



Hospitality Accessibility Solutions Report

Prepared For

Hospitality NT

Prepared By

Flare Access

W: flareaccess.com.au

Completed

November 2023



Contents

Introduction.....	3
Summary of Recommendations.....	4
Existing Inclusive Practices.....	4
Accessibility Solutions.....	4
Background To Disability Access And Inclusion.....	5
Statement Of Limitation.....	6
Legislative Compliance.....	7
Purpose Of Recommendations.....	8
Existing Inclusive Practices.....	9
Accessible parking.....	9
Drop-off point with a cut curb.....	9
Accessible entrance.....	9
Continuous path of travel.....	10
Accessible toilets.....	10
Adjustable background music volume.....	11
Adjustable lighting.....	11
Table service as required.....	12
Menu assistance.....	12
Service animals welcome.....	13
Allergen information provided.....	13
Temperature controlled seating options.....	13
Accessibility Solutions.....	14
Disability Inclusion Training.....	14
Signage of Accessible Entrances.....	15
Wayfinding to bathrooms.....	15
Signage to Accessible Bathrooms.....	17
Increase Lighting in Functional Areas.....	17
Quiet Zones.....	18

Provide Sensory Bags.....	19
Provide alternative methods of contact.....	19
Provide menus in alternative formats.....	20
Assisted Listening System at Service Counters or Functional Areas.....	21
Accessible tables.....	22
Accessible Seating.....	23
Clear floor space between tables.....	23
Utilise existing accessible features.....	24
Summary.....	25

Introduction

Embracing accessibility in customer service is a strategic imperative for businesses in today's market. Increasing the accessibility of customer experiences for people with disabilities is not only a matter of social responsibility but also presents significant economic advantages for businesses. By enhancing accessibility, businesses can tap into a wider customer base leading to revenue growth and increased market share of an accessible tourism market valued over \$13.5 billion.

The accessible tourism market is set to grow, driven by an aging population and a rise in multi-generational travel. In this evolving landscape, seizing the moment to become market-ready for accessible tourism is not just timely but essential. Enhancing accessibility benefits not only individuals with disabilities but also extends to the older population and young families, ensuring ease of access and comfort for a wide spectrum of the community.

In response to the growing demand for accessible tourism experiences, Hospitality NT committed to undertake a project aimed at enhancing the accessibility of Hospitality venues across the NT. Comprehensive Accessibility Guides were created for sixteen hospitality venues situated in the scenic Darwin Waterfront Precinct.

In addition to the Accessibility Guides, this report has been developed in order to support businesses across the NT to increase the accessibility of their customer experience, by highlighting existing accessible features that demonstrate best practice, and identifying access solutions that can be incorporated to remove barriers.

The key principle of Flare Access's approach for this report is to prioritise high-impact, low-cost solutions with the intention to highlight achievable solutions that businesses can put into place as well as support businesses to establish an action plan for the future.

Summary of Recommendations

Existing Inclusive Practices	Accessibility Solutions
Accessible parking	Disability inclusion training
Drop-off point with a cut curb	Signage of accessible entrances
Accessible entrance	Wayfinding to bathrooms
Continuous path of travel	Wayfinding to accessible bathrooms
Accessible toilets	Increase lighting in functional areas
Adjustable background music volume	Quiet zones
Adjustable lighting	Sensory bag service
Table service as required	Provide menus in alternative formats
Menu reading assistance	Accessible seating
Service animals welcome	Accessible tables
Allergen information provided on menus.	Assisted listening system at service counters or functional areas
Temperature controlled seating options	Clear floor space between tables
	Utilise existing accessible features

Background To Disability Access And Inclusion

As members of our community, people with disability, their families, friends and carers have the same rights as people without disabilities to access public spaces and services within the community. These rights are built into Territory and Commonwealth legislation which make it unlawful to discriminate against a person with disability.

There are several pieces of legislation that protect and promote the rights of people with disability as well as codes and standards that relate to access and inclusion of people with disabilities.

