



CASE STUDY 4 - Outback at Isa



Outback at Isa is Mount Isa's Visitor Information Centre, located in Marian Street, Mount Isa (north-west Queensland). Aside from being a one stop shop for traveller and tourist information, it is the home of Mount Isa's number one attraction The Hard Times Mine Tour. Outback at Isa is also home to the Riversleigh Fossil Centre and Laboratory and The Isa Experience (a fascinating display about the history of the city in the outback). Indigenous Bush Tucker, painting and Nulla-Nulla (fighting stick) / clap stick making experiences are also conducted here. The Centre also includes a Café.

Outback at Isa staff engaged with the following self-assessment audits:

- Whole of Venue Self-Assessment Audit Checklist
- Hospitality Venue Self-Assessment Audit Checklist
- Tourist of Event Destination Self-Assessment Audit Checklist

Centre staff engaging with the audit checklist advised that they found the checklists to be very in depth and covered absolutely everything. Only issue found was that there was no option for "No", other than "N/A".

The following are examples of areas where Outback at Isa staff found:

- a. No adjustments are required (as the destination already attends to this area)
 1. Handrails
 2. Seating areas
 3. Signage provides simple and brief wording
 4. Service counter
 5. Ramps
- b. Adjustments are pending (as the destination has already planned for such)
 1. Drop off and pick up area for taxis
 2. External walkway surface level, firm, stable, non-slip and anti-glare
 3. Signage
 4. Customer service training
 5. Doorways
- c. Potential minor adjustments are needed
 1. Emergency exits
 2. Portable signs are not placed on the path of travel
 3. Large open walkways incorporate tactile direction indicators as a guide
 4. The entrance door contrasts visually with adjacent surfaces

- d. Adjustments should be undertaken in the medium term, however these do not require renovations
 - 1. Website accessibility
 - 2. Visual information provided in spoken form via push button or QR code
 - 3. Tour guides to receive customer service training
 - 4. Tour guides to use an FM system

- e. Adjustments are required in the longer term / during future renovation or redevelopment
 - 1. Floor surface is non-glare and non-slip
 - 2. More signage with raised characters/symbols
 - 3. Tactile buttons and audible instructions provided on touch screen technology
 - 4. A 3D model or tactile floorplan located near the entrance
 - 5. Sound dampening materials use on café floor

- f. Adjustments are ongoing in their nature
 - 1. Staff taking reservations or ticket sales over the phone to ask pertinent questions
 - 2. Approach and entrance to be free from tripping hazards
 - 3. Adequate lighting provided through car parks
 - 4. Overhead clearance of all walkways is at least 2 metres
 - 5. Automatic entrance doors

Provided are five examples of Outback at Isa's facilities where staff believe each area **is** where it should be in terms of accessibility for blind and low vision visitors.

