ageing population and the effect of the retiring Baby Boomer generation. US research by McKinsey & Company predicts that by 2015, the baby boomer generation will command...
almost 60 percent of net U.S. wealth and 40 percent of spending. In many categories, like travel, boomers will represent over 50 percent of consumption. The impact on the Inclusive Travel sector is significant as over 40% of them will be retiring with some form of disability, raising the total value of direct expenditure to the Inclusive Tourism sector to over 25% of the market by 2020.

“The American adults with disabilities or reduced mobility currently spend an average of $13.6 billion a year on travel. Creating accessible cruise ships, accessible ship terminals, accessible ground transportation, and accessible tourist destinations is not charity. It is just good business.”

Dr Scott Rains, a US expert on disability issues

The Economic Model of Disability.
Evolution from the medical to social model of disability saw a major shift in attitude from one that concentrated on teaching an individual how to cope with a disability in an otherwise hostile environment to changing social attitudes to manipulate the environment to be more accessible to a person with a disability. It was a rights issue and based on the premise that society had an obligation to assist those with a disability. The final evolution is to stop concentrating on the “disability” but rather the needs and abilities in a customer focused environment. An economic model of disability changes the basic driver from a rights and compliance issue to a market demand driver. The economic model will change that focus by changing how access is looked upon. Once any industry appreciates that the disabled and their friends are a large market they will start to research their interests.

The economic model is suggesting that the market already exists and is growing rapidly with the retiring baby boomers. The real issue is attracting them by providing the facilities and services that they need. This group will not identify with the disability sector but will simply want to keep doing those things that they have always done and even relive their youth in their retirement. Their abilities will not be what they were in their 20’s but they will still expect be able to fulfil their aspirations. This impetus of new demand for more accessible facilities and service will change the paradigm for the disability sector. The business case is about making the industry aware of the market size and redefining disability away from the concept that it is an homogenous group to regarding it as significant group of people with differing levels of ability desires and needs.

The Disability Models

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Improved accessibility – a commercial success for Scandic

Scandic is intensifying its successful focus on improved accessibility. This year, over 100 new rooms for disabled will be added to the portfolio and 2012 there will be even more to meet the large and growing demand. More and more companies and organisations seek rooms and conference facilities that are accessible to all. At the same time the numbers of older, active private travellers who are attracted by improved accessibility are increasing. Improving accessibility has proven to be a commercial success for Scandic, the Nordic region’s leading hotel chain.

Design for All is a key concept in Scandic’s accessibility work. The aim is for the rooms for disabled to be just as well designed as any other room, with practical solutions that go almost unnoticed, except by those who really need them. Hooks, mirrors and keyholes at two heights are appreciated by children, short adults and those who use a wheelchair. Height-adjustable beds and extra spacious bathrooms are popular with all guests. Scandic’s comprehensive 110-point accessibility programme covers everything from team member training to adapted rooms and extensive, detailed accessibility information on every hotel’s website.

“When we take over a hotel, we implement our accessibility programme within three months and, after just one year, we tend to notice more bookings from private guests and from companies and organisations, thanks to our accessibility work. This gives us a clear competitive advantage and, as well as showing our commitment to social responsibility, we see major commercial benefits in being accessible to all,” relates Anders Ehrling, President and CEO of Scandic.

New hotels require smart new solutions
A lowered reception desk for wheelchair users, a guest computer in the lobby at a comfortable height for a wheelchair and an ordinary chair, a hearing loop in conference facilities and reception, and vibrating alarm clocks that also hear the fire alarms are just some examples of smart solutions that ensure a high level of accessibility. Scandic’s accessibility work remains a core focus in its new and refurbished hotels, with numerous examples of best practice:

With Scandic Victoria Tower, the new spectacular 34-floor hotel in Kista, Stockholm, Scandic shows that it is perfectly possible to offer rooms for disabled with fantastic views high up in the building, with the help of fire-safe elevators that allow wheelchair users to evacuate the building easily. The flagship Scandic Grand Central opening soon in central Stockholm (Oct 2011) proves that it is also possible to incorporate accessibility into a 130-year-old property.

This year Scandic Sydhavnen in Copenhagen will become Scandic’s most accessible hotel in Denmark, offering 11 new rooms for disabled and reception, restaurant and conference area all on the entrance level, with easy access from the car park.

“We have worked hard on accessibility for eight years and learned a great deal about these complex issues, but there is of course plenty still to do,” states Magnus Berglund, Disability Ambassador at Scandic. “We have entered an exciting phase, where interest and bookings show our accessibility work is appreciated by many more people than just the guests with a disability.”
I travel because I want my mind and my heart and my soul to overcome the boundaries that my body now feels. I travel in spite of the fact that it is “inconvenient” in that I am unable to walk onto the plane or to simply stand up and use the bathroom when needed, or that I have to spend innumerable hours planning and seeking out where I may be able to go in a wheelchair; what I will be able to see and where will accommodate me once I reach my chosen destination. I travel because to do so puts me in the realm of saying “HA! Look at me now!” I can do and be and see and experience this wonderful world. I CAN taste, smell, delight in the people and remarkable sights and win in the battle of my body over my spirit.

