

The Digital Accessibility Journey

Exploring priorities and investments in
Aus and NZ organisations





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, access to information and communication technologies – including the internet – is a basic human right. At least it should be, especially as society continues to live and work in a digital world, accelerated significantly by the COVID-19 pandemic.

But in the rush to get online over the past 15 years, accessibility has not always taken its rightful seat at the table. Many people have been left behind in an increasingly digital world – people with disability making up a large proportion.

In Australia, **one in every five people have a disability**, while in New Zealand the number's one in four. This scale shows that Digital Accessibility is simply non-negotiable if the benefits of a digital era are to be available to all.

A growing imperative

Digital Accessibility includes everything from designing websites and documents that can be read by screen-readers, to providing subtitles on audio-visual media. Across the globe, strides are being taken to embed these solutions into all communications.

The New Zealand Government recently announced plans to establish a new ministry for people with disability and introduce an Accessibility Act into Parliament. Australia's federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 already requires government agencies to provide equal access to information and services.

But not all organisations are putting Digital Accessibility into everyday practice. In fact, this research found that **only 3% of organisations in Australia and New Zealand** are meeting Digital Accessibility standards in all of their employee and customer facing digital assets and services.

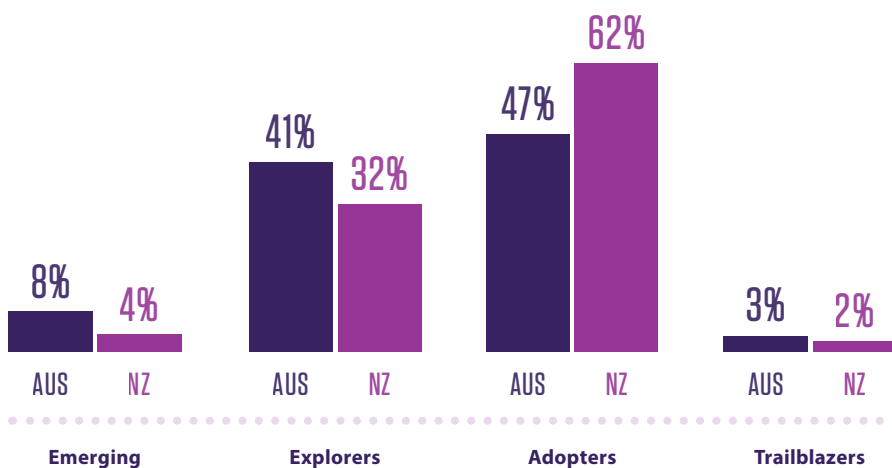
So what's holding us back?

In this report, Infosys examines the progress being made in Digital Accessibility among enterprises, public sector and not-for-profit organisations in Australia and New Zealand. To bring this research to life, we sought advice from accessibility organisations, including the Australian Network on Disability, the Centre for Accessibility Australia, Intopia and Vision Australia in Australia, as well as Accessibility Tick and Access Advisors in New Zealand. This advice combined with qualitative interviews with leaders responsible for accessibility in organisations helped us to construct the research questions. We surveyed more than 670 organisations (570 in Australia and 100 in New Zealand) to understand where they are on their Digital Accessibility journey, what routes they're taking, what barriers they're facing, and what advice they might have for those just starting out.

KEY FINDINGS

Most organisations are on the journey

- **8% Emerging:** Organisations yet to begin their Digital Accessibility journey, with no or very few elements in place.
- **40% Explorer:** Organisations with established Digital Accessibility foundations starting to build momentum.
- **49% Adopter:** Organisations with Digital Accessibility embedded within processes and culture, but with room for improvement.
- **3% Trailblazer:** Organisations consistently achieving Digital Accessibility standards for customers and employees.



Almost half of the organisations we surveyed (49%) are in the **Adopter** phase of their journey, with Digital Accessibility strategies and processes already in place.

The next biggest category (40%) belonged to **Explorers** – organisations in the early stages of their journey, with some Digital Accessibility pillars in place.

Just 3% of organisations are **Trailblazers** – in other words, well ahead of the curve – while 8% of organisations are considered **Emerging**, with no or inconsistent progress.

It's also worth noting that:

- **New Zealand organisations are generally more advanced**, with 62% in the Adopter category compared to just 47% of Australian organisations.
- Across both markets, **mid-sized enterprises** (earning \$10m to \$49m revenue) are ahead of the curve with more than 63% at the Adopter stage, compared to just 48% of **large enterprises** (earning more than \$50m).

