



**Queensland
Government**

Accessible Communications and Brand Guidelines

**A Guide for Operators and
Businesses in Tourism and
the Visitor Economy**



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About this document

Get Skilled Access, on behalf of the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport have developed this document with the aim of providing guidance and recommendations on digital accessibility for organisations in tourism and the visitor economy.

Accessibility information for destinations is crucial so people with access needs can travel with confidence. Equally important is making the information itself accessible.

Get Skilled Access have resourced information from Australia and Internationally and would like to pay particular thanks to the South Australian government for the development of their [Online Accessibility Toolkit](#) and to the Victorian and Federal Governments for their initiatives in this area.

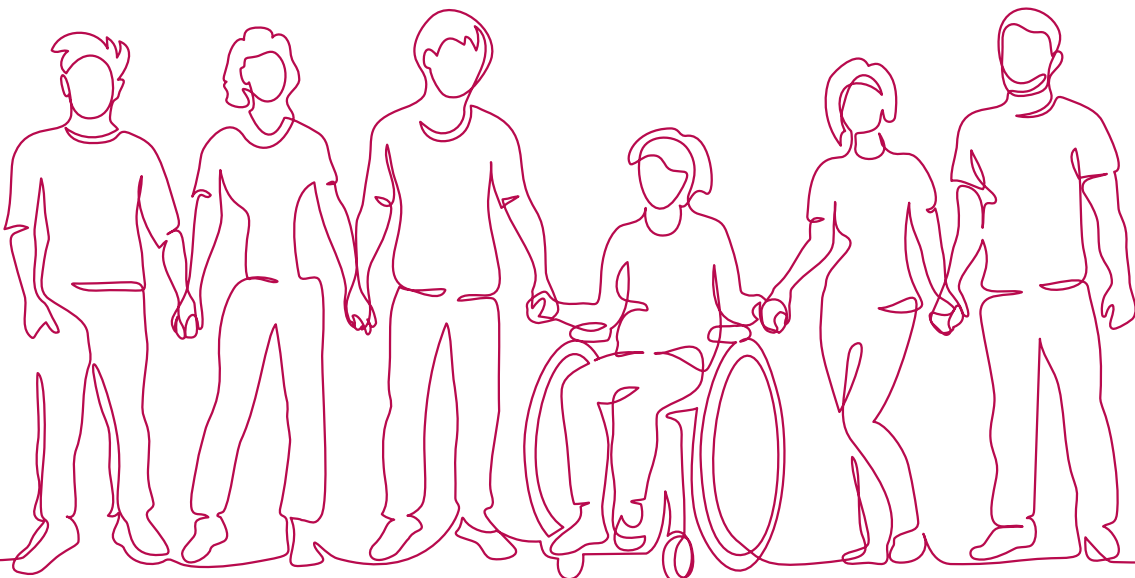
This document is not exhaustive, but it does seek to provide both the reasons digital accessibility is important and an overview to help make tourism and destination information more widely available to everyone. There are references to universal guidelines, recommendations for best practice and resources for technical implementation.

See the bibliography at the end of this document for more resources.

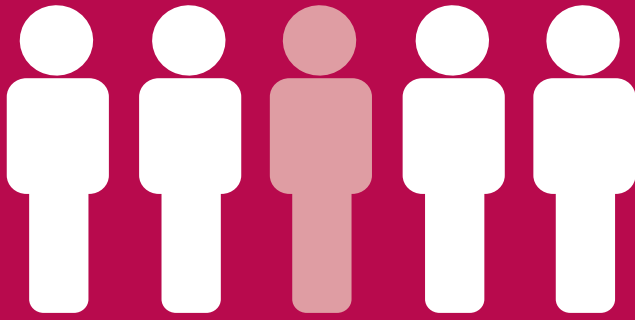
Disclaimer

Whilst care has been taken in the preparation of this document, the writer and Get Skilled Access and the Department of Tourism, Innovation and Sport do not accept responsibility for the results of any specific action taken on the basis of this information nor for any errors or omissions.

The principles and processes around digital accessibility change regularly and its often wise to consult for your specific needs.



Introduction



1 in 5

**people in Australia
have a disability.**

People with disability are the largest minority in the world. They enjoy travel and tourism experiences in the same way as everyone else, planning, researching, visiting and sharing experiences. To travel well, everyone needs accurate, up-to-date information to make decisions that will work. In particular, content needs to be readable, logical and understandable.

Good information is good for business, and this is very true of the travel industry. Producing everything – from general visitor information to destination marketing – in accessible formats for people with disabilities, allows businesses to open-up to more customers. It has economic benefit, it's a moral imperative and will help your business reach a valuable, under-served market.

Creating accessible content such as adding subtitles to video recordings, rewriting content to remove complex language or sometimes producing alternative versions may seem like more work. However, building accessibility into everyday practices will result in your communications reaching a broader audience and providing equitable and dignified access to information for everyone.



Why make communications accessible?

Could a person with low vision use the booking page on your website? How would a person with autism engage with your social media posts?

Accessibility in tourism communications is important – reaching many customers is good for business and equal access to information is a human right. We all want to feel that we're included and that we can participate. This is true in the provision of information. So why should information be made to be accessible?

It makes economic sense

Providing tourism information that everyone can access makes business sense. The accessible travel and tourism market in Australia is valued at \$10.8 Billion¹ and the number of travellers with access needs increases every day.

Providing marketing and communications in formats that everyone can use is a great way to reach this market and it might be simpler than you think. Information about your tourism offering should be easy to find, easy to understand and easy to share. Afterall, supplying material so visitors can plan, book and visit with confidence is the key to more visitation and great customer experience.

It's the right thing to do

Businesses don't operate in isolation, they're part of a community. A 'social license' is how a community accepts the operating practice of a business. It's built on trust and assumes a business will operate with a social responsibility. This applies to the customers and visitors it serves.