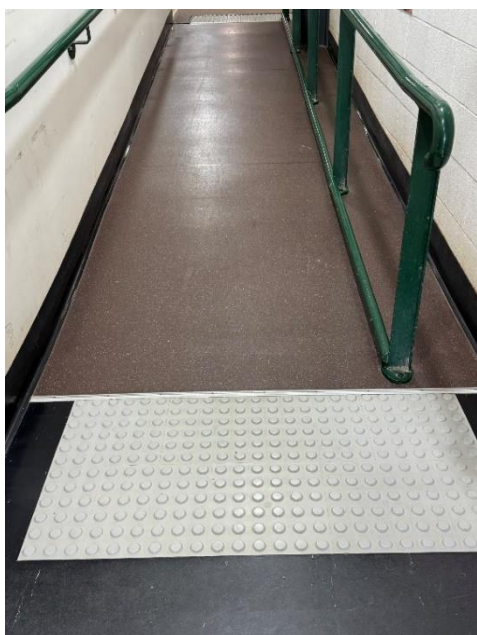


Photo of tactile markers indicating a ramp and railings with rounded ends

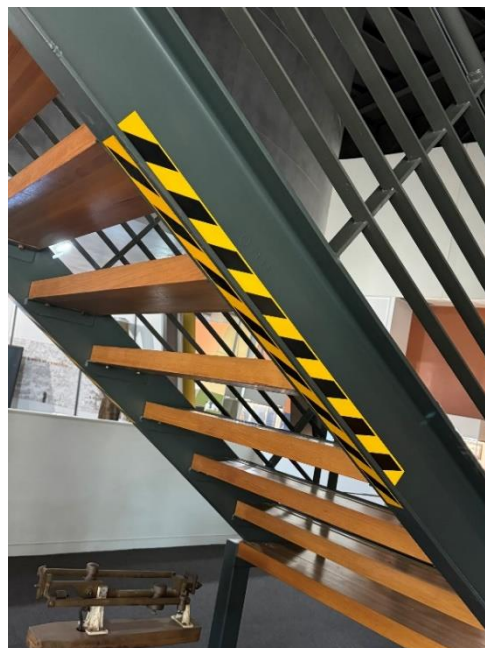


Photo of markers indicating low head height area under stairs



Photo of tactile markers indicating stairs



Photo of many tables in the café with rounded corners for safety



Photo of toilet / shower sign with Braille

The examples provided below demonstrate five areas of Outback at Isa's facilities where staff believe each area **is not** where it should be in terms of accessibility for blind and low vision visitors and required improvement.



Photo showing it is unclear where the entry way is



Photo of smooth surface on the floor – tripping hazard if wet



Photo of internal stairs with no tactile markers



Photo of sandwich boards in middle of walkway



Photo showing no tactile markings to indicate where roadway starts and uneven ground

After consideration of the self-assessment audit findings, Outback at Isa is considering the following “next steps” that management will look to undertake to make the destination more accessible and inclusive for visitors who are blind or have low vision.

1. **Tactile Maps and Signage:** Create tactile maps of the facility's layout and provide tactile signage for key areas such as restrooms, entrances, dining areas, and points of interest. These tactile indicators can help visitors navigate independently.
2. **Audio Guides and Tours:** Develop audio guides or tours that provide descriptive narration of exhibits, attractions, and points of interest within Outback at Isa. These guides can be accessed through smartphones or provided on handheld devices, offering detailed descriptions and insights into the surroundings.
3. **Braille Menus and Informational Materials:** Offer Braille menus for dining options and Braille versions of informational brochures, guides, and pamphlets about Outback at Isa's offerings. This ensures that individuals with visual impairments can independently access information about activities, events, and amenities available at the establishment.

4. **Accessible Website and Online Resources:** Ensure that the establishment's website and online resources are designed to be accessible to individuals using screen readers and other assistive technologies. This includes providing alternative text for images, clear headings, and intuitive navigation to facilitate access to information about Outback at Isa's facilities, services, and upcoming events.
5. **Staff Training and Awareness:** Conduct training sessions for staff members to raise awareness about the needs and challenges faced by visitors who are blind or have low vision. Equip staff with the knowledge and skills to provide assistance, guidance, and support to such visitors, including understanding how to effectively communicate, offer assistance with navigation, and describe exhibits or attractions in detail.

Outback at Isa's suggests that provision of the following resources will assist them in their quest to make tourism more accessible for visitors who are blind or have low vision.

- Assistance to produce large print/braille 'twin vision' café menus.
- Tactile QR code indicators would be useful.

Centre management know that Braille House can assist with the production of resources, and have reached out to Braille House for assistance.

Outback at Isa's leadership is also appreciative of the Human Guide Training which Braille House consultants are providing to Outback at Isa staff.

Through the undertaking of the self-assessment audits, Outback at Isa's leadership team has articulated the following key learnings.

Key Learning 1: Doorways and entrance ways need to be more clearly marked for those with poor vision.

Key Learning 2: Car parking and walkways need to be smoother and less overhead hanging from tree branches.

Key Learning 3: Staff / management need to be more aware of obstacles that could be hazard to those people with low vision.

The key benefits which the Outback at Isa's team believe arose from engaging with the self -Assessment Audits include:

- ✓ It has made staff / management more aware of things that could pose an issue for those people who are blind or have low vision.
- ✓ Tactile flooring is very important for indicating stairs, ramps or roadways.

***THANKS to the Outback at Isa team for this participation, feedback and valuable insights,
and
CONGRATULATIONS on your commitment to cater for accessibility and inclusion
for guests who are blind or have low vision.***