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**Title: Enabling accessible and inclusive tourism: Lessons from New Zealand and Australia**

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**Abstract**

The overarching goals of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) bring an important spotlight on the need to foster accessibility for everyone, regardless of their ability, age, or background; indeed, participation is a human right. In recent work, we challenge our peers, policy makers, and providers to reflect critically on, and help dismantle, the disabling discourses and normative structures that continue to marginalise and oppress people with disability in their role as tourists. The tourism industry has largely failed in its moral and social responsibility to design and promote tourism experiences ‘for all’. As academic researchers, our focus on, and aspiration toward, social change means that social solutions are possible to help achieve full access and inclusion for all tourists in transportation, built and natural environments, and information communication technologies (in accordance with Article 9, CRPD) so that experiences become not only accessible, but equitable, dignifying, empowering, and enabling for tourists with disability. Without changes to infrastructure, industry attitudes, information, and care provision, individuals with disability will remain unable to assume the role of tourist and therefore remain ‘disabled’.

In this presentation, we discuss the findings of recent research borne out of our relationships with the disability community and essential understandings of their lived experiences. Our collective research shows that people with disability want and expect to exercise their right to enjoy the benefits of participation in travel and tourism, but multiple barriers and constraints to their access remain despite human rights frameworks and some accessibility legislation in some countries. Notably, our research highlights the various constraints different dimensions of disability place on the built environment. To shed light on how access may be better enabled for people with disability to overcome physical and social barriers, we discuss conclusions from recent ‘accessible tourism’ research in New Zealand and Australia. Specifically, we compare and contrast the notably different stances taken by each country’s tourism industry towards accessibility and critically consider how the dis/ability theme can inform universal design thinking and action to inform policy, research and practice. In conclusion, we reflect on our collaborative research findings to consider the challenges and opportunities for making tourism more accessible and inclusive, and to removing physical barriers through a focus on universal design, for the benefit of everyone living in and visiting Australasia and beyond.