Providing material that is accessible adds to the credibility and reputation of a business, painting the organisation as a good social citizen.

marketing and communications are provided can show a conscious decision to be inclusive. This will likely enhance reputation and visitation.

¹ Accessible Tourism in Victoria and Queensland, Tourism Research Australia & Austrade, 2018

It's a Human Right

Access is a principle of the [Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (CRPD) a charter on Human Rights put forward by the United Nations (it's Article 9). In some ways access is part of a measure of civil society. Equality is ingrained in the 'social contract' under which progressive destinations and organisations operate. Today, there's an expectation that good tourism operators provide good access – to physical and the digital environments.

The Australian [Disability Discrimination Act 1992](#) (DDA) makes it against the law to discriminate against a person because of their disability either:

- by refusing to provide them with goods or services or make facilities available; or
- because of the terms or conditions on which, or the manner in which, the goods, services or facilities are provided.

The act includes access to information and requires a legal obligation to provide information in an accessible format for all businesses and organisations.

Accessibility in the physical environment is important and so is the way you talk about it. The way marketing and communications are provided can show a conscious decision to be inclusive. This will likely enhance reputation and visitation.

The [Queensland Human Rights Act 2019](#) commenced in its entirety on 1 January 2020 and forms part of the administrative law obligations and oversight mechanisms that hold government to account.

The main objects of the Act are to:

- protect and promote human rights
- help build a culture in the Queensland public sector that respects and promotes human rights
- help promote a dialogue about the nature, meaning and scope of human rights

RESOURCES

There are legal obligations under state and federal law for the access to information.

Australian legislation relating to access

Queensland legislation on access

Right to Information Act 2009 (RTI)

<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2009-013>

Disability Services Act 2006, QLD government

<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2006-012>

Providing information for visitors with access needs

Most of society can be spontaneous when they travel. Without too much thought they can jump in the car or book a flight and take off. This is not the case for most people with disability. Generally, for them, travel means a lot of work. It requires researching accessible destinations, booking support staff, arranging equipment and adjusting routines. For many, it's not a small undertaking, it requires time and can be a cause of anxiety.

Providing information in an accessible format makes travel easier. It allows prospective visitors to browse, view, read, hear and see material that will help them decide if a travel experience is for them. They want to be informed, and put simply, 'if they don't know they won't go'.

Who is the audience?

People with disability make up around [18% of society](#)² and, for the most part, have the same expectations as everyone else. They're consumers who value convenience, they have certain wants and needs, and they often put a premium on their time. If they're shopping and can't find what they want, they'll go somewhere else.

In 2019, the loss of revenue due to online inaccessibility was [valued at AUD \\$29Billion](#).³ While the audience may have some physical and mental diversities, they want to – and have the right – to participate in travel experiences like the broader community. That starts with good, accessible communications.

Types of disabilities

Disabilities – like the people who have them – are diverse. Here are a few examples of disabilities and how the people might use assistive technology to interact with information.

Mobility and motor disabilities

These customers can have difficulty with fine motor skills and movement. They may have tremors, weakness, loss of function because of stroke or MS, or they could have paralysis due a spinal cord injury.

Some of these customers will use their voice to control a computer and browse the web. They may use [speech-to-text](#) applications to write and they could benefit from a web interface with large buttons. In the physical world, this group might find it difficult to use their hands to turn the pages of a brochure.

Blind or low vision or vision impairment

A person is said to have 'low vision' when they have permanent vision loss that can't be corrected with glasses and affects their daily functioning.⁴

A legally blind person cannot see at six metres what someone with normal vision can see at 60 metres or if their field of vision is less than 20 degrees in diameter.⁵ These customers might use a [screen magnifier](#) to browse the web and use their computer. They could use [speech-to-text](#) to write, and a [screen reader](#) to read out loud the content on their computer screen. If it's poorly formatted, the reader will jumble the content making it confusing or non-sensical.

² [Disability, Ageing and Carers, Australia: Summary of Findings](#), 2019

³ [Click-Away Pound](#) Survey 2019

⁴ [Blindness and Vision Loss](#), Vision Australia

⁵ [Blindness and Vision Loss](#), Vision Australia

Neurodiversity

Some customers may experience sensory disabilities and be over- or under stimulated by information and layout. They will sometime benefit from clear, short sentences in a layout without bright colours or distracting animations and movement. Some visitors might benefit or prefer to use cards or signs when they communicate in person.

Learning disabilities

Many people prefer simple and clear language. Customers with Dyslexia or learning disabilities will prefer language without jargon, complex writing or too much text.

Hard of Hearing or D/deaf

Travellers who are [D/deaf or hard of hearing](#) have complete or partial loss of hearing. They'll likely benefit from captions in videos, transcripts of video content and Auslan interpreting.

Summary

To provide accessible information about your tourism business, think about the range of ways people will interact with the content you provide. Everyone has different needs and preferences, consider providing options so visitors have a choice.

Some people will have more than one disability and others may not consider themselves disabled but benefit from the improved accessibility of your tourism materials such as elderly people.

RESOURCES

Assistive Technology explained

<https://www.ndis.gov.au/participants/assistive-technology-explained>

Introduction to screen readers (June 2018, 57 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y0m7VEHoXMI>

What is a screen reader anyway, UC Berkley (April 2014)

<https://webaccess.berkeley.edu/ask-pecan/what-is-a-screen-reader>

Voice control in Windows 10 and 11 (May 2020, 14 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zN3JBnZ-4gQ>

Voice Control For Mac (Nov 2019, 14 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6y6MQq-Jtz0>

Accessibility on Apple computers

<https://www.apple.com/au/accessibility/>

Autism communication strategies, The Spectrum

<https://thespectrum.org.au/autism-strategy/autism-strategy-communication/>

Windows

JAWS Screen Reader from Freedom Scientific (For windows only)

<https://www.freedomscientific.com/products/software/jaws/>

NVDA – Non-Visual Desktop Access (For windows only)

<https://www.nvaccess.org>

Steps in providing accessible information

Making information accessible – whether it's a webpage, a printed brochure, a video or podcast – benefits everyone. Getting information out to visitors requires several steps – from the initial idea, to planning, creation and distribution. When you place accessibility within the process, it ensures the information is made to benefit all visitors. It's also a lot easier than trying to bring accessibility in at a later point.