“It is a basic human right to have equal opportunity and possibility.”

- Respondent's quote

It pays to put it in writing

- There is a direct link between having a formal policy or plan and making significant inroads in the Digital Accessibility journey.
- Organisations which have progressed are often driven by values and culture, not reputation.
- Awareness of Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) and other Digital Accessibility standards is lower than expected.

The pandemic is having a mixed effect on progress

- Overall, the impacts of the pandemic have accelerated Digital Accessibility among organisations.
- But for many businesses, available budget is often allocated to scaling digital programs rather than progressing Digital Accessibility.
- Organisations who were already on the Accessibility journey have still made progress.

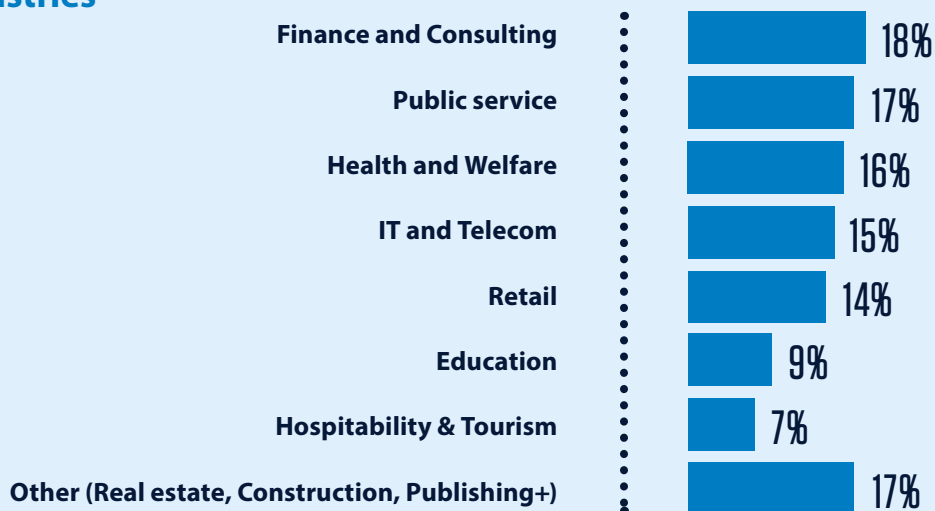
Much like the digital transformation journey, Digital Accessibility is an ongoing process. There will always be room for new solutions and improvements as technology and needs evolve. “This is even more reason for businesses to get started now,” says Andrew Groth, Infosys Executive Vice President and Region Head, Australia and New Zealand, “so they don't get left behind – or leave anyone behind.”

“We hope this report offers inspiration and guidance to organisations as they embark on, or prioritise, their Digital Accessibility investments, and encourage progressive legislation.”

WHO WE SPOKE TO

From April to October 2021, we conducted qualitative interviews with 12 accessibility leaders and then conducted quantitative research with 670 organisations (570 in Australia and 100 in New Zealand) that generate over \$10m annual revenue. The majority of the respondents are based in NSW, Victoria and Auckland. All respondents are employed (full or part time) in roles which either involve designing or making decisions about digital systems, or have some awareness of what their organisation is doing for Digital Accessibility. Three-quarters of respondents are directly involved in Digital Accessibility, while for 11%, it is their primary focus.

Industries



Sectors

- Publicly-listed: 21%
- Privately-owned: 44%
- Not-for-profit: 12%
- Public sector: 20%
- Other: 3%

Number of employees

- More than 5000: 20%
- 1001-5000: 19%
- 101-1000: 35%
- Less than 100: 27%

Annual revenue

- \$50m+: 26%
- \$30m to \$49m: 18%
- \$10m to \$29m: 28%
- Less than \$10m or N/A: 26%

UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY

With advice from accessibility organisations, Digital Accessibility was defined for the purposes of this report as the ability to allow a wide range of users – including those with visual, auditory, motor, or cognitive disabilities – to access and navigate digital content. **Digital Accessibility facilitates the right to participate and thrive in today’s digital world**, which includes websites, apps, digital documents, and devices such as computers, smartphones, tablets and self-serve kiosks.

