



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

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Cocky Guides Expands Inclusive Tourism Push at Australian Tourism Exchange 2026

Cocky Guides Australia will attend the 2026 Australian Tourism Exchange in Adelaide next week as the organisation continues its evolution from a supported travel provider into one of Australia's emerging leaders in inclusive tourism delivery, destination collaboration, and accessible visitor economy development.

Founder James "Buck" McFarlane said the organisation's focus at ATE will centre on expanding its Destination Management Company (DMC) services to help tour operators and destinations open up new markets and create new product opportunities, growing fundraising-supported domestic travel opportunities for blind and low-vision Australians, and building stronger partnerships with destinations and tourism operators seeking to improve accessibility and inclusion.

"While supported travel remains incredibly important to our community, the majority of our revenue now comes through our DMC services delivering tours and visitor experiences for international FIT travellers in Sydney and the Blue Mountains," Mr McFarlane said.

"That shift has allowed us to continue reinvesting in inclusive tourism outcomes while reducing our reliance on NDIS-funded supports alone."

"As a not-for-profit social enterprise, every dollar we generate is reinvested back into creating opportunities for blind and low-vision Australians to connect with community, experience travel, and reduce isolation," he said.

"The visitor economy has become one of the most powerful ways for us to create social impact."

"Revenue raised through our DMC services, tourism partnerships, fundraising travel programs, and industry collaborations goes straight back into delivering experiences, building confidence, removing barriers, and creating meaningful social connection for people who are blind or have low vision."

"That investment also flows directly back into Australia's visitor economy through the accommodation, cafés, attractions, transport providers, guides, and tourism experiences our travellers use right across the country."

"We're proud that the same tourism industry we support is also helping us tackle loneliness and isolation across the community."

Cocky Guides currently delivers experiences in more than 70 destinations nationwide and works closely with tourism operators, visitor economy businesses, and regional destinations to improve accessibility through practical, lived-experience engagement.



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At ATE, the organisation is seeking to connect with:

- Tourism operators and suppliers interested in helping ordinary Australians experience extraordinary destinations while supporting travel programs that reduce isolation for blind and low-vision Australians
- International trade partners seeking authentic Australian DMC delivery
- Destinations wanting to improve inclusive and accessible tourism outcomes
- Visitor economy businesses interested in testing and refining experiences with blind and low-vision travellers

Mr McFarlane said Cocky Guides' accessible tourism approach focuses on "progress over perfection".

"We're not asking destinations to rebuild everything from scratch," he said.

"We help regions look at what they already have and identify practical ways to become more welcoming, inclusive, and accessible for travellers with disability."

"One of the most valuable things a business can do is experience their product alongside travellers with lived experience."

CONTACT

For further information, please get in touch with James (Buck) McFarlane at james.mcfarlane@cockyguides.com.au or call 0403 827 666.

Interviews and filming opportunities are available during the visit, including the Red Feet Wines sensory experience on Saturday, 21 February.

ABOUT COCKY GUIDES

Cocky Guides Australia is a not-for-profit social enterprise creating multisensory group adventures and inclusive tourism experiences for blind and low-vision travellers.

Since 2018, Cocky Guides has delivered experiences across more than 70 Australian destinations, combining travel, community connection, confidence building, and accessibility advocacy through lived experience.

The organisation also works with tourism operators, destinations, and visitor economy stakeholders to improve inclusive tourism awareness and accessibility outcomes across Australia.

For more information, visit www.cockyguides.com.au