I was a dancer and I was 18 when I crashed my car in front of the Mormon Chapel on the Maryland beltway. I broke my neck and was told I will never move from the neck down again. Yet, I heard a voice as I lay alone in the night.

"you will not be able to move your legs..but it will not be permanent and there is a purpose"

I accepted this, moved on and regained the use of my arms and hands…just like the voice said.

So I go--and I relish in the next trip--the next challenge that I WILL over come. I am not a wheelchair sports jock-never raced in my chair or played tennis or rugby or wheelchair basketball. Travel and love is how I survive. I take my love and my will with me and I look strangers in strange lands in the eye as I roll by and I am saying to myself and to everyone who sees me that WE are not pathetic, sad, miserable cripples…

WE are here and we want to share the world with you….it is up to me to show you I will come--it is up to you to show me I am welcome.

Deborah Davis
The Path to Inclusion in Tourism.

Universal Design is also called Inclusive Design, Design-for-All and Lifespan Design. It is not a design style but an orientation to any design process that starts with a responsibility to the experience of the user. It has a parallel in the green design movement that also offers a framework for design problem solving based on the core value of environmental responsibility. Universal Design and green design are comfortably two sides of the same coin but at different evolutionary stages. Green design focuses on environmental sustainability, Universal Design on social sustainability.

Institute for Human Centred Design

Bridge the Disconnect
Inclusive not Special Facilities

The clear fundamental intent of Universal Design was to create experiences that could be enjoyed by entire families or groups of friends together as an inclusive experience. The true joy of life is sharing experiences with family and friends, aspirations that don’t change with differing levels of ability. Accessibility, in the way it has been incorporated into standards, has more often than not, resulted in design solutions that have segregated people with a disability by building “special” facilities. On the left is an example from the John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park in the Florida Keys. They have created an excellent picnic facility incorporating BBQ’s at a usable height and picnic tables with long overhangs at one end to facilitate a wheelchair. The facility is concrete paved and has a disabled car park just behind where the photo is taken which has provision for side ramp vans. From an accessibility point of view the facility is excellent and certainly meets all of the requirements of the ADA (American Disability Act)

On closer inspection however, it doesn’t meet the spirit of Universal Design or the concept of inclusion. The picnic facility is one of five similar facilities along the same stretch of car park. The one pictured is emblazoned with blue signs clearly highlighting to the world that it is a facility for the disabled. By definition it has segregated that section of the community as special or different. The only differentiation the pictured facility has to the others in the park is the overhang on one end of each table. A far better solution would to have simply incorporated the overhang into the tables at every picnic pavilion in the park. The addition of 18 inches of timber into all of the tables would have cost less than the blue signs and paint. If all of the tables incorporated the overhang then every facility is accessible but more importantly “inclusive”. The blue signs needn’t be there and the population is suddenly treated as equals. True inclusion should just blend in.

The first principle of the seven principles of Universal Design states “Equitable Use - The design does not disadvantage or stigmatize any group of users.

The real disconnect here is that prescriptive legislation will lead to prescriptive outcomes. If the rules say 10% of picnic tables are to be accessible then 10% will be. The 10% is a minimum but there
is no incentive to look outside the square and say lets make 100% accessible.

**Turning Access Information into a Competitive Advantage, not an Audit Report**

The big gap in the current framework is the provision of information. Every piece of research on accessible tourism comes to the same conclusion. While there are many facilities with good to great accessibility the information about those facilities is hard to find if it exists at all. Where it does exist it is often hidden under “other information” or under “compliance”. Accessible Information is not seen as offering any value as a marketing tool, which means the Tourism Industry does not see Inclusive Tourism as a genuine market. The perception is that it is very small sector that has to be “accommodated”.

The provision of information is driven by compliance and the perception that every disability is the same. Hence where accessibility information is provided it is done so in a compliance manner with simple statements as “This facility has disabled facilities” A detailed examination often reveals that the statement means that there is: car parking, accessible rooms, and toilet facilities, and there may be braille and or audio announcements in lifts. Accessible rooms are defined as those rooms with roll in showers etc. Seldom do the operators know the height of the bed, the knee clearance under a writing desk or indeed if their balconies have a sill. Even where they have a fully compliant room there is little understanding of the practical needs of a traveller with a disability and the information needed to drive a stay or not stay decision.

