

A METHODOLOGY FOR TESTING ACCESSIBLE ACCOMMODATION INFORMATION PROVISION FORMATS

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ABSTRACT

The combined effects of the increased ageing of the population, the relationship between ageing and disability rates and the proportion of the population who have a disability have significant implications for global tourism. Numerous studies have identified that the foundation of any tourism experience for people with mobility disabilities is locating appropriate accommodation. Such studies have identified serious issues with the way that accommodation information is documented, promoted and marketed by the accommodation sector. Other studies have identified that there is a considerable difference between the accommodation sector's understanding of access and that of people with disabilities. This research seeks to understand the 'discourse of access' between the demand and supply of accessible accommodation. To this point in time, no research has sought to assess the preferred accessible accommodation information formats for this group. This exploratory study presents a methodology for market testing four information formats for the mobility dimension of accessible accommodation. The information formats are based on current practice and proposed information formats. They are: AAA Tourism access icons; Spinal Cord Injury Australia's representation of AS1428; floorplan representation; and virtual tours/OSSATE. It is believed that the outcomes of this methodology will provide a suitable foundation for including access considerations as part of the broader Australian Tourism Data Warehouse; developing a business case for this class of accommodation through improved occupancy rates; and satisfaction with the presented information formats.

Keywords: accessible tourism; accommodation; mobility disability; information systems;

INTRODUCTION

A number of authors note that tourism experiences for people with disabilities are more than access issues (Shelton & Tucker, 2005; Stumbo & Pegg, 2005; Yau, McKercher, & Packer, 2004). Yet, for people with mobility disabilities a foundation of any tourism experience is having accessible destinations (Israeli, 2002) and locating appropriate accommodation from which to base oneself while travelling. Quite simply, to stay a night away from their normal residence requires appropriate accommodation to allow access to a bedroom and bathroom as a base for their stay. Two studies specifically identified the relative degree of impairment, mobility aid used and level of independence as significant influences on tourism requirements and accommodation choice (Burnett & Bender-Baker, 2001; Darcy, 2002a). Studies in Australia (Access For All Alliance (Hervey Bay) Inc, 2006; Darcy, 1998; Market and Communication Research, 2002; Murray & Sproats, 1990) and overseas (Burnett & Bender-Baker, 2001; Daniels, Drogin Rodgers, & Wiggins, 2005; HarrisInteractive Market Research, 2003; Shaw & Coles, 2004; Turco, Stumbo, & Garnarcz, 1998) have shown that people with disabilities have indicated that there are serious issues with locating accessible accommodation. Intertwined with locating accessible accommodation is the planning of the trip, accessing information, negotiating directly with providers or, less frequently for people with disabilities, engaging travel agents (McKercher, Packer, Yau, & Lam, 2003). These complexities are further compounded by the way that information is documented, promoted and marketed by the accommodation sector in particular. In the Australian context, these studies have been validated by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission complaints cases and Federal court

actions (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2006) taken by people with disabilities against accommodation providers (Darcy, 2002b).

This situation may seem somewhat perplexing in the Australian context, as the government regulates all aspects of the built environment in Australia through legislation, codes, standards and development control processes (Bates, 2006; Stein & Farrier, 2006). One component of this regulation requires the Building Codes of Australia (Australian Building Codes Board, 1996) to consider access and mobility through the Australian Standards (Standards Australia, 1992a, 1992b, 2001, 2002). These standards are reinforced through the *Disability Discrimination Act*, 1992 (DDA) that makes it illegal to treat a person differently before the law because of their disability in all areas of citizenship. In the past, this complex information has been interpreted by the Australian Automobile Association (AAA) AAA *Tourism* accreditation and, as Appendix 1a shows, presented in their mainstream accommodation directories through a dual icon accessible accommodation rating system. The iconic representations are based on the ACROD assessment tool for hotels and motels (ACROD, 1994; Australian Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled (ACROD) Ltd, 1999), which is, in turn, based on the Australian Standard for access and mobility (Standards Australia, 1993). This system has recently been withdrawn from the accommodation directories for the reason that the third-party based assessment criteria is being reviewed (AAA Tourism, 2006).

Currently there is also an undertaking by Tourism Australia and all state tourism organisations (STOs) to work towards an inclusion for accessible accommodation on the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (ATDW) (Tully, 2006). The ATDW 'provides a central *distribution* and storage facility for tourism product and destination information...The information is compiled in a nationally agreed format and electronically accessible by operators, wholesalers, retailers and distributors for use in their web sites and booking systems' (Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, 2006). It has approximately 22,000 product listings that are fed to Tourism Australia's online website, the STOs' websites and a series of commercially operated websites. Yet, this opportunity is absent for accessible tourism operators who have good access considerations who nevertheless have no agreed format to list on the ATDW. By not having a template of information with respect to accessible tourism available electronically, day-trippers, domestic tourists and international tourists with access and mobility requirements are effectively excluded from the benefits of electronically accessing the designated premier search engines of the NTO and the STOs.