Innovations in Digital Accessibility are happening everywhere – from talking microwave ovens for users with low vision, to gloves that translate sign language into audible speech. In fact, the global assistive technology industry is set to surpass \$24b by 2024, up from only \$14b in 2015. But it’s important to remember that the majority of solutions are much closer to home and easier to achieve. Common examples include:

- Providing alt text or audio descriptions for visual designs.
- The ability to present information in multiple different ways without losing meaning.
- Designing visuals in ways that avoid causing seizures.
- Using intuitive navigation and plain language.
- Tagging documents with the correct reading order.
- Integrating closed captions for audio-visual media.
- Enabling keyboard-only navigation for users who aren’t able to use a mouse.

“Imagine trying to schedule a vaccination appointment, or get a COVID-19 test, if the whole process is not designed accessibly.”

- Will Butler, VP of Community at Be My Eyes

More than 20% of the community

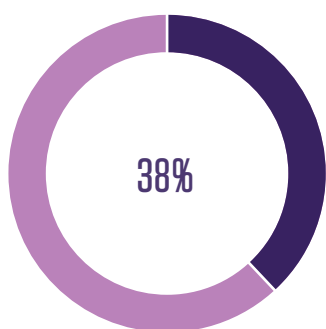
One in five Australians and one in four New Zealanders identify as having some form of disability. This means that, without Digital Accessibility, **organisations are potentially excluding more than a fifth of their workforce or customer base** – an impact with consequences in all directions.

But improving the accessibility of digital platforms, tools and experiences doesn’t just benefit people with disability. In this report, **63% of organisations say that improving Digital Accessibility can lead to better digital experiences for everyone**, regardless of abilities. This kind of widespread improvement holds major potential for a company’s bottom line, customer satisfaction and even the world’s understanding of technology. In fact, many of the world’s most powerful digital tools originated as Accessibility innovations – from eBooks and movie subtitles to GPS voice directions and “personal assistants” like Siri.

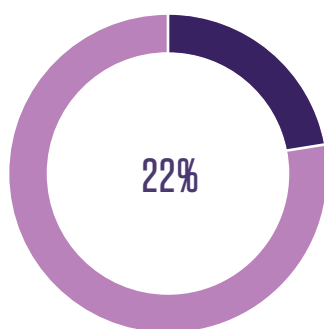
“Digital Accessibility impacts the whole organisation - not just the IT department,” says Amy Whalley, Deputy CEO of Australian Network on Disability. “Accessible technology enables businesses to provide access to employment and supports an inclusive culture.” And it’s a journey that we need to start now. In this report, 35% of mature businesses in Digital Accessibility say they have already been along the journey for over four years, highlighting that **getting started is the most important step**.

TRACKING WHERE AUS AND NZ ORGANISATIONS ARE ON THE JOURNEY

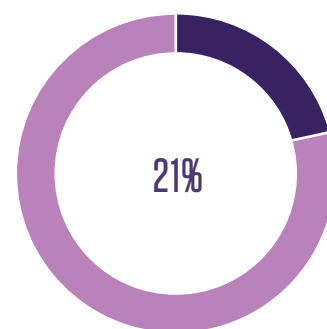
While many barriers and learnings remain, the overall progress uncovered in this research is inherently positive. The majority of organisations in this study have embarked on their Digital Accessibility journey, with only 8% in the Emerging phase making no or minor changes.



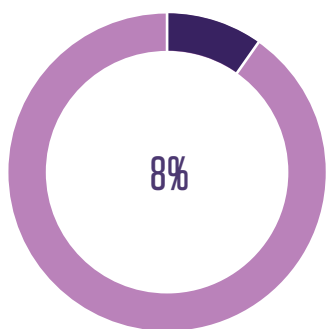
Making good progress



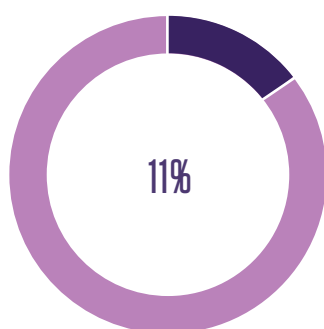
Building Digital Accessibility into majority of solutions



