



AUSTRALIA KEY FINDINGS 2022

Exploring barriers to travel
among disabled people





Credit: Tourism Australia

BOOKING AND PLANNING TRIPS

Three in ten feel that they shouldn't have to use specialist travel agents or providers.

Half of disabled Australian holidaymakers (49%) book directly with a travel provider when booking their holiday, making this more common than just using a travel agent (28%) or using both (13%).

A fifth (20%) say they solely use travel agents or providers that specialise in holidays for disabled people when booking their holiday. Two-fifths (41%) say they use travel agents or providers that do not specialise in holidays for disabled people and the remaining two-fifths (39%) use both. Overall, the majority (59%) are using a disabled specialised provider at least some of the time.



49%

of disabled Australian holidaymakers book directly with a travel provider when booking their holiday.



Booking and Planning Trips

The reasons for not using disabled specialist agents or providers are more likely to be due to not feeling like they should have to, rather than anything to do with the service they offer.

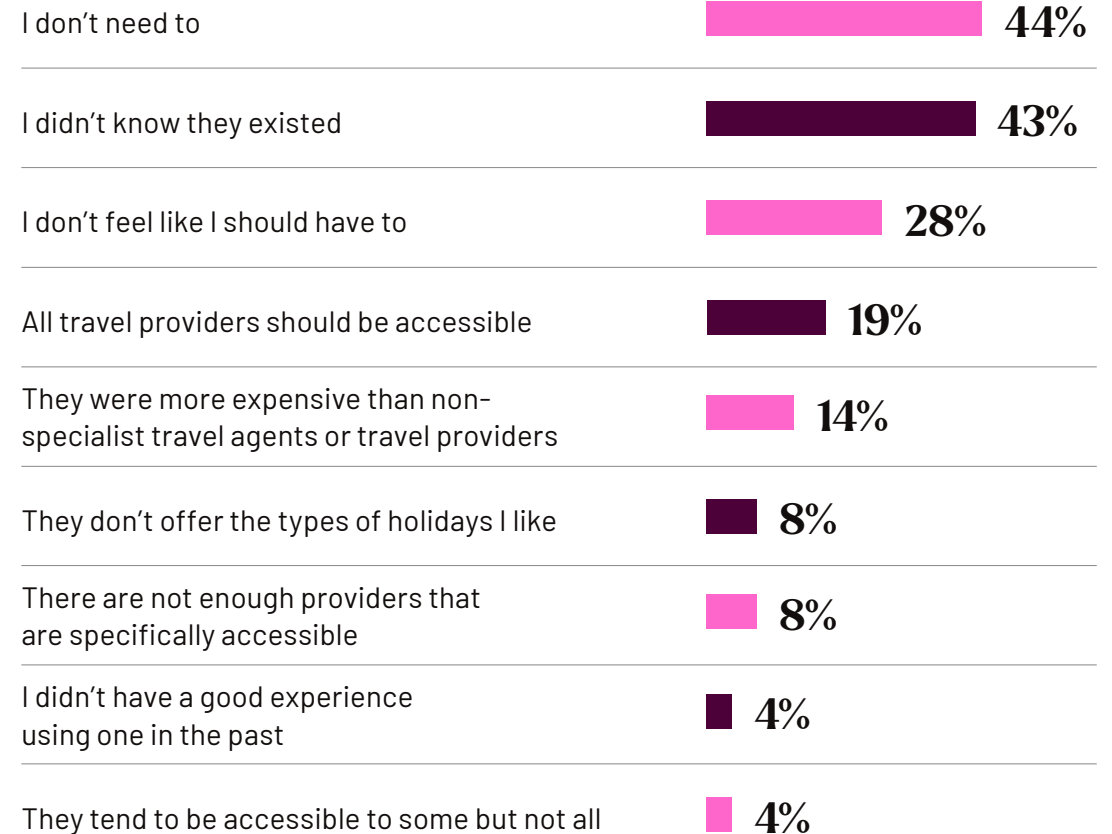
Of those who don't use specialist agents or providers, three in ten (28%) say they don't feel like they should have to.

Additionally, over two-fifths (44%) don't need to use specialist travel agents or providers, and a further two fifths (43%) didn't know they existed.

Just under one in ten (8%) said there are not enough specifically accessible providers, and the same proportion (8%) said they don't offer the types of holidays they like. Just 4% said they haven't had a good experience using one in the past.

The reasons for not using disabled specialist agents or providers are more likely to be due to not feeling like they should have to, rather than anything to do with the service they offer.