Given these current contexts, this paper provides a background examination of the importance of this issue to sustainable industry planning, discusses recent conceptualisations of the accessible tourism market, outlines the regulatory environment and conceptualises this research within an overall accessible tourism research agenda. The paper then provides an outline of a proposed methodology to test the preferred accessible accommodation information formats.

BACKGROUND

Disability, Ageing & Sustainable Tourism

The relationship between people with disabilities and tourism has started to receive increasing academic and government attention over the last decade in Europe, the Americas and the Asia Pacific (Darcy, 2006). Prior to this, disability and tourism were largely an under researched phenomenon. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2004) showed that substantial numbers of Australians have disabilities, and the level of disability in the community increased from 15 to 20 percent of the population from the period 1988-2003. There is also a significant relationship between ageing and disability where a person is 14 times more likely to have a disability by the time they reach 65 years than they were as a four year old (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2004). The issue on its own is significant as Australia has an ageing population and the numbers

and proportion of older people in Australia is growing dramatically (Commonwealth of Australia, 2002). This situation is largely reflected in all developed nations and many Asian nations (Albrecht, Seelman, & Bury, 2001) from which Australia draws its major inbound tourism markets. For Australia specifically and, for tourism globally, these trends in population demographics have significant implications (Dwyer, 2005). Despite the significant numbers of Australians and people from overseas that have disabilities are estimated to be in the order of 600 million worldwide (Albrecht, Seelman, & Bury, 2001) there has been very little policy that has sought to systematically promote accessible tourism as part of sustainable tourism development (United Nations, 2001).

Conceptualising Accessible Tourism Market

Visitor numbers to Australia from overseas will double by the year 2015 and beyond, and domestic tourism will remain steady (Tourism Forecasting Committee, 2005). Importantly, and has recognized earlier in the paper there will be an increasing number of people with disabilities, many because of ageing. Yet, unlike past generations of seniors who will effectively sought to disengage from mainstream society, this generation of baby boomers is seeking active, fulfilling and adventurous experiences for their post work lives (Hilt & Lipschultz, 2005; Mackay, 1997; McDougall, 1998; Moschis, 2000; Muller & Cleaver, 2000). Tourism is seen as an important component of this quest for life experiences and the tourism industry and government should be planning to incorporate the needs of what have been described as the *Easy Access Market (EAM)* (Tourism New South Wales, 2005). Tourism New South Wales identifies the EAM as:

Any segment within the tourism market that prefers accessing tourism experiences with ease. This may include seniors who may prefer walking up a gentle ramp rather than tackling a large number of stairs. People with a disability, including those with physical and sensory disabilities, will find it easier to access tourism facilities where there is a continuous pathway and tactile surfaces and clear signage (Tourism New South Wales, 2005).

Effectively the majority of people will benefit from these provisions including our ageing population, parents with prams, and employees as it incorporates good design for a range of occupational health and safety requirements (Preiser & Ostroff, 2001). At a Commonwealth level, the Commonwealth Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources (2004) has identified people with disabilities and seniors as an emerging market area with Tourism Australia (2005) establishing *accessible tourism* as a niche experience. Packer and Carter (2005) in reporting on the *Out Of the Blue! Valuing the disability tourism market* conference held in Australia reinforced the legitimacy of accessible tourism as both a market and an area that required further research. The 'market' has a relative complexity involving a series of dimensions to access and requires a broad understanding for inclusion across mainstream market segments. Yet, the term *accessible tourism* had not been defined in any of the government documents and this was realised at a national workshop on *Setting a Research Agenda for Accessible Tourism* (Darcy, 2006). An outcome of the workshop was to develop a definition of *accessible tourism* situated within the Australian context. Subsequently, accessible tourism has been defined as:

...a process of enabling people with disabilities and seniors to function independently and with equity and dignity through the delivery of universal tourism products, services and environments (adapted from OCA (1999)). The definition is inclusive of the mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive dimensions of access (Darcy 2006, p 8).

Importantly, the definition create synergies between people with disabilities and seniors who would benefit from mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive dimensions of access. A concept underpinning accessible tourism is universal design. Universal design is defined as,

...the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design...The intent of the universal design concept is to simplify life for everyone by making products, communications, and the built environment more usable by more people at little or no extra cost. The universal design concept targets all people of all ages, sizes and abilities (Center for Universal Design, 2003).