All organisations have a responsibility, under the federally legislated Disability Discrimination Act (1992) to provide equitable access to goods and services and to premises used by the public.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) places an obligation on building owners and service providers to ensure that, as far as possible, there is no discrimination against people on the grounds of disability in respect of access to premises, work, accommodation & the provision of services etc. Equitable and dignified access must be provided and a complaint can be made under the DDA if appropriate access is not provided.

The DDA acknowledges that it is not always possible to create full access to existing structures or services, however, it requires services to maximise inclusion and consider all options in creating an inclusive experience.

Statement Of Limitation

This document contains advice and recommendations made by Flare Access in relation to statutory requirements for the provision of access for people with a disability. The advice and recommendations are generalised based on barriers observed within the hospitality venues located in the Darwin Waterfront Precinct. Further advice and consultation may be required for your individual business needs.

These recommendations, while comprehensive, are not exhaustive and should be considered as a starting point for ongoing improvements in accessibility at the venues.

Throughout this report, examples of solutions, equipment, or suppliers may be provided. Flare Access is not affiliated with any supplier or equipment mentioned. This information is provided as a reference for context and an example to assist you in your next steps. There are extensive equipment and service providers in the market, you may choose to source the suppliers that suit you best.

Legal requirements in the areas of anti-discrimination law, Access Standards and inclusion change, and require ongoing review.

While all care has been taken by Flare Access in preparing this document, Flare Access does not accept responsibility or liability for the results of specific action taken on the basis of this information nor for any errors or omissions.

Legislative Compliance

The report provides a practical approach to offering accessible experiences according to the latest standards.

The following documents are referenced in this report:

- Disability Discrimination Act (1992)
- Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standard 2010
- AS 1428.1, Design for access and mobility, Part 1: General requirements for access – New building work (2021)
- AS 1428.2, Design for access and mobility, Part 2: Enhanced and additional requirements – Buildings and facilities
- AS/NZS 1428.4.1, Design for access and mobility, Part 4.1: Means to assist the orientation of people with vision impairment – Tactile ground surface indicators
- AS 1428.4.2, Design for access and mobility, Part 4.1: Means to assist the orientation of people with vision impairment – Wayfinding signs
- AS 1428.5, Design for access and mobility, Part 5: Communication for people who are deaf or hearing impaired

The Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standard 2010 provides for a defense of “unjustifiable hardship” against a complaint where, among other items, the provision of a particular level of access would be technically impossible, impose major difficulties or involve unreasonable costs in an existing building that is being extended or undergoing alterations/renovations. However, compliance is required to the maximum extent not involving “unjustifiable hardship”.

Purpose Of Recommendations

The recommendations outlined below are intended to be used as an introduction to address the barriers to access and inclusion that were identified during the review of venues throughout Darwin Waterfront. The areas addressed include communication, information, services and facilities and are broken down at each step of the customer experience. The recommendations mentioned aim to achieve improved access and inclusion and can be applied to venues throughout the Territory.

It is not a legal requirement for visitors to disclose their disability, it is therefore encouraged to offer a service that is inclusive to all and as accessible as possible.

It is important to remember that some people do not consider themselves to be a “person with disability”. It may, however, be difficult for them to experience services where accessibility barriers exist. Implementation of these recommendations will create a more inclusive experience for all.

These recommendations have been made to maximise access and inclusion of your customer experience. Each step of the visitor experience has been reviewed and are considered below. Observations of current practice or design are noted and are followed by potential issues that can arise from the observation and recommendations of how to reduce the issue. Please note that the barriers identified below are not present in all venues, as such the recommendations may not be relevant for all businesses.

These recommendations provide businesses with the scope of work to be undertaken. Technical details on how the recommendations should be achieved must be gained from the referenced document/s. References in the report generally refer to the relevant clause of the document rather than any diagram or figure. It is imperative that technical information is gained from the relevant Clause and any Figure referenced within the Clause when implementing the solutions.

Existing Inclusive Practices

Accessible parking

Observations: Accessible parking is offered for patrons visiting the Darwin Waterfront Precinct. It is vital for inclusion as mandated by the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standard 2010 and broader Access Standards. These designated parking spaces, equipped with proper dimensions and proximity to entrances, ensure that individuals with disabilities can readily access public facilities.

