



MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

13 DECEMBER 2024

Blind and low-vision Australians set to embark on a 100-kilometre challenge of rail trails, community parkruns and hikes across Australia in 2025 with the support of not-for-profit Cocky Guides.

Six years ago, Cocky Guides, an award-winning not-for-profit tour operator, paved the way for blind and low-vision Australians to discover their country via sensory small-group adventures. With most major tourist routes ticked off the list and some more unique destinations, such as Mount Kosciuszko, Lightening Ridge and Broken Hill, a new chapter begins with the launch of walking experiences connecting communities across Australia.

With more and more participants wanting to add physical activities to their itineraries, Cocky Guides has mapped out trips across Australia to include walking and hiking for a mix of mobilities.

“We have always offered experiences that involve some form of physical activity such as swimming, paddleboarding, kayaking and sensory walks. However, there is now more demand for our participants to connect with various communities via activities such as community rail trails and parkruns” said James (Buck) McFarlane, founder of Cocky Guides and recent Judge in the NSW Tourism Awards 2024.

The success of this 100-kilometre goal will rely heavily on visitor economy businesses in destinations helping host Cocky Guides blind and low-vision groups. Each new adventure a participant joins will add to their tally towards 100!

Buck adds, “Our recent launch of sponsorship packages helps Cocky Guides reduce the cost of participating in our adventure and enables businesses and destinations across Australia to collaborate with us to be more accessible and inclusive for over 575,000 Australians who are blind or low-vision. These partnerships will be the key to delivering an exciting and diverse 2025 schedule.”



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Since its launch in 2018, Cocky Guides has returned over two million dollars to the Australian visitor economy and aims to deliver more via these new, walking-orientated itineraries due to be released in January 2025.

Are you an accommodation provider, tourism attraction, or hospitality venue operating within the Australian visitor economy that is interested in hosting a Cocky Guides group? To find out how you can support blind and low-vision participants in 2025 to reach their 100km goal, feel free to reach out via email to partnerships@cockyguides.com.au

If you are a blind or low-vision Australian that would like to take up the challenge or a sighted family member, friend, companion or volunteer that would like to walk with Cocky Guides in 2025, subscribe to the Cocky Guides newsletter at www.cockyguides.com.au

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CONTACT

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

ABOUT COCKY GUIDES

Since launching on 15 August 2018, Cocky Guides have specialised in providing unique, multisensory adventures for the blind and low-vision community. More than 1,500 Australians have visited 70 destinations with Cocky Guides.

Cocky Guides purpose is to inspire blind and low-vision Australians to access new destinations and experiences, and they were the recipient of the Gold Award for Excellence in Accessible Tourism at the prestigious 2023 NSW Tourism Awards and finalist in the 2023 Australian Tourism Awards.

There are over 575,000 Australians who are blind or have low vision. Cocky Guides aims to be the leading support provider for adventure and travel, designed to increase independence, plus social and community participation for blind and low-vision Australians.

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