This definition extends the concepts of a continuous pathway and barrier-free environments (Goldsmith, 1997; Holmes-Siedle, 1996) to incorporate intergenerational and lifespan planning that recognises the nexus between ageing, disability and the continuum of ability over a person's lifespan (Aslaksen, Bergh, Bringa, & Heggem, 1997; Steinfeld & Shea, 2001). In 2004, there was a call made for the tourism industry to adopt universal design principles as a foundation to achieving greater social sustainability as part of the triple bottom line (Rains, 2004). A universal design conference incorporated for the first time a stream on the travel and tourism industry, and concluded proceedings with delegates proposing the *Rio de Janeiro Declaration on Sustainable Social Development, Disability & Ageing* (Walsh, 2004). This was a proactive and significant declaration given the recent work on developing a UN convention on the rights of disabled people, which has only recently been passed (United Nations, 2006). Yet, declarations and conventions belie the fact that in many countries, the framework for developing accessible tourism or implementing universal design is not embedded in the building codes and the accessibility standards to ensure a right to basic mobility access. This situation is different in the Australian context where these foundations exist, yet, as outlined are still far from being implemented in a non-discriminatory way. Mindful of this concern, the next section of the paper will briefly review the Australian context of the built environment legislation for access and mobility.

Revision of the Building Code of Australia

Universal design, disability and access requirements are dynamic and evolving in the same way that the spirit and intent of the DDA surpassed the previous conceptualisations of mobility, hearing, vision and cognitive dimensions of access. The effect of the DDA on the Building Codes of Australia (Australian Building Codes Board, 1996) and the Australian Standards for access and mobility (Standards Australia, 1992a, 1992b, 2001, 2002) created an 'uncertainty' in the development processes from an industry perspective. After intense lobbying, the Australian Building Codes Board (2004a) entered into a process with the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department and the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (2004) to harmonise the DDA with the Australian Building Codes through the development of a *Draft Disability Standard for Access to Premises* (Commonwealth Attorney General's Dept., 2004). Yet, the draft standards are at an impasse that includes class three accommodation (Australian Building Codes Board, 2004b). While agreement exists as to what constitutes accessibility across the four dimensions of access, there is significant industry resistance over the level of compliance and the number of rooms to be included within tourist accommodations (Darcy, 2004b; Innes, 2006). Part of the concern involves the perceived cost of access inclusions and the relative occupancy of current accessible accommodation stock (Australian Hotels Association, 1998; Mirvac Hotels, 1998). However, as previous research and the HREOC complaint cases have identified, a great deal of 'disabled rooms' built as accessible accommodation do not appropriately comply with the aforementioned Australian Standards for access and mobility. It has been suggested, that these breakdowns in compliance are an aggregation of professional misunderstanding at the planning, design, construction and operation phases of development. Yet, the processes developed for the Sydney 2000 Olympics and Paralympics (Olympic Co-ordination Authority, 1999) have shown that with political will the situation does not have to exist (Darcy, 2003).

Accommodation Research

Given the recent action by AAA Tourism and the position of the *Draft Disability Standards for Access to Premises*, it is an opportune time for the accommodation sector to take stock of accessible class three accommodations. Yet, outside of the identification of accommodation as a constraint to travel, very little Australian or overseas research has been done on any aspect of accessible tourism accommodation. The preliminary work on site accessibility of Israeli (2002) provided an understanding of the importance of the many components that need to come together to make a site accessible for the accessible tourism market. The main Australian studies that looked at the tourism experiences of people with disabilities identified:

- the lack of accessible accommodation as a significant constraint;
- the importance of accommodation as a significant component to satisfaction with a trip;
- problems locating accessible accommodation even when it did exist; and
- the level, detail and accuracy of information about accommodation as inadequate (Access For All Alliance (Hervey Bay) Inc, 2006; Darcy, 1998; Market and Communication Research, 2002; Murray & Sproats, 1990).

Darcy (2002a) as argued that there is a relationship between the mobility aid used and the level of independence of the person, their information requirements and accommodation needs. The two previous studies (Darcy, 2000; O'Neill & Ali Knight, 2000) that looked at supply side perceptions concluded that accommodation managers did not understand the access features of their rooms or provide any level of detailed information outside of whether an establishment had a 'disabled room'. Supporting these findings, a market research study that looked at what people with disabilities most wanted in the way of product development concluded that accurate and detailed information about accommodation was a pre-requisite to determining their destination of choice (Market and Communication Research, 2002).

In an examination of the contrast between people with disabilities construct of access and that of the accommodation sector, Darcy (2004a) argued that there is a different 'discourse of access' between the two groups. For instance, many people with accessible accommodation needs have a highly individualised understanding of access and the more inexperienced a traveller they are the more likely they are to accept without questioning that the 'disabled room' is truly an accessible accommodation for their needs. Most owners or managers' understanding of access is quite rightly reliant on the professional expertise of architects, planners and builders to interpret the complexity of access and mobility requirements. When these professionals do not complete work to the standard requirements, it is little wonder many owners and managers report that their 'disabled rooms' have lower levels of occupancy as they expect their 'disabled rooms' to comply to the relevant standards. Yet, the accessible tourism market cannot use rooms that are not suited to their needs. In this case, both the individual with access requirements and the accommodation providers are losers as a consequence of a lack of expertise by the professionals constructing the built environment (Darcy, 2004a).