The absence of accessible parking can significantly impact the experience of individuals with disabilities. It can lead to physical exertion for those with reduced mobility, as they may have to travel longer distances to reach the venue. Such shortcomings in accessibility can discourage repeat visits and negatively affect the venue's reputation as an inclusive and welcoming destination.

Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standard 2010

Drop-off point with a cut curb

Observations: There is a drop-off point with a cut curb to access the Precinct. Providing a drop-off point with a cut curb enhances accessibility and safety, especially for those with reduced mobility, by facilitating easier and safer entry and exit. This feature promotes independence, allowing people with disabilities to access venues without extra assistance.

Accessible entrance

Observations: Entrances to venues are accessible with level access, an unobstructed opening with width of at least 850mm and adequate doorway circulation space.

Physical barriers like steps, narrow doorways or heavy doors can prevent access for those with reduced mobility and those who use mobility aids. Businesses risk losing potential customers and damaging their reputation, as inaccessible entrances can turn away not only individuals with disabilities but also their companions.

AS1428.1 (2021) Section 13.2, titled "Clear Opening of Doorways".

Continuous path of travel

Observations: Venues throughout the precinct are connected with a continuous path of travel that adheres to the Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standard (2010), ensuring unobstructed accessibility Between venues.

A continuous path of travel refers to an unobstructed and accessible route that allows individuals with disabilities to move freely within and between spaces. It is essential because it ensures that people with mobility or sensory disabilities can navigate a space comfortably and independently.

(Access to Premises - Buildings) Standard (2010).

Accessible toilets

Observations: Accessible toilets are available in some venues and public toilets are available within the Precinct. These facilities are specifically designed to accommodate individuals with disabilities, providing adequate space and accessible fixtures.

The unavailability of an accessible toilet can cause discomfort and distress for those who need these facilities, as standard toilets often do not accommodate mobility aids or provide necessary support features like grab bars. This lack of access can limit the time these individuals can spend at a venue and may deter them from visiting altogether. This oversight can result in a loss of customers and negative public perception, as it shows a disregard for the diverse needs of the community.

By offering accessible toilets, businesses and organisations ensure that people with access needs can use these facilities with dignity and ease.

The Building Code of Australia and the (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standard (2010).

Adjustable background music volume

Observations: Background music can be adjusted on request by patrons. Loud background music can create a difficult environment for individuals who are hard of hearing or who have sensory sensitivities.

Music with adjustable volume allows venues to cater to a diverse range of patrons. By providing the option to modify the music's volume, businesses create a more comfortable and inclusive atmosphere where all guests can enjoy their experience without discomfort or exclusion.

AS 1428.5 Section 2.1 titled "Environment"

Adjustable lighting

Observations: Lighting can be adjusted indoors on request by patrons. Adjustable lighting enables individuals with low vision or varying visual sensitivities to participate comfortably in various settings. It allows for customisation to accommodate those with light sensitivity and visual disability.

To facilitate lipreading and sign language communication in areas where information is exchanged or spontaneous conversations take place, adequate lighting on the face and body is mandated. It is recommended to maintain a minimum illumination level of 160 Lux for these purposes.

AS 1428.5 section 8.2 titled "Illumination"

Table service as required

Observations: Table service is either standard service or can be provided as required. Offering table service ensures that all individuals can access and enjoy dining or service experiences. Table service promotes equal access, dignity, and convenience, creating a more inclusive environment where all customers can comfortably partake in restaurant or service offerings without physical barriers.

Without table service, individuals may face challenges in accessing food or beverages, especially if self-service involves navigating through crowded or physically demanding spaces. For those with cognitive disabilities or conditions like anxiety, the self-service process can be overwhelming or confusing, creating barriers to their comfort and enjoyment. The absence of this service can also affect elderly patrons or those with temporary injuries who might find it difficult to carry items or stand for extended periods.

Adapting service delivery to include table service, even when it's not the standard practice, demonstrates a commitment to accessibility and inclusivity, showing that the venue is mindful of the diverse needs of its patrons.