There are key stages when you can make sure accessibility is considered:

Planning

When you're mapping out content creation at concept stage ahead of time, consider how good access can be included. For example, if you need to film an interview, book a quiet room so your video content is easy to hear and book an Auslan interpreter ahead of time so they can be filmed too. You may need some help writing a script. And at production, schedule time and budget to create captions.

Creating

When you're creating content, access can be embedded into the output. For example, when collating images for a social media post, include the alt text and make sure the language is flowing and your #HashTags capitalise the first letter of each word. Making resources and materials should be done with access in mind. This could be producing the material as a separate 'alternate format', producing a transcript of a video or providing a Plain English version.

Testing

To make sure content is achieving its goal, trial it and test it. This might include employing a person with low-vision to review content with a screen-reader or using online tools to check accessibility.

Publishing

When publishing content and releasing material digitally, there are usually controls to enhance accessibility. Check these options and provide access at a high level. Other publishing approaches could involve uploading a separate captions file for a video, writing an image description when you post an article or providing a Microsoft Word version as well as a PDF.

Updating/Reviewing

Organisations tend to prioritise physical accessibility over digital accessibility. Reviewing existing content and updating it to be more accessible is important. This might involve saving documents into more accessible formats, changing wording to be easy-read or updating website code to ensure a logical reading order for screen-readers.

Overview of creating accessible content

Making content more accessible is easier when you know the factors that contribute to accessibility. By considering key factors when you create material you can produce more accessible communications.

These are mainly to do with how people, and assistive technology, read pages of information.

When thinking about accessible materials, think about these four areas –

- the structure
- the language
- the user experience
- the visual design

Structure

We read pages top-to-bottom and look for a start, middle and end. Reading is made easier when content is structured and categorised, grouped and when content is labelled.

In HTML and in the printed page it's good to have information in chunks to make it easier to comprehend. Including headings at the start of any new information can help with chunking.

The code of a webpage should have clearly defined [page regions](#); like the header, navigation, main content and footer. This helps assistive technology read valuable content and skip others like organisation logos.

Some information should be grouped and sequenced. For example, when describing boarding a plane; it's best to explain the sequence. Arrival, check-in, security and so on can be numbered or labelled as individual sections so they can be understood in order and as part of a process.

Headings are a great way to provide information hierarchy to a webpage. In the same way headings introduce new topics on a page, chapters and audio signifiers can be used to indicate a new section in audio and video content.

YouTube allows for chapters within videos, so viewers can skip ahead accurately. Chapters are a good idea for audio content too.

Summaries at the top of a web page are a way to set expectations for longer pages, and 'quick links' provide a helpful way to jump down the page.

Consistency is important. For example, if a brochure is listing different hotels, the layout of information should be the same for each listing. People expect to see information laid out in the same way. Headings should be the same format and position. For example, a phone number and email address might be positioned in the bottom right corner of a page and formatted consistently.

By creating a logical structure to your content – customers (and technology) will find it easier to read.

⁶ Literacy and access, Style Manual, Australian Government (Nov 2021)
<https://www.stylemanual.gov.au/accessible-and-inclusive-content/literacy-and-access>

Language

The way written ideas are expressed is important. Reading can be made easier by choosing words carefully and making sentences short.

In Australia it's [reported](#) that 44% of the population have literacy levels of 1-2⁶, it's recommended that writing be made easy to read, direct and 'active'.

Good writing uses clear language in a meaningful way. Hurtful or discriminatory language should be avoided. The same goes for slang, idioms, or technical words.

Here are some ideas on how to write for better access:

- Avoid writing with jargon, initialisms/acronyms, technical words and metaphors. These can make sentences complicated or confusing
- Use short, simple sentences. Sometimes lists with bullet points are a good way to format information. People with limited language skills and those scanning the page will benefit.
- Keep the tone friendly and helpful. Avoid a tone that is formal or inactive – write the way you would talk.
- If needed, create alternative communications that use Easy English. [Easy English](#) (or Easy Read) is a writing style the helps people who communicate in a language other than English.
- Engage people with disability to test your social language and implement their feedback

Writing in this way is good for customers for many reasons. It will benefit customers who are in a rush and need to scan a page, if they use English as a second language or if they have a learning disability. These writing tips are also good for website search engine optimisation (SEO) and can help people find your business online.

User Experience

User experience (or UX) is the way people interact with a product. In terms of your website – it's how they browse, search and use the site and how positive that experience is.

Websites should be made intuitive and simple to use. The navigation should be easy to find, buttons easy to press or click and forms should be easy to fill out. When they're not, people get frustrated and may leave.

User experience is important for tasks like searching, booking and payment because it's on these pages that people are more likely to leave.

User experience makes digital products useful and sometimes pleasurable. [Good User Experience](#)⁷ will make products –

- **Useful:** A product must fill a need. If the product isn't filling a perceived gap in the users' lives, then there is no real reason for them to use it.
- **Usable:** A product needs to be simple, easy to use, and familiar.
- **Findable:** If the user has a problem with a product, they should be able to quickly find a solution.
- **Credible:** The company and its products need to be trustworthy.
- **Desirable:** The visual aesthetics of the product need to be attractive and evoke positive emotions.

⁷ [The 7 Factors that Influence User Experience](#), Interaction Design Foundation.
(Accessed Aug 2022)

- **Accessible:** The product or service needs to be accessible to everyone, including people with disabilities.
- **Valuable:** A product must deliver value. It must deliver value to the business which creates it and to the user who buys or uses it.