A great deal is known about the senior or mature traveller in Australia and overseas (Fleischer & Pizam, 2002; Fleischer & Seiler, 2002; Horneman, Carter, Wei, & Ruys, 2002; Queensland Office of Ageing, 1998). Each of the studies recognizes some inherent constraints and facilitators to tourism with a proportion of senior travellers having specific access requirements. A study of the accommodation needs of mature travellers by (Ruys & Wei, 1998) offers direction for a quantitative analysis of a hotel room inclusions for the accessible tourism market. In this study, five major dimensions were identified as important to mature travellers: safety, convenience, security, service, and comfort and recreation. The study concluded by recognizing the changing nature of the accommodation sector's client base and suggesting that changes to design and planning could improve the peace of mind and satisfaction of mature travellers.

Research Agenda for Disability and Tourism - Accommodation Identified

While the CDITR (2003) has identified accessible tourism as an emerging market area and Tourism Australia (2005) has established accessible tourism as a niche market segment, there has not been a research or industry strategy developed to realise the opportunity that these groups offer. In 2005, the Sustainable Tourism Cooperative Research Centre (STCRC) funded a workshop to set a research agenda for disability and tourism that involved 45 invited participants from all sectors of the industry, government and disability advocacy. The outcome of the workshop was a technical report to the STCRC outlining a prioritized research agenda (Darcy, 2006). One of the key areas of recommendation was the improvement of information provision generally and, with specific reference, to the accommodation sector. Further, this workshop was attended by a number of significant industry bodies who were interested in becoming involved in ongoing research. The proposed methodology capitalises on the research agenda and the industry contacts made at the workshop and directly seeks to test a variety of formats of information provision.

Summary

In summary, the background context and literature clearly exemplifies that the accessible tourism market is a phenomenon that the tourism industry globally and, the Australian situation in particular, must plan to address sooner rather than later. The Australian literature on accessible tourism identifies that there have been significant issues with respect to locating, gaining reliable information and having satisfying accessible accommodation experiences. The contemporary Australian situation has seen three convergences that make an investigation of accessible tourism information provision timely: the withdrawal of the AAA Tourism assessment of accessible accommodation; the work of the NTO and STOs to operationalise access within the ATDW; and the recent identification of accessible accommodation information as a strategic research agenda. To this point in time, no research has been published that tested what are acceptable formats of accommodation information provision to people with disabilities. As such, research related to this issue is clearly warranted.

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The aim of the research is to better understand the information preferences of people requiring accessible accommodation (demand) and the way the accommodation sector represent their stock (supply). The overall research approach is informed by a mixed methodology involving qualitative and quantitative data. A constant comparison of the qualitative results from each section of the study provides further insights into the 'discourse of access' between the demand and supply perspectives (Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, & Coleman, 2000). This will involve case analysis of specific accessible accommodation's information formats and cross case examination of the same said information formats. These will then be cross-tabulated through the quantitative analysis of the survey results to see if there is any variance within or between variables.

The proposed objectives of the project are to:

1. determine 10 'best practice' class three accessible accommodation providers (Australian Building Codes Board, 1996, 2004a; Standards Australia, 2001);
2. measure the component parts of class three accessible accommodation based on the Australian Standards 1428 for access and mobility for the best practice cases;
3. Using current industry standard and newer innovative methods of information presentation (detailed in research design) to present the above measured information;
4. understand stakeholder perspectives toward these accessible class three rooms through:
 - a. providing the accessible information in 4 formats to people with disabilities to determine their perception of whether the provided information would allow them to make an informed decision as to whether the accessible accommodation met their needs and their reasons for this assessment;

- b. undertaking product testing with the people with disabilities to determine whether their perception of the accessible information meets the reality of the accessible room;
 - c. documenting the practice and perceptions of the hotel staff towards accessible accommodation; and
 - d. determining the perceptions of nondisabled customers towards accessible accommodation.
5. use the information collected from objectives 1-4 to develop a stakeholder understanding to gain a better understanding of developing a business case development for class three accessible accommodations.

Populations

Class 3 Accommodation Hotels and staff most responsible for the accessible accommodation

In this research, class three accessible accommodation rooms, as defined by the Building Code of Australia, form the basis of the research. Working with an industry partner, 10 rooms considered best practice based on AS1428 (Standards Australia, 2001) will be selected from their Sydney accommodation stock to be access audited by professionals from the Association of Consultants in Access, which is based in Australia (2006). The rationale for using rooms of best practice is that the research wishes to develop an understanding of the 'discourse of access' between stakeholders and determine which format of information provision is preferred by the accessible tourism market. These rooms will be referred to as *superior access rooms* and a possible outcome of the research is to examine the rebranding of accommodation that meets this standard. Using *superior access rooms* alleviates many of the constraints that the accessible tourism market encounter in the accommodation sector through rooms not meeting Australian Standards. For each of the hotels, a request will be made to the General Manager for an in-depth interview with a staff member most responsible for accessible accommodation stock, sales or marketing from each hotel will be interviewed (10-20 in total).