This is good practice if other access solutions such as accessible service counters or QR code ordering cannot be incorporated.

Menu assistance

Observations: Verbally describing menu items and options provides individuals with visual impairments or reading difficulties the opportunity to independently make informed choices when alternative formats are not available. This service ensures equal access to information, preserves dignity, and promotes inclusivity.

This is good practice if other access solutions or alternative formats are not incorporated.

Service animals welcome

Observations: Service animals are welcome in all venues.

When a service animal is not welcomed at a venue, it can lead to several issues, particularly for individuals who rely on these animals for assistance. Firstly, it can significantly limit the independence and mobility of these individuals, as service animals are trained to aid with various disabilities, including visual impairments and mobility challenges. Denying access to service animals can also cause emotional distress and anxiety for their owners, who depend on them for support and safety.

Under the Disability Discrimination Act, service animals are legally protected, and denying access to them can be considered a form of discrimination against individuals with disabilities who rely on these animals for assistance and support.

Disability Discrimination Act (1992) Section 9

Allergen information provided

Observations: Allergen information was provided on most menus and dietary requirements can be met at all venues.

Including clear allergen information on menus or providing separate allergen guides helps individuals with food allergies or dietary restrictions make safe choices.

Temperature controlled seating options

Observations: The provision of fans for outdoor areas and fans and air conditioning indoors ensures a comfortable environment for all guests, including individuals who may be sensitive to temperature extremes, including elderly guests, young children, and people with certain medical conditions.

Accessibility Solutions

Disability Inclusion Training

Observations: Most teams have not had the opportunity to engage in disability inclusion training.

Potential issues: Not providing disability inclusion training can lead to a lack of awareness and understanding among staff regarding the needs and experiences of individuals with disabilities. This can result in unintended discrimination, communication barriers, and inaccessible environments or services. Without proper training, employees may not know how to interact respectfully, make reasonable accommodations, or create an inclusive atmosphere, which can negatively impact both the workplace and the experiences of customers with disabilities.

Recommendation

Disability inclusion training, also known as disability awareness or disability sensitivity training, is a form of education and awareness-building designed to promote understanding, empathy, and inclusivity toward individuals with disabilities. This type of training typically covers various aspects related to disability, including:

- **Awareness:** Understanding the different types of disabilities, their characteristics, and the challenges individuals with disabilities may face in various aspects of life.
- **Communication:** Learning how to communicate effectively and respectfully with individuals with disabilities, including using appropriate terminology and etiquette.
- **Legislation and Rights:** Familiarising participants with disability rights laws, regulations, and policies, such as the Disability Discrimination Act (1992).
- **Accessible Practices:** Exploring accessible design, technology, and practices that create inclusive environments in both physical spaces and digital platforms.

- **Attitudinal Shift:** Encouraging participants to examine and challenge any biases, stereotypes, or stigmas they may hold regarding people with disabilities.
- **Customer Service:** Teaching customer service representatives and staff how to interact respectfully and effectively with customers or clients with disabilities.
- **Problem-solving:** Developing problem-solving skills to address disability-related issues and challenges that may arise in various settings.

Signage of Accessible Entrances

Observations: Accessible entrances have limited signage or wayfinding to direct patrons to accessible routes.

Potential issues: This can create confusion and frustration for individuals with disabilities who rely on clear guidance to access a venue or facility. Without proper signage or wayfinding, patrons may struggle to identify these entrances, potentially leading to unnecessary barriers and delays.

Recommendation

Where an accessible entrance is provided, an indication of access for pedestrians is recommended. Where a pedestrian entrance is not accessible, directional signage incorporating the international symbol of access must be provided to direct a person to the location of the nearest accessible pedestrian entrance.

AS 1428.4.2; Appendix D Illustrations For Sign Placement; Appendix E Sans Serif Font Examples; Appendix F Pictograms

Wayfinding to bathrooms

Observations: There was a noticeable absence of indoor and outdoor signage and directions guiding patrons to the restroom facilities.