As a rule - simple is better. Avoid distracting animation, overwhelming graphics and confusing interactive elements. Making a website visit easy and pleasureable is more likely to lead to a visit in person.

Visual Design

The visual design is more than the look of something. It's also the way it feels and how easy it is to use because of the design elements such as layout, colours, and imagery.

The visual design of a webpage can have a huge impact on those using it. On the web this is called interface design or UI.

User interface is about creating the design of a page by arranging elements like buttons, text, input fields and navigation into a layout. The choice of font, colour and almost every design decision will affect usability of the page – especially for people with disability.

Ensuring information is easy to read is a priority. To achieve this there are key things to think about –

- Make buttons and other common elements perform predictably and ensure they are labelled correctly
- Maintain high discoverability
- Keep interfaces simple
- Respect the user's attention regarding layout
- Minimise the number of actions for performing tasks
- Put controls near objects that users want to control
- Keep users informed regarding responses/actions with feedback
- Use appropriate UI design patterns to help guide users and reduce burdens
- Maintain brand consistency

Always provide next steps which users can deduce naturally, whatever their context

Visual design in tourism and travel is prone to be very image-based and often uses flourishes in language like metaphors. If this approach is utilised, ensure its balanced with accessible language and consider alternate materials for those with disability.

There is a whole section on accessibility and visual design at the [SA online Accessibility Toolkit](#)

RESOURCES

Access for all: Improving accessibility for consumers with disability (2016)

<https://humanrights.gov.au/our-work/disability-rights/publications/access-all-improving-accessibility-consumers-disability>

Making the digital experience accessible

Most of us use the web every day. When we're making travel plans it's probably the first place we look. We get inspired by photos and videos, we read articles about activities on offer, and we start to think about a trip away.

For people with disability, that experience might not be simple because – for example – videos don't have audio descriptions, web pages aren't formatted properly for screen readers, or the writing is complex and difficult to understand.

To make sure this doesn't happen when creating your content think about the following. (We've drawn on the 7 key principles from the Digital User Experience and Inclusivity guidelines⁸)

1. Provide comparable experience

Whether out of circumstance, choice, or context people are diverse. As people use different approaches and tools to read and operate interfaces, what the interface offers each user should be comparable in value, quality, and efficiency.

2. Consider situation

People are first time users, established users, users at work, users at home, users on the move, and users under pressure. All these situations can have an impact. For those who already find interaction challenging, this impact may make usage particularly difficult.

3. Be consistent

Familiar interfaces borrow from well-established patterns. These should be used consistently within the interface to reinforce their meaning and purpose. This should be applied to functionality, behaviour, editorial, and presentation. You should say the same things in the same way and users should be able to do the same things in the same way.

4. Give Control

Install tools that allow the user to change standard browser and platform settings such as orientation, font size, zoom, and contrast. In addition, avoid content changes that have not been initiated by the user unless there is a way to control it.

5. Offer choice

There is often more than one way to complete a task. You cannot assume what someone's preferred way might be. By providing alternatives for layout and task completion, you offer people choices that suit them and their circumstances.

⁸ Inclusive Design Principals - <https://inclusivedesignprinciples.org>

6. Prioritise content

Interfaces can be difficult to understand when core features are not clearly exposed and prioritised. A site or application may provide lots of information and functionality, but users should be able to focus on one thing at a time. Identify the core purpose of the interface, and then the content and features needed to fulfill that purpose.

7. Add value

Features should add value to the user experience by providing efficient and diverse ways to find and interact with content. Consider device features such as voice, geolocation, camera and vibration, and how integration with connected devices or a second screen

Website accessibility

Your website is likely the main resource for people planning a visit. Its content will likely include your location and proximity to surrounding places, how to get to you and the activities and experiences you offer.

By providing accurate, clear information, customers can see what to expect so there's less chance of barriers, disappointment or surprise.

The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) are recognised as some of the best ways for improving website accessibility.

WCAG explains how to make online services accessible for people with permanent, temporary and situational disability.

WCAG helps make websites, documents and mobile apps accessible to people with:

- **Visual disabilities**, including people who are blind, partially sighted, and people with conditions like being colour blind
- **Hearing disabilities**, including Deaf people who use sign language, and people who are hard of hearing
- **Mobility disabilities**, including people with restricted movement that stops them using a mouse or keyboard, and people who find it difficult to control a mouse
- **Learning disabilities**, including people with Dyslexia and ADHD.
- **Neurodiversity**, including people who are Autistic

By providing information on your website in a way that adheres to the design principles in WCAG, you will improve access and benefit people with disability.

You will also create a better website experience for all your other visitors.