Accessible Tourism Market

The accessible tourism market involves tourists who have mobility, vision, hearing and cognitive access needs. For the purposes of the study, the population will be people who have mobility access needs as class three accessible accommodation primarily targets people with mobility access needs (Australian Building Codes Board, 1996, 2001, 2004a). The reason for this is that research into the tourism experiences of people with vision impairment is currently being undertaken (Packer, Small, & Darcy, 2006), the access needs of people who are Deaf or hearing impaired focus on communication issues that have recently been addressed (Deafness Forum & HMAA, 2005). People with cognitive needs have not been researched in the tourism sense. By specifically focusing on mobility access the understanding gained from a sound research base can be put into practice in this research. Mobility related issues are extremely pertinent to the ageing population and are directly relevant to families with young children. This focus will provide the basis for a specifically designed 'product'. Previous research has drawn a sample of people through placing advertisements in the main mobility disability membership organisations including ParaQuad, Spinal Cord Injury Australia, People with Disabilities NSW Inc., M.S. Society, The Spastic Centre of NSW and the Physical Disability Council of NSW. The sampling frames will be added to with organisations directly related to ageing including Council of the Ageing and the Seniors Card. Further, a number of specialist discussion lists will be used to supplement these sampling frames.

Nondisabled customers of hotels

Anecdotal evidence suggests that nondisabled customers often have negative perceptions of 'disabled rooms' and these rooms have a lower occupancy rate than standard rooms (Australian Hotels Association, 1998; Mirvac Hotels, 1998). However, no empirical work has been

conducted on these anecdotal findings. Two nondisabled customers at each of the best practice hotels (10-20 in total) will be approached to product test and then be interviewed on their perceptions of the *superior access rooms*. The product testing and interviews will be anonymous, confidential and take 15-30 minutes of their time. An incentive will be offered that is yet to be negotiated with the industry partner.

Research design

Apart from the direction that Dye, Schatz, Rosenberg, & Coleman (2000) provide for constant comparison, the proposed research design draws on the work of Yin (2002), Fontana & Frey (1994), Wilkins (1983) and Tregaskis (2000). Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of conditions and their relationships. A contemporary phenomenon is studied within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence. In this instance, data will be collected via access audit survey, product testing and in-depth interview, and supporting documentation review. Construct validity, internal validity, external validity, and reliability will be assured through techniques such as cross-case examination and within-case examination along with a comparative literature review. Each stage of the research is now reviewed.

Stage 1: Access Audits of the Hotel Rooms and Accessible Tourism Information Development

Together with an industry partner a preliminary assessment of hotel accommodation stock in Sydney will be undertaken to determine hotels and accessible accommodation rooms of 'best practice'. Access audits of the premises and the best accessible room in establishment will then be undertaken based on AS1428 (Standards Australia, 2001) and universal design principles (Preiser & Ostroff, 2001). The research will utilise professionals from the Australian Association of Access Consultants (AAAC). Once the access auditing process is completed, the information will be developed into four formats to be presented to people with disabilities. Appendix 1 presents an example of the following four formats (see Appendix 1a, 1b, 1c & 1d for the formats):

- A. current AAA Tourist accommodation guide information - **Appendix 1a** (ACROD, 1994; Australian Automobile Association, 2005; Australian Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled (ACROD) Ltd, 1999);
- B. textual presentation - **Appendix 1b** (Australian Quadriplegic Association, 2002; Fodor's, 1996);
- C. a textual and spatial presentation - **Appendix 1c** (Cameron, 2000; City of Melbourne, 2006); and
- D. digital photography or virtual digital video tour similar to those found commercially (Accor - Australia and the Pacific, 2006; Voyages Hotels and Resorts - Australia, 2006) and the One-Stop Shop for Accessible Tourism Europe - **Appendix 1d** (Buhalis, 2005; Buhalis, Michopoulou, Michailidis, & Ambrose, 2006).

Stage 2: In-Depth Interviews of Hotel Managers and Staff

At the same time as the access audit of the hotel rooms, in-depth interviews of hotel managers and staff will be undertaken to determine their perception of the rooms and current practice with information provision, marketing and promotion. This is important to determine the role of the accessible accommodation within the overall accommodation stock and whether mobility access is marketed as part of organisation practice. A semi structured interview schedule will be used that draws on previous anecdotal research. Interviews for all stages will be taped and transcribed.

Stage 3: Information Appraisal and Decision-Making of the Accessible Tourism Market and

The four information formats will be provided to people with disabilities in hard copy or via e-mail or a web site (to be determined in conjunction with industry partner). A structured feedback schedule will be developed to determine each person's preferred information format.