Reasons for not using travel agents or providers that specialise in holidays for disabled people, among those who don't use them.





Booking and Planning Trips

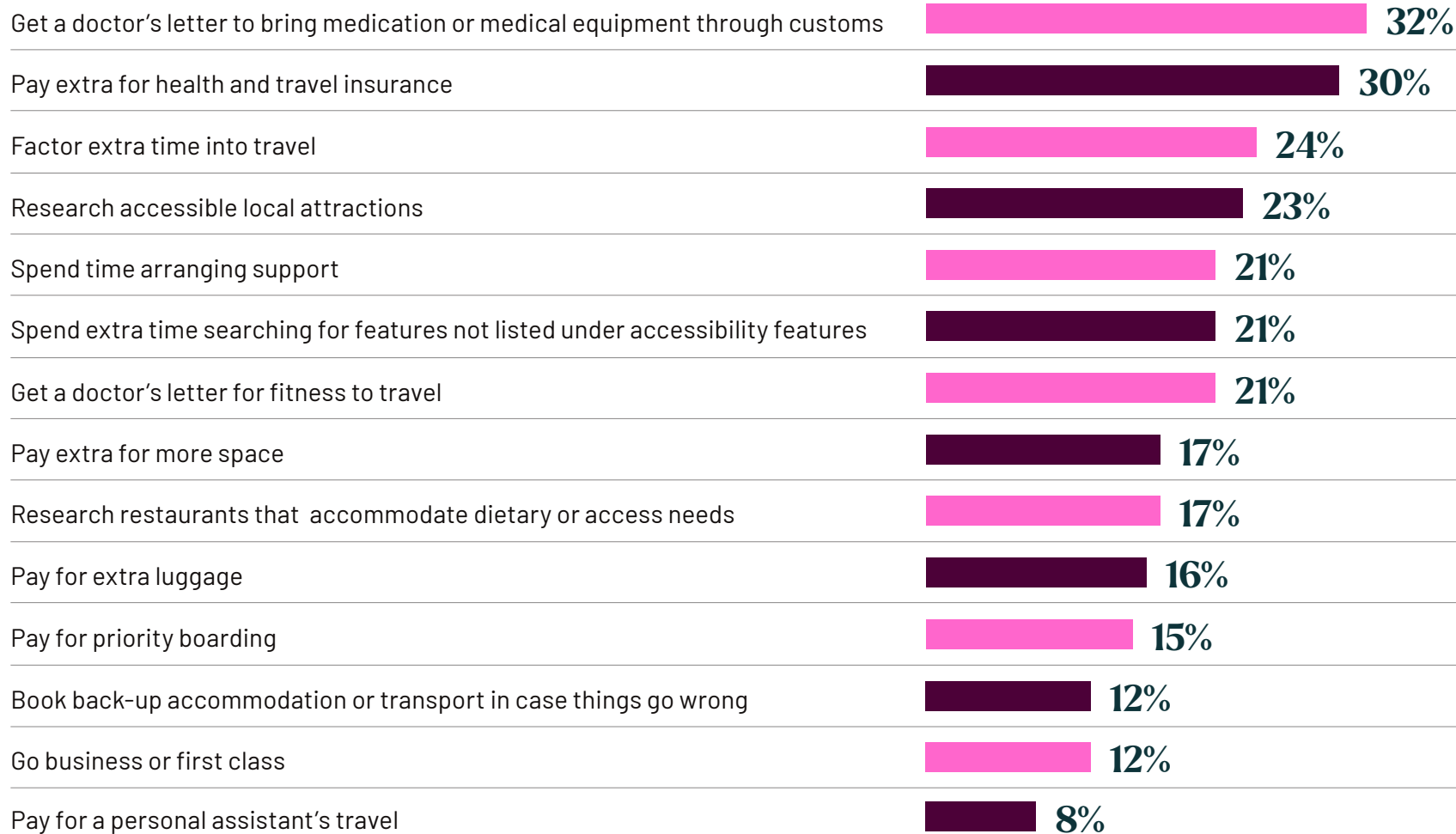
One in ten find booking a holiday online difficult.

A quarter (24%) of Australian disabled holidaymakers say they find it difficult to book a holiday online on a smartphone. This is compared to a fifth (19%) who find it difficult to book over the phone, 15% in person and one in ten (10%) online on their computer.

24%

of Australian disabled holidaymakers say they find it difficult to book a holiday online on a smartphone.

Extra steps taken to ensure trips are as accessible.





Booking and Planning Trips

Almost a third have to pay extra for health and travel insurance, amounting to nearly AUD \$560.