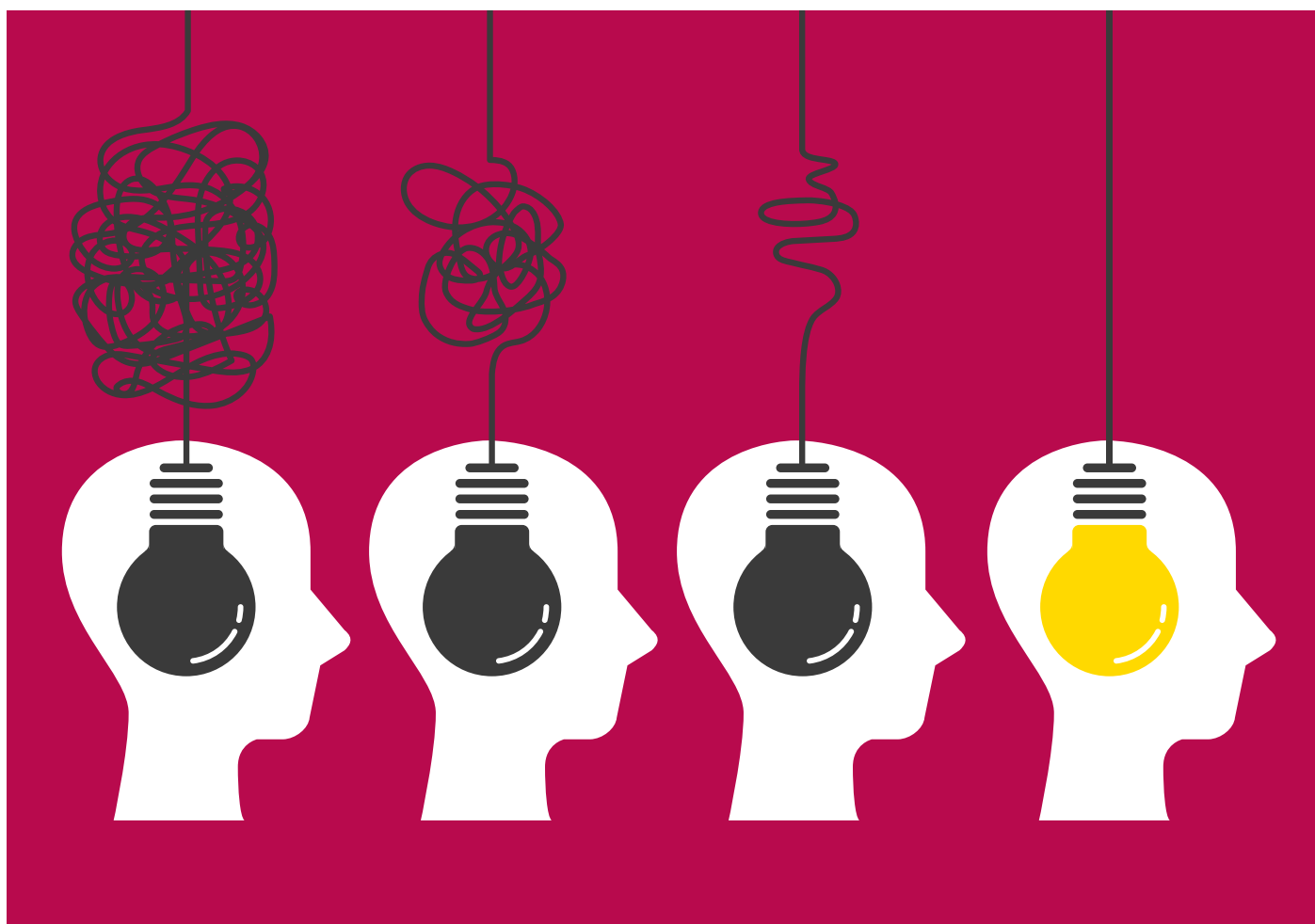
Below is a series of principles and considerations that are helpful when creating and publishing digital content. They can be used as a checklist to measure your current accessibility.

⁹ [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#), W3C (Accessed August 2022)

WCAG 2.1 Overview and design considerations⁹

WCAG design principles are supported by 12 guidelines, grouped into four principles:

1. **Perceivable**
2. **Operable**
3. **Understandable**
4. **Robust**



Perceivable

Your website must present information in ways people can recognise and use, no matter how they consume content (by touch, sound or sight for example).

- Do all images have an appropriate text equivalent? Is essential visual information also available as text?
- Do all audio files have a transcript? Is essential audio information available as text?
- Do all videos have captions that are synchronised with the audio?
- Does video that includes visual information have an audio description?
- Is all content structure that is communicated visually available to assistive technologies?
- If styling is removed is the content in a logical reading order?
- Have you avoided using visual characteristics to communicate information?
- Have you avoided using colour as the only way to convey some information? E.g., within a graph
- Can users stop audio that auto plays?
- Does all text have sufficient colour contrast against the background colour?
- Is the content fully usable when text is enlarged up to 200%?
- Have you avoided using images that include text within the image?
- Can users flip the content horizontally and vertically?
- Have you added HTML autocomplete tokens to any forms collecting information about the user?
- Does the page content resize to a single column with no horizontal and vertical scrolling?
- Do all important graphical objects, interface components, and states have a colour contrast of 3:1?
- Can line height, spacing between paragraphs and letter and word spacing be changed without breaking anything?
- Where extra content is shown or hidden on focus, can it be dismissed, interacted with (and not disappear when the user moves to it) and will stay visible until dismissed by the user?

Operable

Your website must be navigable and usable no matter how someone uses it (without a mouse, with voice commands, or with a screen magnifier for example).

- Can all menus, links, buttons, and other controls be operated by keyboard?
- Do pages that have time limits include mechanisms for adjusting those limits?
- Can any content that moves or auto updates be stopped?
- Have you avoided using content that flashes or flickers?
- Can blocks of links and other interactive elements be bypassed by keyboard users?
- Does each page have a unique title that indicates its purpose and context?
- When using a keyboard to move through a page does the order make sense?
- Is the purpose of every link clear from its link text and do links have alt-text?
- Does the website have two or more ways of finding content, such as a navigation menu, search feature, or site map?
- Are headings and labels clear and descriptive?
- When using a keyboard to move through a page can you tell where you are?
- Do you have shortcuts triggered by only one letter or character? If so can they be turned off or remapped by the user?
- Does some of your site functionality need several fingers or complex gestures to operate it?
- Does some of your site functionality work using a single point (fingertip) and is it triggered the moment it is touched?
- On forms and other components is the accessible name or label the same as any on-screen text?
- Does your site respond to motion or movement to operate parts?
- Have you avoided pop-ups that interrupt a person using your website? If not, is it easy enough to close the pop-up when using assistive technology?

Understandable

Your website must make information understandable and make it easy for people to understand how to complete tasks.