All disabilities are not the same, however, and while a full roll in shower may be required by some people it is not required or wanted by others. Often people with poor circulation, wheelchair user or not, may prefer a bath or spa bath. Many hotel rooms that are not “compliant” are suitable especially if the traveller with a disability has someone with them. Even more flexibility is offered by seasoned travellers who have with them their own bathroom aids whether that is a toilet riser or shower/bath chair. In these cases the critical information is door width, manoeuvring room, and bed height. The right information would allow an individual traveller to make their own informed decision. Further if a tourism venue understood the actual needs of a disabled traveller the purchase of additional mobility aids would open up a greater product range to the sector rather than just the “disabled room” which, in most cases, is the standard and lowest yielding room.

In many cases there is just no information at all. A case in point is the Village of Sun Peaks in British Columbia, Canada. Walking through the village one can’t help but be impressed by the standard of accessibility with ramps, lifts and level access paths throughout. The walking paths close to the village are also fully accessible being barrier free and gentle grades. The village runs a comprehensive adaptive ski program during the winter season. Sun Peak’s web site, however, has no information about the village’s accessibility. Sun Peaks clearly see accessibility as a compliance issue and not an asset or competitive advantage.

The US has moved, under the ADA, to require information to be provided on accessible facilities as of the 1st of March 2012. While this is a step in the right direction and will see information being presented in the mainstream it is still likely to result in a compliance outcome. The information will be presented in accordance with the requirements of the ADA and is more likely to resemble an audit document than a brochure encouraging people with a disability to visit or stay.
Incorporating Infrastructure and Equipment into the Touring Offering

The final disconnect that needs bridging is between the owners of infrastructure and equipment and the major tour operators and wholesalers. As has already been discussed, 20+ years of accessibility legislation has resulted in some very good accessible infrastructure and equipment. A recent tour of Florida with Comos, however, highlighted that the infrastructure has not translated into a touring product offering. The tour took in Kennedy Space Centre, Fort Lauderdale, Miami and South Beach, Key West, Naples, St Petersburg and St Pete Beach. Throughout the tour accessibility was excellent with accessible accommodation available, every attraction was fully accessible as were all of the dining options. In addition, the coach used for the tour was one of Escot’s that was equipped with a wheelchair lift. Despite the fact that the tour was fully accessible to people with a disability it is not marketed as such. In fact no tour is marketed as an inclusive tour and there is no facility to schedule accessible coaches to a particular tour. Again there is the glaring disconnect between infrastructure required under compliance ie rooms and coaches and its translation into a marketable product.

The wholesale and retail sectors of the tourism industry have not yet seen a market connection.

The Little Things can make a Huge Difference

The large items of accessible infrastructure, car parks, access ramps, accessible rooms and toilet facilities are laid down in the building codes and, as has been stated, are compliance issues. In any facility, however, there are numerous small items that with small amounts of additional expenditure can turn it into a fully inclusive environment. Inclusive thought needs to be incorporated into the initial design phase and then maintained throughout the life of the facility. Some examples follow:

- Resorts today have million dollar pool complexes, but few have a sloping entry ramp into the water or provide a pool lift. The marginal cost of either is negligible.
- Many resorts have numerous beach equipment activities from paddle boats, catamarans and jetskis. The addition of beach wheelchairs opens up another inclusive experience for little marginal cost.
- Outdoor picnic tables can be made accessible by choosing a design that allows wheelchairs to roll under one end.
- Paths of travel is one of the most simple and most overlooked. Removing barriers from those interconnecting paths opens up a facility to both the mobility and visually impaired.
- Play is critical to an enjoyable lifestyle. The incorporation of inclusive design elements into a playground is marginal expenditure.
- Providing pool side deck chairs of a height providing easy transfer from a wheelchair is inclusive and marginal cost.
- Providing lower counter tops, especially at places like Cellar Doors, promotes an inclusive experience.
- Mood lighting in elevators may be trendy, but no one should have to fumble for their reading glasses with arms full of luggage to read the floor numbers in the dark.

This list is clearly not exhaustive. It is limited only by imagination. The Tourism Industry will not come up with imaginative solutions while it cannot see the demand and hence the need.
Despite published research on the size of the Inclusive Travel sector, the industry has not made the connection between accessible infrastructure and market demand. Accessibility has been dogged as a human rights and compliance issue and has been buried in risk management procedures. The attitude has been exacerbated by continual litigation over failures to meet access standards. Based on the Social Model of disability it is seen as a cost impost for a small minority.

Most disability advocacy organisations have concentrated on the rights issues and the only professional consultants operating in the industry are access auditors trained to only look at compliance to the requirements of the disability access acts. The structure of the industry is perpetuating the disconnect.

There are some key steps required to move Inclusive Tourism towards a demand driven model and to create the innovation that is at the heart of Universal design.