Further, each person will be asked whether they could make a decision on the appropriateness of the accessible accommodation for their needs based on the information provided and the reasons for their decision.

Stage 4: Product Testing and In-Depth Interviews of People with Disabilities & the Nondisabled

A sample of the accessible tourism market from stage one (10%) will product test the accessible accommodation to determine whether the information provided about the accessible accommodation and the decision made equates with the reality of the room. A short debriefing interview about the accessible room will then take place (15 mins). A budget item has been included to offset any transport costs of those who wish to be involved. Similarly, nondisabled customers of the hotel will be asked to view the rooms and will then be interviewed as to their perception of the room (15 mins). A semi structured interview schedule will be used for both in-depth interviews.

Proposed analysis

A. *Discourse analysis of in-depth interviews with hotel managers and staff; and nondisabled customers*

Tape-recorded sessions will be transcribed in full. A content analysis of the data (Veal, 2005) following Denzin and Lincoln (1994), will be used to code the data using universal design and attitudes to disability theory (Daruwalla & Darcy, 2005; Gething, Poynter, & Reynolds, 1994), as well as identifying any emergent themes. This will involve a constant comparative process of sorting the data into provisional categories based on similar characteristics. The validity and reliability of the categorization and coding will increase through persistent observation and comparison of the data by members of the research team. Nvivo v7 will be used for the content analysis of the qualitative data in this study. The raw data will be examined to find linkages between the research objectives and the outcomes with reference to the original research questions. The multiple data collection methods and analysis techniques will be used to triangulate data in order to strengthen the research findings and conclusions. The data will be analysed in many different ways to expose or create new insights. Focused, short, repeat interviews may be necessary to gather additional data to verify key observations or check a fact.

B. *Comparative Analysis of the access audit information provided to be accessible tourism market pre-visit determination and visit assessment*

In using the procedures outlined above for in-depth interview analysis, the analysis of the accessible tourism market pre-visit determination and visit assessment will be cross-referenced with the Australian Standards and the principles of universal design. While the self-selected sample of people with mobility access needs may be wheelchair users, there is a considerable degree of variance in their access requirements and their personal care needs. These considerations will also be analysed in the context of their pre-visit determination and visit assessment. Generalisations will then be made based on these considerations. The quantified components of the assessment will involve a selection of a preferred information format from the four presented information formats.

SUMMARY AND: EXPECTED RESEARCH OUTCOMES

The tourism industry recognises that it must respond to the Western demographic trends of ageing and disability (Dwyer, 2005). This research seeks to provide a sound empirical basis to position Australian tourism information systems, such as the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse (Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, 2001; Pyo, Uysal, & Chang, 2002; Sharma, Carson, & DeLacy, 2000a, 2000b), to validly and reliably incorporate accessible tourism information. By doing so, in the research seeks to contribute towards building a stronger and

more robust knowledge management system that in turn will be far more socially sustainable because of the aforementioned global trends.

The potential results of this research will provide an insight into understanding the discourse of access between the demand and supply stakeholders in the accommodation sector. To knowledge of the researcher, this research will be the first empirical research specifically designed to investigate this area. With respect to the draft *Disability Standard for Access to Premises*, this research offers the potential to better understand the information needs and room requirements of people with mobility disabilities for class three accommodations. In addition, it potentially offers industry a better means by which to present, market and promote accessible accommodation information to people with disabilities and, hence, improve the economic and social sustainability of their enterprises. The tourism industry is recognised as one of the most significant contributors to GNP and diversity is recognised as an area of competitive advantage in globalised business practice (Harvey & Allard, 2005).

In summary, the proposed research involves the investigation of the preferred information formats of the accessible tourism market for accessible tourism accommodation. The research also provides an important insight into the broader understandings of the 'discourse of access' between stakeholders as a component in the formulation of built environment codes, standards and processes. Importantly, the research has the potential to provide a better appreciation of the business case for accessible tourism accommodation and may be leveraged for further research work. In particular, through using the branding opportunity provided by *superior access rooms*, the accommodation industry may implement a new system of information collection, presentation, marketing and promotion that will be more effective in the management of the accommodation stock. The significant business outcome of a new system of knowledge management would contribute towards improved occupancy of this class of accommodation in the future. Lastly, the research will provide a greater appreciation of the general public's perception of this form of accommodation, which should provide marketers with further insights into developing future campaigns.

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APPENDIX 1: FOUR INFORMATION FORMATS FOR ACCESSIBLE ACCOMMODATION PROVISION

A. AAA Tourism Accessibility Icons and ACROD Accessibility Checklist

HOLIDAYS FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
 Properties displaying these wheelchair symbols offer various facilities for people with disabilities. These symbols are based on ACROD (Australian Council for the Rehabilitation of Disabilities) assessment carried out by the Royal Automobile Club of Queensland (RACQ).

 **Wheelchair "Independent Access"** indicates establishments with one or more units providing full wheelchair access and purpose-built facilities which comply with Australian Standard AS1428.1 - 1993.