Over three in four (76%) disabled people in Australia said they have to do extra planning before a holiday to make sure it is accessible for them.

For disabled people, this most commonly involves having to factor extra admin and costs into their trip.

A third (32%) have to arrange a doctor's letter to bring medication or medical equipment through customs.

A slightly smaller proportion (30%) said they have to pay extra for health and travel insurance, paying on average AUD \$560 to ensure they're covered.

Respondents also reported having to factor in extra time, both into travel (24%) and arranging support (21%).

76%

of disabled people in Australia said they have to do extra planning before a holiday to make sure it is accessible for them.

Travel insurance is a pain for people with a disability. The treatment is not equal at all, and I pay a very high premium.



30%

said they have to pay extra for health and travel insurance, paying on average AUD \$242 to ensure they're covered.



Booking and Planning Trips

A holiday costs a disabled person AUD \$1,786.20.

A disabled holidaymaker in Australia spends on average AUD \$1,786.20 on a single trip, rising to AUD \$1,912.70 among men and dropping to AUD \$1,692.70 among women.

Sydney considered the most accessible city.

Of those who have visited the most travelled cities in the world, disabled people in Australia said that Sydney was the most accessible.

Of those who selected Sydney, 49% said this is because it has accessible transport links, while 45% said it has a wide variety of accessible accommodation close to cultural attractions, shops, and restaurants. Two-fifths said it's because the information is easily accessible (43%). Interestingly a fifth (20%) said it's because cultural attractions are free or discounted for disabled people.

The top five accessible cities, as voted by the survey participants of Australia are listed below.

- Sydney (Australia) - 41%
- Singapore - 13%
- London (UK) - 11%
- Los Angeles (USA) - 6%
- Tokyo (Japan) - 6%



Cities voted the most accessible:

Sydney
(Australia)

41%

Singapore

13%

London
(UK)

11%

Los Angeles
(USA)

6%

Tokyo
(Japan)

6%



Booking and Planning Trips

Three in five have been left in a difficult situation while travelling, causing stress and discomfort.

Three in five (60%) listed at least one challenge they faced while travelling due to the agent or provider they were using not being accessible to disabled people.

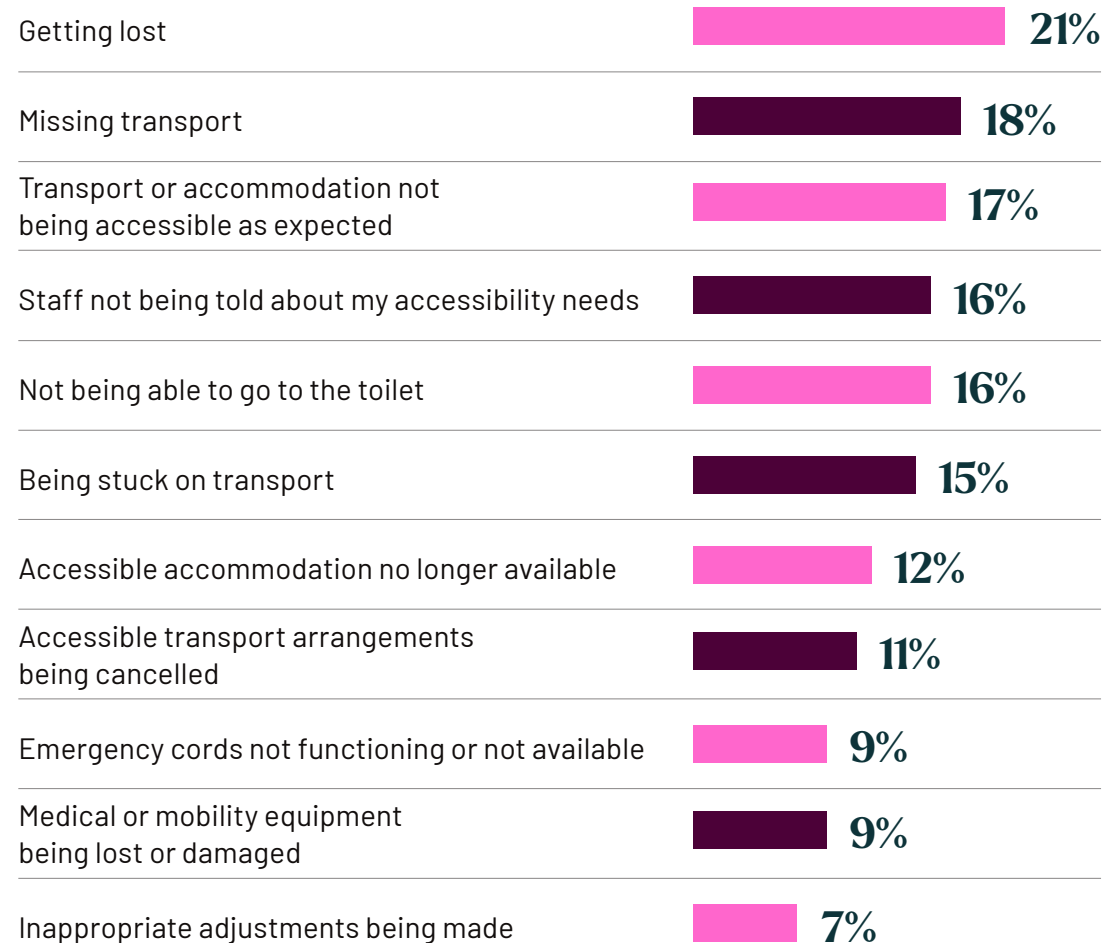
A fifth (21%) recall getting lost. They also faced issues with transport with almost a fifth (18%) missing transport and a similar proportion (17%) reporting that their transport or accommodation was not as accessible as expected.