Potential issues: The issue for patrons with disabilities when signage is not provided is the potential for confusion and inconvenience. This lack of direction can lead to frustration, fatigue, delays, or even accidents.

Clear and accessible signage guides people with diverse needs, including visual impairments, neurodivergence or cognitive disability, to navigate public spaces independently.

Recommendation

Consider incorporating the following features in any signage upgrade, based on good signage principles:

- Signage should be placed in prominent locations where they can be easily seen from a distance, particularly from the main approach to the venue.
- Signage should have high colour contrast between the text and the background to ensure that it is easy to read for people with low vision.
- Strategically place the signage to direct people to key areas such as entrances, parking, venues, and restrooms.
- Directional arrows can be useful in helping to guide people to their destination.
- Signage should use clear and concise language that is easy to understand
- The text on signage should be in a font that is easy to read, such as sans-serif fonts like Arial or Helvetica, and the size of the text should be appropriate for the distance from which it will be viewed.
- Information provided on signs should be clear and unambiguous to read
- Lettering (size, type, layout) should be clear and legible
- The sign should not reflect light.
- Located between 1200mm – 1600mm from the finished floor surface, where they are visible to people both seated and standing.
- Directional signage to be located at key decision-making points
- The sign should be in contrast to the background surface

AS 1428.4.2; Appendix D Illustrations For Sign Placement; Appendix E Sans Serif Font Examples; Appendix F Pictograms

Signage to Accessible Bathrooms

Signage for unisex accessible facilities should be provided with the letters LH or RH to indicate the left-hand or right-hand side transfer onto the WC pan. The minimum font size shall be 20 mm sans serif.

AS1428.1 (2021) Section 8.1 titled "Form of signs"

Increase Lighting in Functional Areas

Observations: Although many venues offer adjustable lighting on request, task lighting or lighting in functional areas was low.

Potential issues: Low lighting can create barriers for individuals with visual impairments, making it difficult for them to navigate safely. It can also impede the ability of those with reduced mobility to identify obstacles.

Dimly lit areas can hinder communication, particularly for individuals who rely on lip reading or sign language. Clear visibility of facial expressions and gestures is essential for effective communication.

Recommendation

Illumination recommendations include:

- Entrances: 150 Lux
- Passageways and walkway 150 Lux
- Toilet 200 Lux
- Service Counters and Countertops 250 Lux
- General displays 200-300 Lux
- Consider adjustable task lighting for functional areas if recommended Lux is not available throughout the venue.

AS 1428.2 Section 19 titled "lighting"

Quiet Zones

Observations: Designated quiet zones were not observed.

Potential issues: This can make it challenging for individuals who seek a peaceful and less noisy environment to find a suitable space. This absence of designated areas can lead to discomfort, stress, and reduced enjoyment for patrons who are hard of hearing, may have sensory sensitivities, neurodiverse conditions, or simply a preference for quieter surroundings.

Recommendation

Provide spaces where patrons can comfortably participate in public activities or access services.

Restaurants, cafes and hotels can create quiet zones in the following ways:

- **Designated Spaces:** Consider specific areas within the establishment as quiet zones, clearly marked with signage and décor to signal their purpose.
 - **Soundproofing:** Invest in soundproofing materials such as acoustic panels, curtains, or carpets to minimise noise from adjacent areas.
 - **Reservations:** Offer the option for guests to reserve tables in quiet zones in advance, ensuring availability and meeting their preferences.
 - **Table Arrangement:** Space tables further apart in quiet zones to reduce noise overlap and create a calmer atmosphere.
 - **Low-Volume Music:** Play softer or instrumental music in quiet zones, or provide the option for no music at all.
 - **Staff Training:** Train staff to be aware of the quiet zone concept and to manage noise levels accordingly, ensuring a peaceful environment.
 - **Quiet Hours:** Designate specific hours or days when the establishment enforces quieter conditions to cater to guests seeking tranquility.
 - **Low Periods:** If a quiet zone is not available, identify and promote when your typical low times or days are so that patrons can choose to attend when it is more quiet.
-

Provide Sensory Bags

Observations: A sensory bag service was not observed at the venues. A sensory bag is a collection of tools and toys designed to calm and stimulate the senses, often used by individuals with sensory processing issues to help manage sensory overload and promote relaxation and focus.