- Have you used plain English?
- Has the language of the web page or document (or individual parts of a multilingual document) been defined?
- Have you avoided links, controls, or form fields that automatically trigger a change in context?
- Does the website include consistent navigation?
- Are features with the same functionality labelled consistently?
- Do forms provide helpful, understandable error and verification messages?
- Are CAPTCHA tests compatible with assistive technology? Or can they be avoided?

Robust

Your website should work with different browsers and assistive technologies in use now and use technologies in ways that will make your service usable with the browsers and assistive technologies of the future.

- Is the web page coded using valid HTML?
- Do all interactive components have an accessible name and role, and when required state? Has the correct ARIA markup (Accessible Rich Internet Applications) been used, and does it validate?
- Are status messages and updates given appropriate roles that can be understood by Assistive Technology, without receiving focus?

Summary

Before people visit your premises, they visit your website. Ensuring it is accessible and easy to use provides many benefits to you and to your customers.

Planning for an accessible website up-front is the best way to integrate good access and to keep costs down. There are many tools to test the accessibility of your website (in relation to WACG) and utilities online.

RESOURCES

Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI)

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/>

WCAG 2

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/wcag/>

ARIA (Accessible Rich Internet Applications)

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/standards-guidelines/aria/>

Tools for testing web accessibility

WAVE (Web Accessibility Evaluation Tool)

<https://wave.webaim.org/>

Hemingway App for simple writing

<https://hemingwayapp.com>

Contrast checker

<https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>

Colour contrast tester

<https://contrast-grid.eightshapes.com/>

Content Management Systems and Accessibility

WordPress and accessibility

<https://en-au.wordpress.org/about/accessibility/>

Squarespace and accessibility

<https://support.squarespace.com/hc/en-us/articles/215129127-Making-your-Squarespace-site-more-accessible>

Drupal CMS and accessibility

<https://www.drupal.org/about/features/accessibility>

Writing for the web

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/tips/writing/>

Social media



Social media plays a part in the lives of many of us and it's a very common marketing tool. Posting to social media for your business should be done in a way that makes the content accessible within the limits of the platform.

There are common things you can do to make your social media posts more accessible –

- Publish meaningful ALT text with your images. See that they describe the picture and convey a meaning
(there's a good [guide here](#))
- Keep the use of emojis to a minimum
- Where possible, don't place text that is important within images
- Put @ mentions and # hashtags at the end of a post
- Format #hashtags in 'CamelCase', capitalising the first letter of each word
- Make sure the colour contrast is adequate (there's a good to colour and contrast [guide here](#))
- Provide closed captions when you publish video. If you use the auto captioning function, review the text to see it's accurate
- Provide clear audio where possible. Try to film without background noise and speak clearly (where possible don't hide your lips when you speak.)
- Consider reducing busy-ness and keep the post simple, clear and interesting
- Make sure you're not perpetuating stereotypes or using any discriminatory language
- Ensure to include an image description as well as alt-text. This can be done in the image caption or the comments.
- Engage people with disability to test your social media and implement their feedback

Social media is a fun and engaging tool for keeping customers informed about your business. Some platforms are very widely used and provide a great place for customers to share their experiences too. Created with consideration and by embedding good access, social media can be a great marketing tool that is inclusive in content and delivery.

RESOURCES

Facebook accessibility

<https://www.facebook.com/help/273947702950567>

How to make your Facebook business page more accessible (Sept. 2019)

<https://bighack.org/10-ways-you-can-make-your-facebook-business-page-more-accessible/>

Instagram accessibility

<https://help.instagram.com/308605337351503>

How to make your Instagram account more accessible (July 2021)

<https://bighack.org/how-to-make-your-instagram-account-more-accessible/>

TikTok accessibility

<https://www.tiktok.com/accessibility/>

Creating accessible posts on TikTok

<https://support.tiktok.com/en/using-tiktok/creating-videos/accessibility>

Becoming More Accessible on LinkedIn: Tips for Improving Your Reach (Oct. 2021)

<https://www.boia.org/blog/becoming-more-accessible-on-linkedin-tips-for-improving-your-reach>

Twitter accessibility

<https://help.twitter.com/en/resources/accessibility>

6 Tips to make your Tweets more accessible and inclusive

<https://business.twitter.com/en/blog/accessible-tweet-tips.html>

Downloadable digital documents

For a long time, Microsoft Word has been a staple for business. The ability to easily create, format, track and share rich text documents is very useful. Word files are also the preferred format for downloadable resources for many organisations – they're readable on most computers, they render consistently and are screen-reader friendly.

PDF – Adobe's portable document format – is the other preferred format for downloads but for different reasons. PDFs allow for consistent rendering across devices, they provide a rich, highly controlled result – with custom fonts, images, diagrams and embedded graphics. PDFs also provide good security and signature features.

Both document formats are useful for various travel and tourism businesses – from booking confirmations and maps to QR codes and itineraries.

From a digital accessibility point of view, each have advantages and disadvantages. You'll want to consider the type of information being distributed before choosing a format. Many organisations will provide resources as PDFs with alternatives in Microsoft Word format.

Both formats can be saved to the user's desktop, sent and referred to without the need for an internet connection. They're also good formats to print and use later.