Respondents also said the staff were not told about their accessibility needs and that they were unable to go to the toilet (both 16%).

Over two in five (43%) of those who experienced something happening to them due to the travel agent or provider not being accessible, said this caused them stress. A slightly smaller proportion (39%) said the situation made them feel uncomfortable, and a quarter (28%) felt embarrassed.

Concerningly, a fifth reported feeling scared or unsafe (18% and 21% respectively). Positive emotions such as feeling reassured or supported were only felt by 10% who went through the experience of travelling.

Situations that have occurred due to travel agents or providers not being accessible to disabled people.





Booking and Planning Trips

A third of those caught in a negative experience had to get out of it on their own.

A third (34%) of those who had a bad experience had to get out of the situation on their own, while a quarter (24%) had to call upon a friend or family member to help. Three in ten (30%) said someone travelling with them helped them out of the situation. However, for one in four (25%), a stranger helped them.

Of those who said they experienced something due to a provider or agent not being accessible a fifth (22%) said it was not resolved. A third (32%) said it was resolved, albeit slowly, and only 18% said it was resolved quickly. Reassuringly, over two in five (44%) of those who said the situation was resolved, said they were happy with the outcome, and only 16% were unhappy. One in three (32%) complained to the provider directly. Of those that did not, the main reasons were because they thought that the provider wasn't likely to change (27%) or they didn't feel comfortable (30%).

These findings suggest a clear need for travel providers and agents to make improvements to not only resolve but also prevent situations occurring that cause stress and discomfort to disabled people.

This is ever more important given that almost two-fifths (37%) of those who've had a bad experience with travel agents or providers have told other people about their experiences, and 31% have stopped using the provider altogether.



34%

of those who had a bad experience had to get out of the situation on their own, while a quarter (24%) had to call upon a friend or family member to help.



Have more knowledge about a range of disabilities. Don't be dismissive of people's constraints. Ask questions about the situation if you are not sure.



MAKING IMPROVEMENTS

Being treated with respect is the most important consideration for disabled people, but they also expect travel agents and providers to improve accessibility.

While accessibility factors, such as having a range of accessible transport or accommodation, or an accessible website, are important to two-fifths of disabled people when choosing a travel agent or provider (41% and 39% respectively), the most important factors influencing choice are more centred around how they're treated.