Potential issues: Without access to sensory bags, individuals with sensory sensitivities may struggle to cope with overwhelming environments, potentially leading to stress, anxiety, or an inability to participate in activities.

Recommendation

Offering Sensory Bags helps services cater to the sensory needs of individuals who may experience sensory sensitivities or overload whilst visiting your venue. Sensory bags can be created on a low budget and typically contain items like noise-canceling headphones, fidget toys, sunglasses, and other sensory tools that can be easily cleaned.

Provide alternative methods of contact

Observations: Some venues do not have alternative methods of contact available on their website or social media.

Potential issues: This can create significant barriers for individuals who have communication disabilities or specific communication preferences. People who are hard of hearing, have speech disorders, or other disabilities may rely on alternative methods such as email, phone or text-based communication. When these alternatives are not available, these individuals may struggle to make bookings or enquiries into your service.

Recommendation

Providing alternative means of contact means offering individuals multiple options or channels through which they can reach out or communicate with your business. For example, alternative means of contact might include offering phone numbers, email addresses, online chat support, social media messaging, or physical mailing addresses. By providing these alternatives, you can ensure that individuals can choose the method that best suits their convenience and accessibility needs.

Provide menus in alternative formats

Observations: Menus in alternative are not provided.

Potential issues: When menus are provided in standard format only, individuals with low vision or reading disabilities from independently accessing and making informed choices when dining out or using food services. This lack of accessibility can result in a loss of dining independence, limited food choices, and a less enjoyable dining experience.

Recommendation

Providing menus in alternative formats ensures that individuals with various accessibility needs can access and make informed choices when dining out. Examples of alternative formats for menus include:

- Large Print Menus: Presenting menu items in larger, high-contrast text that is easier to read e.g 18 point font, Arial
 - Audio Menus: Audio menus can be hosted online and accessed via a QR code that is linked to your website or Youtube. Patrons can listen to a recorded description of menu items via their smartphone.
 - Digital Menus: Digital menus can be accessed on personal devices, such as smartphones or tablets, allowing users to adjust text size, use magnification or screen readers, and enable other accessibility features as needed.
-

- **Picture Menus:** Picture menus or visual aids are beneficial for some individuals as they can use images to identify and understand menu items.

Assisted Listening System at Service Counters or Functional Areas

Observations: Assisted Listening Systems such as Hearing Loops are not provided at service counters or functional areas such as bars.

Potential issues: This can create significant communication barriers for individuals with hearing disabilities. These systems are crucial for ensuring that individuals who rely on amplification to hear and understand spoken content can actively participate and engage with staff. Without access to assisted listening systems, these individuals may struggle to comprehend spoken information, place orders, ask questions and participate in the experience.

Recommendation

Assisted Listening Services can be provided at any place where a service deals with a customer.

The goal of an assisted listening system is to position a microphone in proximity to the desired sound source to enhance the ratio of the desired sound to undesired elements like background noise.

A hearing loop, also known as an induction loop or hearing induction loop system, enhances accessibility for individuals with hearing impairments by providing a direct and clear audio signal to their hearing aids or cochlear implants. Portable Cross-the-Counter Systems are available for less than \$500 (as at the date of this report).

AS 1428.5 Section 3 titled "Situations requiring hearing augmentation."

Accessible tables

Observations: Accessible tables were not consistently provided across all venues. Many tables available offer restricted foot and knee clearance for wheelchair users due to the table height, cross bars or pedestals.

Potential issues: Accessible tables are essential for ensuring that everyone, regardless of their mobility or disability, can comfortably dine and participate in social activities. Inconsistencies in their availability may lead to exclusion or inconvenience, limiting the choices and experiences of patrons with disabilities.

Recommendation

Consider offering accessible tables in order to increase accessibility for wheelchair users and other patrons with reduced mobility. Providing a few accessible tables near the venue entrance and indicating their accessibility will provide options for customers with access needs.