 **Wheelchair "Access with Assistance"** indicates establishments with one or more units providing wheelchair access with assistance.

Source: (Tourism Queensland, 2005)

CHECKLIST FOR WHEELCHAIR ACCESSABILITY IN HOTELS/MOTELS

(TO COMPLY WITH AS1428.1 1993)

Name of Hotel/Motel:

Address:

Telephone Number:

	Yes	No	Problem?
CARPARK			
1. Is there a level, 3.2 metre wide carpark? OR is assistance available for unloading/parking?			
RECEPTION			
1. Is there level or ramped access from carpark to reception? (kerb/step ramp 1:8 gradient; longer ramps 1:14)			Number of Steps?
2. Is the entry free of any steps or thresholds?			
UNIT			
1. Is access from carpark to unit free of any steps or thresholds? OR, is there a ramp or lift?			Number of Steps?
2. Does door to unit have a clear opening of 760mm minimum?			
3. Is door easy to open (no heavy springs or closers), are handles at 900-1100mm, and can door be opened with one hand?			
BEDROOM			
1. Is there a minimum of 800mm beside the bed to allow transfer? OR can bed be moved to achieve this?			
2. Is space sufficient to turn a wheelchair? (2000 x 1600mm).			
3. Is top of mattress 480-500mm from floor, or can bed be adjusted?			
4. Are switches (light, TV) & phone within reach of bed?			
5. Are all facilities within reach (coathanging, tea making, air-con switch, etc)?			
TOILET			
1. Does door have a clear opening at 760mm minimum?			
2. Is door easy to open (type & position of handle, weight)?			

	Yes	No	Problem?
3. Is there space to manoeuvre —min overall dimensions 2000 x 1600mm.			
4. Is there 800mm minimum on one side of toilet to back in for transferring?			
5. From transfer position beside & in front of toilet, can you reach across to grab-rail at 800-810mm height beside & behind toilet?			
6. Are all switches, power points, hooks, dryer, mirror etc useable from a seated position? (900-1100mm)			
7. Is there knee space under the basin?			
SHOWER			
1. Is the shower free of hob, step or floor tracks?			
2. If sliding door, is opening a min 760mm?			
3. Is shower base large enough to manoeuvre a chair? [1428.1 requires 1160x1100mm plus 1600 x 1250mm outside cubicle].			
4. Are there grab rails at height 800-810mm?			
5. Is there a seat (fold-down or freestanding)?			
6. Is there a hand-held shower nozzle operable from a seated position?			
7. Are taps between 900-1100 mm height, and of lever type?			
RESTAURANT			
1. Is access from unit to restaurant free of steps or thresholds?			Number of Steps?
2. Does door have a clear opening of 760mm? If no restaurant, or if not accessible.			
3. Is room service available?			

NOTES TO ASSESSOR
 For 'access independent' all answers must be 'yes'. This means a person using a wheelchair can use the facility without any assistance.
 For 'partial access' all shaded squares must be 'yes'. This means a person can get in, use the toilet and have a shower but may need assistance. One step is tolerable, more than one step is not.
 If 'no' to any shaded box, then classify as 'not accessible'.

CLASSIFY

Access independent number of rooms.....

Partial access - inquire number of rooms.....

Not accessible

Assessed by: Date:


 ACN 008 526 369

Source: (ACROD, 1994)

B. Spinal Cord Injury Australia & ACROD Textual

The Observatory Hotel	Phone: (02) 256 2222
89-113 Kent Street, SYDNEY	Fax: (02) 256 2233
No (w) CP. Valet pkg only H2100. Set down area. Portable kerb ramp. Bus and taxi ramp at front 1:12 or +3. Hndrl. Assistance available. Main ent level drs >760 hngd. Porter till 11pm or door bell. (w) circ space. Wheelchair available for guests. Reception desk H1130 will register in room. Flr carpet. Lght level medium. Pub ☞ (w) pushbutton coin 900.	
Public areas unisex (w) toilet dr 760 lev hndl at 900 opens out. (w) circ space. Toilet pan ext 800. Seat H480. Grab rails 800 side and rear. Sideways transf space. Toilet pan to rim of basin 1100. Basin 660 under taps lev mirror 1200. Lght pp 900 to 1100.	
Lift D1190 L3360 W1520. Key operates controls int 1000 to 1300. Hndrl.	
2 to 4 adapted rooms grd flr closest to reception desk. Dr >760 lev hndl at 1000. Lght sw 1000. (w) circ space. Bed H530. Sideways transf space lmt'd by furniture arrangement. Sw (w). Bathrm dr 760 lev hndl. Flr marble. (w) circ space. Sh 1100 x 1150 no hob small lip. Hndsh seat grab rails taps caps. Toilet pan ext 800. Seat H460 to 480. Grab rails 800 to 810. Sideways transf space. Toilet pan to rim of basin 1100. Basin 680 under taps lev mirror 970.	
Rstrnts and bars (w). Rm serv. Swimming pool +3. Dr 760 steps with rail into pool. Near The Rocks, CBD. \$\$\$\$\$	