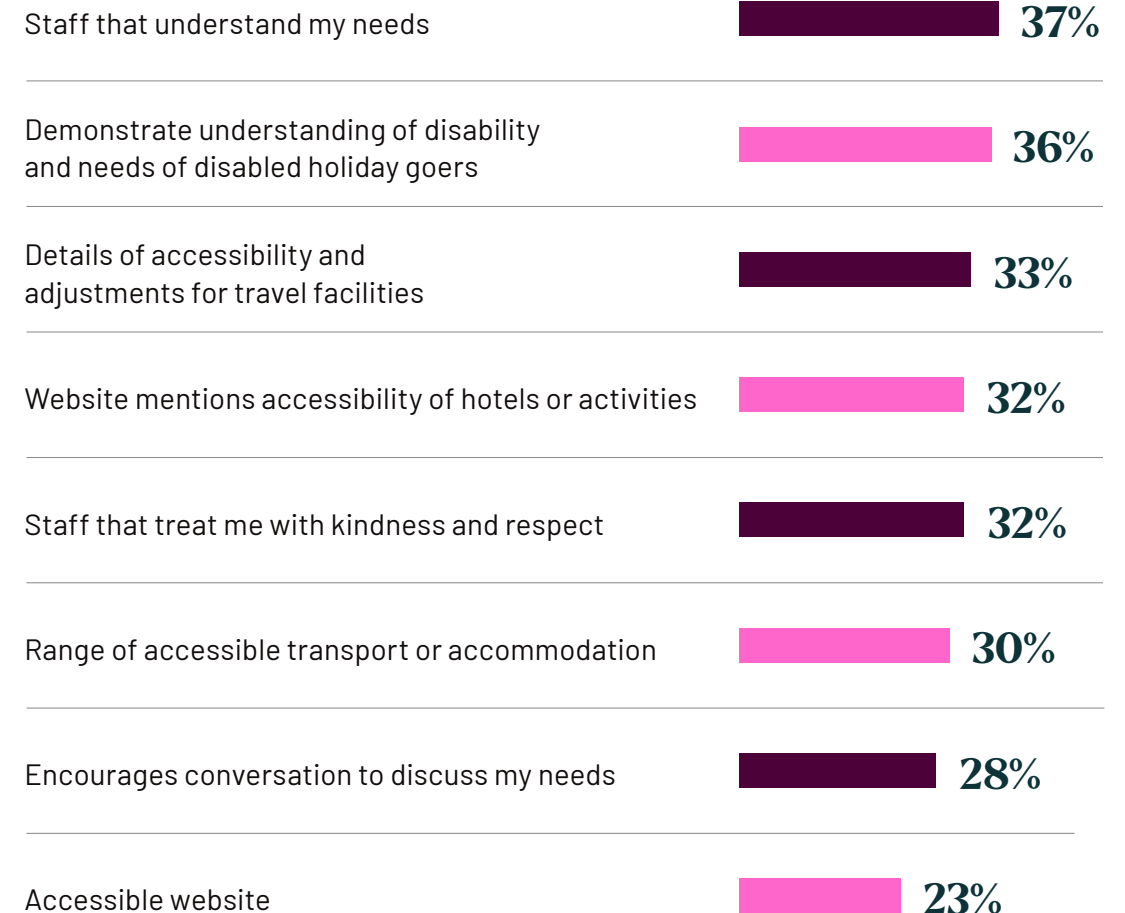
Making Improvements

Three in five (60%) disabled people say they choose a travel agent or provider based on whether they treat disabled people with kindness and respect. Furthermore, half (48%) say they choose based on whether they understand their needs.

However, while being treated with respect is most important when choosing a travel agent or provider, it's not necessarily the area travel agents need to improve on the most. While 60% said they choose a provider based on whether the staff treat them with kindness and respect, only 32% said they need to improve on this.

Respondents were more concerned with travel agents and providers having staff that understand their needs (37%). A similar proportion (36%) also said they need to improve on showing a demonstrated understanding of disability and the needs of disabled holiday goers.

Factors travel agencies and providers need to improve on.



60%

said they choose a provider based on whether the staff treat them with kindness and respect.

Be more understanding of any person who shows signs of physical or mental or emotional difficulties in every circumstance.



Making Improvements

Travel providers need to provide better accessibility contact information on their websites.

While disabled people found accessing websites on their computer the easiest platform for booking a holiday (65% said it was easy) it's important that adjustments are made to ensure the process is accessible for all.

Of those who said it was difficult booking a holiday online, 42% said this was due to there being limited or no contact options to ask questions. Over a third (36%) said it was due to needing to print documents and slightly less (35%) said there was a lack of clear instructions on how to book or reserve the trip. A further third (32%) said there was a lack of accessibility information for the travel facilities.

A fifth said that complex or confusing language on information pages makes the process difficult for them and that website functions (for example filters, search functions or calendar formatting) do not always work with assistive technology (both 21%).

Accommodation providers need to improve on providing grab rails.

Over four in five (84%) of disabled people think that accommodation providers need to improve on at least one feature to be more accessible to disabled people.



“
Have more empathy and understanding with a passengers' needs or disability.”

42%

of those who said it was difficult booking a holiday online, said this was due to there being limited or no contact options to ask questions.

This most commonly included improving fixed grab rails (24%), which was closely followed by 23% that said accommodation providers need to improve on providing ground floor facilities. Medical support available locally and accessible transport links are important for a fifth (both 20%). Slightly less (19%) said they need to improve on providing quiet areas.



Making Improvements

Features accommodation providers need to improve on to be more accessible to disabled people.