- In the case where only a single height table is available the recommended specifications are:
 - Height of table 850 +/- 20 mm
 - Height of clearance beneath unit 820 +/- 20 mm
- In the instance where two table heights can be provided the recommended specifications are:
 - Height of table:
 - 1st table: 750 +/- 20 mm
 - 2nd table 850 +/- 20mm
 - Height of clearance beneath table:
 - 1st table 730 +/- 20 mm
 - 2nd table 820 +/- 20mm
- The minimum clearance width between the legs or other fixtures beneath a table on at least one accessible face of the unit should be 800 mm.

- Pedestal tables and tables with splayed legs are not recommended and tables with corner legs are preferred.

AS 1428.2 Section 24 titled "Furniture and Fitments"

Accessible Seating

Observations: Seating without armrests was commonly observed throughout the various establishments.

Potential issues: Armrests provide stability and aid in the process of sitting down and getting up from a seat for those with reduced strength, balance or mobility. Without armrests, individuals may find it more difficult to maintain balance and stability, which can increase the risk of accidents or discomfort.

Recommendation

Accessible seating refers to designated seating areas within venues that are specifically designed to accommodate individuals with disabilities. These seating areas are strategically located to provide equal access and comfort to people with a range of access needs.

Consider providing a range of options of chairs including chairs with armrests to increase the ease and independence of patrons. Chairs should have a firm base and a seat height of 450 mm.

AS 1428.2 Section 24 titled "Furniture and Fitments"

Clear floor space between tables

Observations: Clear floor space varied between tables, often resulting in reduced floor space for patrons to navigate between occupied chairs and tables.

Potential issues: inadequate floor space can create potential obstacles for individuals who have low vision or who have reduced mobility.

Recommendation

Clear floor space refers to an unobstructed area on the restaurant floor where there are no tables, chairs, or other obstacles. This space is essential for ensuring accessibility and ease of movement for individuals who are blind or have low vision, as well as those who use mobility aids such as wheelchairs, walkers, or scooters. The clear floor space allows these individuals to navigate the restaurant, access tables, and move freely between tables without encountering physical barriers or obstructions. Clear floor space should be 820 mm between occupied chairs.

If clear floor space cannot be provided consistently throughout the venue, wayfinding and signage is recommended to guide patrons to an established accessible route to access various areas of the venue.

AS 1428.2 Section 24 titled "Furniture and Fitments"

Utilise existing accessible features

Observations: There are instances where accessible features exist however are obstructed and cannot be utilised for their intended function.

Potential issues: A missed opportunity to offer accessible features that are currently in place. Obstructing accessible features such as accessible ramps or handrails in toilets can cause frustration and barriers for patrons with access needs.

Recommendation

To create a truly inclusive and accessible environment, it is essential to utilise existing accessible features effectively. This involves recognising and appreciating the value of accessible design elements, such as ramps, handrails, and clear pathways, and ensuring they remain unobstructed. It means refraining from using these features for storage purposes or blocking them with objects that hinder their intended function.

Summary

This Accessibility Solutions Report serves as a comprehensive document outlining strategies and recommendations to improve accessibility within the venues of the Darwin Waterfront. It includes a review of existing accessibility barriers and provides practical solutions to overcome them. These solutions focus on creating inclusive environments, accommodating individuals with disabilities, and ensuring compliance with accessibility regulations. This list is not exhaustive, however it creates a starting point for businesses to increase accessibility. The report emphasises cost-effective measures that can be implemented regardless of budget constraints, fostering inclusivity and equal access for all. Ultimately, this report aims to guide businesses in making spaces and services more welcoming and accessible for individuals with diverse needs and abilities.

Accessibility is an ongoing journey that begins with the formulation of a well-thought-out access plan and continues with a commitment to making incremental improvements over time. Much like any journey, it involves taking that crucial first step, whether it's in designing an accessible space, offering alternative menus or enhancing digital platforms. This journey acknowledges that achieving full accessibility may take time, but with each positive change made, we are one step closer to creating a more inclusive and equitable world for all individuals.