Making Microsoft Word files more accessible

Here are some tips for creating accessible Word files:

- Microsoft Word has an Accessibility Checker that inspects documents, provides results and is easy to use
- Avoid using tables and instead describe data where possible. If tables are required, use [table headers](#) and the table creation tool built into Word.
- Use the header styles within Word, Heading 1 (H1), Heading 2 (H2), Heading 3 (H3), etc, provide browsers and screen readers with a hierarchy and structure, like HTML. This is beneficial, especially for screen readers.
- Provide ALT text for images and graphics. As in social media and websites, the ALT text will be read by screen readers to provide added context and information. Make the wording no longer than a few sentences and ensure it conveys the content, description and purpose of the image. There is no need to state "image of.." or "photo of.." unless it creates context.
- Use lists to condense wording and make information easier to comprehend for users and screen readers
- Microsoft Word makes suggestions to improve grammar and correct spelling. You can also use the [Hemingway app](#)¹⁰ to condense and simplify your writing style
- Test your Word files with people who have disability and take on their feedback

¹⁰ <https://hemingwayapp.com>

The accessibility of PDF files

PDFs are an appealing way to create documents. For organisations, they offer a range of design freedoms and allow for more control over the layout. You can create any layout imaginable – the downside is that accessibility is harder to achieve. Accessibility within PDFs is based on tags that sit behind the content, invisibly adding structure to the pages, much in the same way as HTML. Creating 'Tagged' PDFs requires more work but can be exported from programs like Adobe InDesign and Microsoft Word.

Here are some suggestions on how to make PDFs more accessible:


- Within Acrobat Pro, use the built-in Accessibility Checker – it will provide a report from which items can be actioned
- All content within a PDF must be tagged properly to be understood by a screen reader, this can be achieved manually after export, or as the document is designed
- Ensure the document reading order is logical
- Provide ALT text for images and graphics. As in social media and websites the ALT txt will be read aloud by screen readers. Make the wording no longer than a few sentences and ensure it conveys the content and the purpose of the image
- Use tags to hide decorative images from screen readers such as repetitive logos
- Ensure you specify document properties like language type, Author, Document title, publish date and description
- Don't use the function 'print as PDF', the PDF 'best for accessibility' option will ensure tags are included
- Accessibility support is provided in applications such as [MS Office](#), [Adobe InDesign](#) and [Adobe Acrobat Pro](#)
- Test your PDF's with people who have disability and take on their feedback

Here are the basic pros and cons with PDFs regarding accessibility:



Pros

- PDFs offer tight control over layout, formatting and brand. Almost any design layout can be created.
- PDF is a common format, and most computers can read them
- PDFs are easy to share and can be created as a relatively small file size
- Can easily include detailed illustrations, diagrams, maps and charts



Cons

- They don't scale/change size to fit the browser (unlike HTML)
- They cause difficulties for navigation and orientation
- They're more difficult and less likely to be kept up to date (unlike HTML)
- It's harder to track their use
- They can be hard for some users to access
- They're hard to reuse
- There are some flaws with the accessibility checker

RESOURCES

Microsoft word

Make your Word documents accessible to people with disabilities - Microsoft

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/make-your-word-documents-accessible-to-people-with-disabilities-d9bf3683-87ac-47ea-b91a-78dcacb3c66d>

PDF Accessibility by WebAIM (Institute for Disability Research, Policy, and Practice) (Feb 2021)

<https://webaim.org/techniques/acrobat/>

Make your content accessible to everyone with the Accessibility Checker – Microsoft

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/make-your-content-accessible-to-everyone-with-the-accessibility-checker-38059c2d-45ef-4830-9797-618f0e96f3ab>

PDFs (Portable Document Format)

Creating accessible PDFs by Adobe (Aug 2022)

<https://helpx.adobe.com/indesign/using/creating-accessible-pdfs.html>

PDF Techniques for WCAG 2.0 by The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C)

<https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20-TECHS/pdf>

What is a tagged PDF? By CommonLook (Sept 2020)

<https://commonlook.com/what-is-a-tagged-pdf-definition-meaning-explanation/>

Making the printed experience accessible

Printed material like brochures and flyers provide a helpful, portable reference for visitors.

These materials should be made accessible through considered design. Because they are physical print outs, think about the size and format. Also consider the paper stock, if it's highly reflective it may be difficult to use.

As with visual design (in the earlier section), content should be provided in a layout that is logical and simple. Think about the context in which the material will be used. For example, a pocket guide should be in a suitable format.

Readability

Consider a readable typeface with enough spacing, the most readable typefaces are the ones that are used most often such as Helvetica, Verdana, Arial. Avoid wide columns or overwhelming walls of text. Make sure sections and headings are well defined. Use 12pt font size as a minimum and consider providing a large print option in 16pt and [accessible typography](#) choices. Sentences are generally easier to read when the line length is 10-15 words.

Layout and pages

Make sure the layout is easy to read and free of distraction. Provide a table of contents or bullet points and page numbers where relevant. Try using the material in context. For example, look at a menu design in the lighting of the restaurant.

Graphics and photos

Graphics and photos should provide value – they should explain something about your destination or experience. Keep diagrams simple and ensure they're printed at an appropriate scale. Caption images when needed to provide context.

It's a good idea to prototype printed material. Before you print multiples, try a few individual options and test them to see which is preferred.

Avoid printing text over the top of an image. The text should be a high colour contrast and sit on a blank background.

Consider alternative formats for your printed material. A Braille version, an Easy English option and an audio recording of important information will be useful.

If you have regular print material at a desk – consider making a magnifier available.

Always make printed material available as a digital version for people who use assistive technologies such as screen readers.

And test your printed material with people who have disability and take on their feedback.

RESOURCES

Video: Vision Australia Digital Access webinar: Typography in Inclusive Design (Feb 2022)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ha768lh6J8M>

Five W's for Accessible Documents

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcuJbnVef70>

Making video and audio accessible

Video is increasingly becoming a preferred method of exploring content online. For tourism operators, video is an obvious choice - it can show a prospective visitor a lot about a place in an immersive format. A range of features, types of experiences and if a picture is worth a thousand words, then a video is worth a million.

Providing videos with captions and transcripts is beneficial for everyone.

Some businesses provide video as part of their marketing, social media and as instructional communications. Closed captions, subtitles and audio descriptions allow people with low vision, blindness, and those who use a language other than English to help understand the content.

Plan for access, don't jump right in. Think about the language you'll use, the background noise and any graphics you're going to use when planning the filming.

