

# CASE STUDY

## Sovereign Hill Ballarat

Open for business is a collaborative regional project by rural and deaf access workers in the Wimmera and Grampians Region to improve access to and within business for people with disabilities, enabling increased participation in their communities and increasing the customer base of participating businesses.

I'm Justin O'Gorman, I'm the Manager of Visitors Services here at Sovereign Hill and we're located in Ballarat. I've been here for seven years now and Sovereign Hill has been running for just over 46 years.

Within my area I've got about 40 staff reporting to me, both permanent part-time and casuals. Sovereign Hill as a whole has over 300 staff.

### What have you implemented to help those with a disability?

We have an access and inclusion working group here at Sovereign Hill and through that group we've implemented an access and inclusion policy which runs over a three year period.

In the last three years some of the initiatives we've run (include) an AUSLAN interpreted screening of Blood on the Southern Cross, we've run AUSLAN interpreted daytime performances here at Sovereign Hill where we run through many of our activities. We also participate in the Open Access Tours App which has seven of our different demonstrations in AUSLAN interpretation as well as text and audio. We run regular Autism friendly days here at Sovereign Hill which have had excellent attendance and great feedback. Also, we had our most recent accommodation upgrade, we have three fully accessible rooms here now at the Sovereign Hill Hotel.

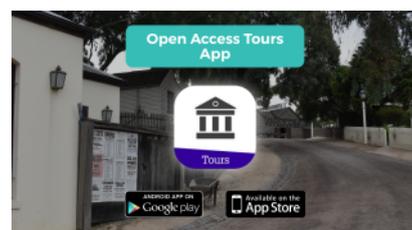
We offer complimentary wheelchair hire here from our front entrance and we've recently implemented a couple of motor-assisted wheelchairs just to help, obviously, Sovereign Hill has a hilly terrain and it can be quite hard to get around.

### Have you seen an increase in business since implementing this initiative?

Yeah definitely, particularly on specific event days that I talked about, the AUSLAN days, the Autism awareness days, we've seen great visitation numbers and again, feedback from people who did come, as an example the Blood on the Southern Cross show that we did attracted well over one hundred people solely for that show.

### Would you recommend other small businesses to implement similar initiatives?

I would encourage all organisations to look at any initiative they can to open access and inclusion to their business. Just under 20% at the moment of Australia's population has some form of disability so that is a large number of people. There are plenty of organisations out there that offer assistance in this field and there are also plenty of grants and money available to roll out some of these initiatives.



# OPEN YOUR BUSINESS

to 20% more customers

## did you know?



1 in 5

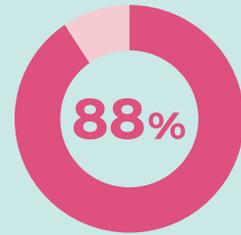
of your potential **customers** have a disability



1 in 3

are close to someone with a **disability**

there are many types of disabilities



of disabilities are not **visible**

## how is this beneficial to your business?



**MULTIPLY**  
your customer base



**GROW**  
your business



**INCREASE**  
your profits

## how can your business be more accessible?

**RESPECT**  
the customer

**TALK**  
to the customer

**PROMOTE**  
accessibility

**POSITIVE**  
attitude

**ASK**  
if you are unsure