Source: (ACROD (NSW Div Ltd), 1994)

Avillion Hotel	
4.5 ★, \$297 & Rms 6	
LOCATION 500m from Central station, 250m from George Street buses, 50m to World Square monorail station	Cnr Pitt & Liverpool Streets, Sydney
PARKING Valet parking only	☎ 8268 1888
ENTRANCE Automatic doors. Aternative entrance in Liverpool Street	☎ 9283 5899
ROOMS Linked room for carer. Door opens inwards with lever handle, heavy closer. Bed cannot be raised. All furniture is moveable	🌐 www.avillion.com.au
BATHROOM/SHOWER Bathroom door opens outwards. Lever handle. Drop-down seat in shower. Adjustable shower head. Central mix taps. Bath with grab rails	✉ sales@avillion.com.au
FACILITIES Avery's restaurant	
TOILETS Unisex & toilet in lobby	

Source: (Australian Quadriplegic Association, 2002, p. 35)

C. Cameron Textual and Spatial Representation

Hotel X Floorplan - 02 9999-9999/fax 02 9888-8888 - email@address.com.au

Access into Hotel:

Taxi drop off at main entrance. Short but steep ramped crossover to gently sloping tiled area to automatic glass doors. Complimentary valet parking.

Foyer:

Large open foyer with Porter desk just on the right inside the entry. Reception desk straight ahead. Both counters are high.

Access to restaurants:

From reception there is sign (international wheelchair symbol) indicating a lift which is located towards the bar. The turning area into the lift is sufficient. Take the lift down one level. Restaurants are on this level. Table heights are to Australian Standards. Accessible toilet is just near the lift and while it appears limited to male/female, it would be no problem to be accompanied by an attendant.

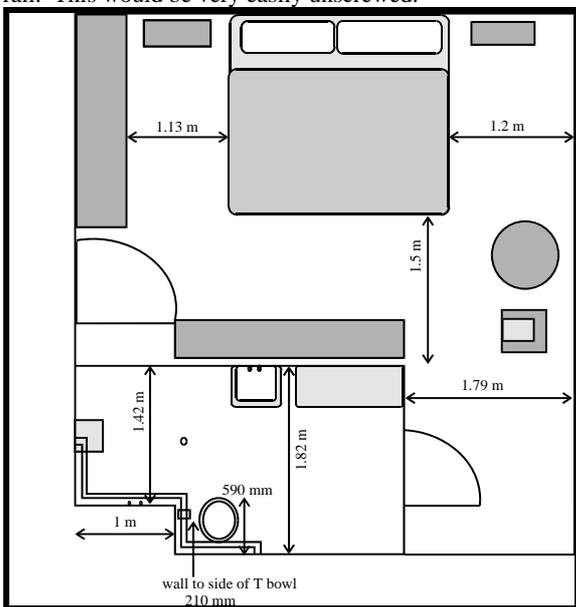
Access to Room:

There are four accessible rooms.

From reception there is sign (international wheelchair symbol) indicating a lift which is located towards the bar. The turning area into the lift is sufficient. You take the lift up one level, turn left through a short and reasonably narrow (approx 1m) passage way, turn right towards the main lifts. Both lifts are sufficiently large and call buttons about shoulder height (1100mm). Room door lock is magnetic card inserted from top and lever handle, shoulder height 1.1m. Door into room is 760 mm wide, there is no door return (good) but there is a polished metal ball knob on the inside. Entry into the room is governed by cabinets on the left and a writing desk/chair on the right. There is a double bed at 650 mm high (can be lowered if needed). Reading lights are located on bedside tables and can be operated from the table by the cabinet. The round table and lounge chair clutter circulation space

Bathroom:

There is plenty of turning space to enter the bathroom, the door is 760 mm with lever handle inside and out at 1.1 m. Circulation space is good. The shower seat is very small (350 mm * 270 mm, 500 mm high, useless) and there is a hand held shower nozzle. The shower and basin taps are both circular capstan and very difficult to grip. The grab rails run from the shower around and behind the toilet, the top measurement is 940 mm. There should be no difficulty getting a shower chair over the toilet except (490mm), possibly for the toilet roll located just under the grab rail. This would be very easily unscrewed.



Source: (Cameron, 2000)

D. Digital Photography/Virtual Tour

See the following web sites:

O'Carrollys. (2006). O'Carrollys at One Mile Beach - Accessibility. Retrieved 12 October, 2006, from http://www.ocarrolllys.com.au/accessibility/cabin_accommodation.php

e-bility. (2006). Access Noosa: Sunshine Coast access guide. Retrieved 12 October, 2006, from <http://www.e-bility.com/accessnoosa/accom.php>