Planning some enhancements



Making no or minor changes

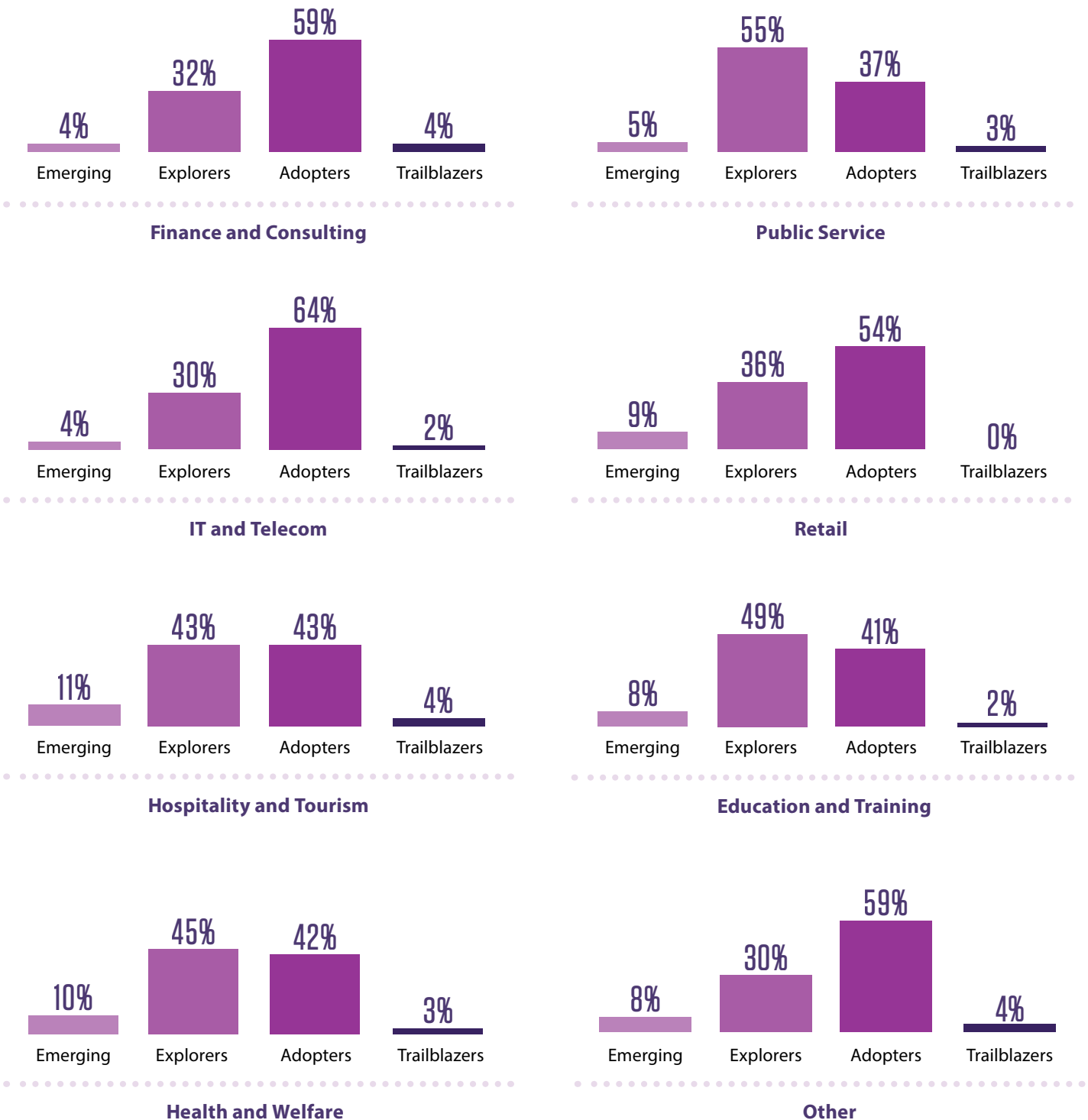


Unsure

“It’s encouraging to see 47% Australian organisations in the Adopter phase. However, there’s still work to be done given a significant gap relative to New Zealand and economies leading in digital inclusion. We’ve seen that the health crisis has enabled positive shifts in thinking and action in digital access. It’s pleasing to see IT, Telco, banks, consulting and retail firms leading the way in the region, but we certainly still need to see marked improvements around accessibility across both the public and private sectors” - Ron Hooton, CEO, Vision Australia

There are significant differences in progress across different industries.

- **IT and Telecom** organisations are leading sectors for Digital Accessibility maturity, with the highest proportion of Adopters (64%). They are followed by **Finance and Consulting** where 59% of organisations are Adopters.
- **Not-for-profit and Public Sector** organisations have the lowest percentage of Adopters (37%) followed by the **Education and Training** sector (41%) and **Health and Welfare** (42%).
- **Hospitality and Tourism** have the highest proportion of organisations Emerging on their journey (11%) followed by **Health and Welfare** (10%) and **Retail** (9%).