- **Statistics must be presented consistently.** When it comes to Inclusive Tourism spending directly relating to people with a disability is a meaningless number. Most people travel in a group and the multiplier is between 2.8 and 3.5 depending on the type of trip. It is the group number that is important as it is the total group expenditure that is affected if the destination is not accessible either physically or through lack of published information.

- **Inclusive Tourism must be raised to a professional standing.** The only professional group operating in the Inclusive Tourism space is the access auditing profession. Inclusive Tourism has to be about creating competitive advantage by providing and marketing the best possible products and services to the disabled or ageing traveler and their friends. It is about creating inclusive environments and inclusive experiences to a large and growing market. The marketing in this “new” market has be backed up by a network worldwide that can help industry develop and market these products. Inclusive Tourism will need the support of a professional consulting network. Those services must be
provided at commercial rates. Pro Bono activity perpetuates a disability rights concept and won’t be valued by the tourism sector.

- Inclusive Tourism has to seek out and help some pioneer organisations to embrace Universal Design. To gain competitive advantage, organisations must provide a complete suite of best practice Inclusive products and then market them appropriately. Scandic has shown what happens when the concept is put into practice and how demand follows innovation.

- Inclusive Tourism will need standards. The marketing message and the presentation has to be in a consistent format so that the end consumer has confidence in the information provided. In the same way as every other profession has a governing body, Inclusive Tourism needs to establish its own.

- Education is the key. Inclusive Tourism is not currently taught in any travel course, nor is it part of any travel related management training. There is some training available for Travel Agents which is of limited use given the lack of commercial Inclusive Tourism product.

- Inclusive Tourism has to be elevated to the mainstream. In addition to specialist conferences it has to be put on the agenda of major mainstream events in much the same way as Eco, Adventure and Cultural tourism have been. It has to be recognised in national tourism awards.

- Government has been lobbied to lead the way in the promotion of Inclusive Tourism through their national tourist boards and set the example with public transport and public infrastructure.

- Tourism is all about the experience of traveling. It is about seeing new sights, new cultures, living history and natural wonders. Most importantly though it is about sharing those experiences with family and friends, old and new. Inclusive Tourism will never succeed while the emphasis is only on infrastructure both buildings and equipment. It needs to be incorporated into the touring product and wholesale markets

Inclusive Tourism is a viable market and needs to be promoted as such. The world is full of poorly utilized accessible assets while the disabled traveler struggles to find information on where they exist and what facilities they have. There is a major disconnect between the assets and the latent demand. The role of the Inclusive Tourism advocacy bodies is to lead the industry and government into the realisation that the rollers on the toys are not just toys or wasted capital, but are a valuable asset and a major competitive advantage to be built upon for an already large and rapidly growing market.
About Travability

Over the last four years, Travability has been developing accessible information on tourist destinations. We have continually refined our presentation style and level of detail as a result of continual feedback. We are members of SATH (Society for Accessible Travel and Hospitality), ENAT (European Network for Accessible Tourism) and Tour Watch the world incubator for Accessible Tourism. We are acknowledged as global thought leaders on inclusive tourism and the economic impact the sector will have on the travel industry over the next ten years.

We have presented at international forums including:
- SATH World Congresses in 2009 and 2011
- Inaugural Access Tourism New Zealand Conference in October 2010

We have developed the Accessible Information Evaluation Model for Parks Victoria and conducted the initial pilot studies.

This year we are a finalist in the National Disability Awards.

Bill Forrester

Bill was born and raised in Melbourne, Australia. As a child he was fortunate to travel to many parts of the world and to learn and appreciate cultures other than his own. That passion for learning and understanding has never left him. Bill spent most of his working life in the corporate field in both financial and operation roles. He specialised in corporate and cultural change. He has extensive experience in facility management, major project delivery, stakeholder relations and corporate training programs. He has worked in the private, mutual, and government sectors. Five years ago he left the corporate world and bought three retail travel agencies in Melbourne to pursue his love of travel.

Recognising that there was a lack of information of accessible tourism facilities, three years ago, Bill formed Travability with a mission to change the way the tourist industry viewed travellers with disabilities and the way accessible information was made available.

Deborah Davis

Deborah has been a founding inspiration in the creation of Travability. She was born and raised in Maryland and moved to Miami in 1984. She was involved in a car accident at the age of 18 sustaining a C6/7 spinal cord injury resulting in incomplete quadriplegia. Deborah has had a successful career in the medical sales field and was the Director of Abilities Florida. She has extensive experience in developing and conducting training programs on disability awareness and the seamless inclusion of accessible facilities. She has a wealth of experience in marketing. She is well travelled and enjoys the thrill of discovering new places. As an active and accomplished individual she is passionate about our dream of making the world accessible to all.