Making video accessible

Here are some considerations when creating video for your tourism business:

- Ensure captions are provided for D/deaf users. Make sure the captions appear at the same pace as speech so it's easy to watch
- Displaying an Auslan interpreter is a good idea as not everyone who is D/deaf or Hard of Hearing understands English.
- Provide text transcripts so users have the option to use a screen reader
- Use a sharable platform like YouTube or Vimeo, their access is generally pretty good
- Consider using Audio Descriptions to explain what is happening on screen
- Ensure people speak with clarity and have their mouth visible for viewers who lip-read
- Ensure the visuals match the audio
- Use inclusive language – this includes in graphics and voiceover
- Provide a sequence and logic to the video so viewers can watch without confusion or distraction
- If your video is part of a display screen, install a hearing loop so people with hearing aids can access it
- Test your videos with people who have disability and take on their feedback

Closed captions are captions that can be turned on or off according to the preference of the viewer. This is mainly seen on social media through YouTube.

Open captions or 'burned in' captions are captions that are always turned on and are embedded into the video.¹¹

¹¹ How to make social media accessible: Our top three tips, Vision Australia Website (<https://www.visionaustralia.org/business-consulting/digital-access/blog/how-to-make-social-media-accessible-our-top-three-tips>)

Making audio recordings accessible

Some considerations when thinking about creating video for your tourism business:

- Consider providing text transcripts of the recording for a screen reader
- Create a summary so listeners now what to expect
- Allow users to speed-up or slow down the recording
- Consider using Audio Descriptions
- Ensure there is a logic to the structure of the recording
- Ensure the pace of the captions makes it easy to watch
- Test your recordings with people who have disability and take on their feedback

RESOURCES

Making Audio and Video Media Accessible by the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) (Nov 2021)

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/media/av/>

Making your brand accessible

A brand is more than a company logo – it's the way your company is perceived after people interact with it. A brand is often given human characteristics and sometimes a personality. Brands can be playful, creative and fun like Lego or sustainable, innovative and ethical like Patagonia.

To instil 'accessibility' as part of a brand characteristic, means making it a company value. Placing importance and a priority on access means allowing everyone to participate and interact with the brand.

An accessible brand is likely to be an inclusive brand as you can't have access without inclusion. A brand that is inclusive will welcome all types of people and make them feel like they belong. Anyone who interacts with the brand regardless of their ability, ethnicity, education, religion, race, gender, sexual orientation will feel comfortable.

Making a more accessible brand, think about the following:

- Does your logo connect to what you do? Is there a visual link or metaphor and is it obvious?
- Is your brand consistent? Do you use the same typeface, colours and visual approach to ensure all your communications appear as a family?
- Does your writing use expression in a simple way, and is your language inclusive?
- Are your company values expressed in your visual approach to communications? – playful brands use bright colour, sombre brands don't
- Are you representing diversity in your hiring, communications and your photography?
- Are your communications accessible (website, EDMs, social media, print matter)
- Is diversity, equality and inclusion part of your brand values? How are they presented visually and in your language?
- Test your brand with people who have disability and take on their feedback

RESOURCES

Provide a statement about accessibility

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/planning/statements/generator/#create>

Summary

Equal access to travel information is important for a range of reasons, and everyone should be able to enjoy great experiences. Tourism business can benefit a great deal by providing accurate, detailed information accessible formats.

To make the most of this approach, build access into your way of working. Ensure your access is considered when any new material is produced and put in place a goal to review existing material. Nominate an access champion, empower content makers and publishers with checklists, and embed the accessibility tools in the publishing process to make it seamless.

Provide the reason; let staff and suppliers understand why accessibility is important to the business and to customers. Sometimes personas are a good way to do this.

Create an access calendar as part of your business rhythm so you can set goals and timelines for becoming more accessible. And celebrate the milestones.

Begin the journey by auditing your current material. Enlist the help of access professionals and people with lived experience of disability.

And with new projects shift-left the accessibility considerations so they're embedded at the start not tested for at the end, this will save you money and time in the long run.

RESOURCES

Making Audio and Video Media Accessible by the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) (Nov 2021)
<https://www.w3.org/WAI/media/av/>



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Resources and Bibliography

There are many guidelines about creating better digital accessibility and they're being updated all the time. Here are some of the resources we used to create this document

The Big Hack – Articles, guides and accessibility resources for businesses. By Scope UK
<https://bighack.org>

Online Accessibility Toolkit – South Australian Government
<https://www.accessibility.sa.gov.au>

DWP Accessibility Manual – GOV.UK resources
<https://accessibility-manual.dwp.gov.uk/tools-and-resources/govuk-resources>

Vision Australia
<https://www.visionaustralia.org>

Website standards, guidelines and templates
<https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/information-and-communication-technology/communication-and-publishing/website-and-digital-publishing/website-standards-guidelines-and-templates>

Easy Checks – A First Review of Web Accessibility by Web Accessibility Initiative (W3C) – (April 2020)
<https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/>

Website standards, guidelines and templates

<https://www.forgov.qld.gov.au/information-and-communication-technology/communication-and-publishing/website-and-digital-publishing/website-standards-guidelines-and-templates>

Easy Checks – A First Review of Web Accessibility by Web Accessibility Initiative (W3C) – (April 2020)
<https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/>

Microsoft

<https://www.microsoft.com/en-au/accessibility/>

Making apps accessible

<https://www.adjust.com/blog/how-to-make-an-app-accessible/>

Google Workspace – user guide to accessibility

<https://support.google.com/a/answer/1631886>

Make content accessible - digital guide - Victorian Government (July 2022)

<https://www.vic.gov.au/make-content-accessible>

WAI Access - Easy Checks – A First Review of Web Accessibility

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/test-evaluate/preliminary/>

Accessibility guidelines for government communications – Victorian Government (June 2022)

<https://www.vic.gov.au/accessibility-guidelines-government-communications>

Thank you.



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