

accessible

beaches

One-fifth of Australians are locked out of summer

Out of 12,000 beaches across Australia's coastline, very few can be accessed by people with disabilities or mobility issues.

Going to the beach is a quintessential part of life for most Australians – 87% of the country lives within 50km of the coast. But for the one in five people living with a disability in Australia, accessing the beach can be challenging. People who use wheelchairs or have mobility challenges can't cross the sand to the water.

Accessible Beaches Australia is urging the government to fund accessibility infrastructure, like beach wheelchairs, beach matting, and other accessible features, to help people with disabilities and mobility challenges access our coastline.

Out of almost 12,000 beaches nationwide, less than 2% are currently accessible. This leaves many Australians excluded from participating in our most iconic summer activities.

Other countries have realised that making beaches accessible unlocks an untapped tourist market. Greece has committed to making 287 beaches accessible over two years, on top of their 100 already accessible beaches. Accessible Beaches Australia (ABA) is calling on the federal government this February to follow their lead by supporting Councils and Surf Life Saving Clubs to introduce more beach accessibility programs. ABA envisions a future where innovative solutions like wheelchair-friendly beach mats and other accessible equipment and facilities such as accessible bathrooms become staples at beaches nationwide.

Shane Hryhorec, Founder & Board Chair of Accessible Beaches Australia, said:

"Everyone deserves the opportunity to enjoy the sand, sun, and surf it's a fundamental part of this country, this culture, this summer lifestyle. Unfortunately, we exclude so many people as beaches in Australia are not accessible to people with disabilities, due to a lack of facilities such as ramps, matting, and accessible toilets."

"This is not an unsolvable problem – other nations are making headway in creating inclusive beaches. The Greek government has committed to installing beach ramps and other accessibility tools. The Australian government needs to step in and match other nations. The demand for beach accessibility programs is there, however, surf lifesaving clubs need the extra funding to invest in the necessary equipment."

"ABA is calling on Australians to sign the petition to make beaches accessible for all. Every beach should be for everyone. Visit Accessible Beaches Australia to sign up and learn more about beach accessibility."

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About Accessible Beaches Australia

Accessible Beaches Australia is committed to providing people with disability the opportunity to enjoy the beach and participate in those quintessential Australian beach activities.

Accessible Beaches collaborates local councils, surf life saving clubs, community groups and people with disability and their families, to make beaches accessible to everyone.

An accessible beach removes physical and social barriers enabling access to the beach for everyone.

Accessible Beaches Australia have launched a campaign for all Australians, including an awareness video featuring real Australians living with disabilities who wish for better beach access, here: <https://accessiblebeaches.com/>