Finance and Consulting are leading the charge

Finance and Consulting organisations are the most likely to be building Digital Accessibility into the majority of their assets (33%). These organisations are significantly more likely to prioritise Digital Accessibility over other business initiatives, with 25% calling it a “very high” priority, compared to less than 15% in other industries. Does this internal prioritisation lead to more successful results?

- **Publicly-listed** organisations are significantly more likely to be further along the journey, with reporting on ESG increasingly a norm.
- The **Education and Training** sector is currently the least advanced, with 8% in the Emerging phase making only minor changes or unsure and 49% in the Explorer phase. Enabling digital learning during the pandemic has taken priority, often meaning that digital accessibility is de-prioritised or missed.
- **IT and Telecom** and **Retail** organisations are the most advanced when it comes to implementing Digital Accessibility in their employee-facing systems.
- The **Public sector** is furthest behind when it comes to Digital Accessibility for employees.
- **Finance and Consulting** organisations and **Retail** are leading the way when it comes to Digital Accessibility in customer-facing systems.
- **Health and Welfare** is most likely to list Digital Accessibility as a “low” priority (20%). This is especially concerning given many people use digital health services or welfare platforms to manage their disability.

Mid-sized organisations ahead

It is notable that **12% of organisations with the highest revenue** (\$50m+) are in the Emerging phase making no or minor Digital Accessibility investments.

Compare this figure to mid-sized businesses (\$30m to \$49m), of which most have started the process - only **1% are in the Emerging stage of their journey**. This middle revenue band is also more likely to have taken on a larger range of general accessibility actions.

Lower-revenue organisations (\$10m to \$29m) are most likely to be “**making good progress**”, despite the fact that a third of all respondents (36%) believe that Digital Accessibility is not “as important” for these smaller businesses.



WHO DOES THE BUCK STOP WITH?

Most of the organisations that responded to this survey design their digital assets using an in-house team. Organisations with higher revenue are more likely to have an in-house team available. For more than half of respondents, this is the IT department.



Responsibility for Digital Accessibility is blurry

Only 2% of respondents are unclear on who in their organisation has responsibility for digital assets, while a full 12% are unsure about who is responsible for Digital Accessibility. The ideal is to have policies and processes that ensure all new digital properties are designed to be accessible, and this is a job for the whole organisation.

- **Most organisations use in-house teams** for Digital Accessibility either solely or in conjunction with external consultants.
- Digital Accessibility is likely to comprise a larger portion of an individual's role if they are employed in **IT, HR, and diversity-specific positions**.
- **Education and Training** organisations are most likely to use an in-house team for Digital Accessibility.
- **Public sector organisations** are the least likely to use external consultants for Digital Accessibility. They are also the least clear about where responsibility with the organisation lies, with 26% unsure.
- **New Zealand organisations** are more likely to rely on internal resources to address Digital Accessibility, while leveraging external consultants was found to be more popular in Australia.

“It is imperative that digital accessibility is considered at all phases of a digital project, starting with the fundamentals in the design phase. It’s therefore essential that organisations understand how digital accessibility and design fit together. By actively thinking about inclusive design as part of your user interface and overall user experience, you can make a major impact before a line of code is written.”

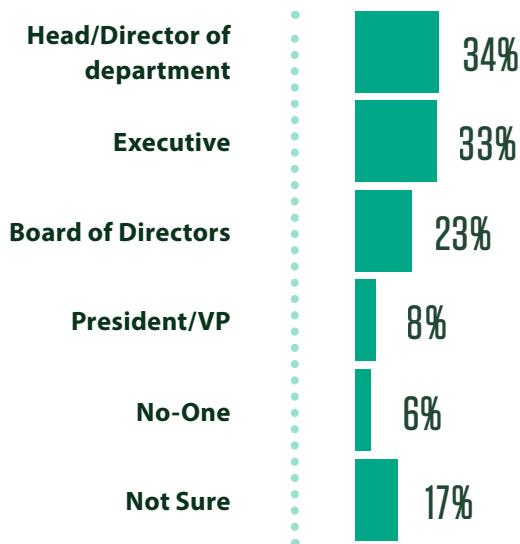
– Phil Turner, Managing Director, Accessibility Tick, New Zealand

The importance of leadership

In most organisations, responsibility for Digital Accessibility sits at the managerial level and above. This highlights the **importance of top-down influence or policy**.

- The smaller the organisation, the more likely it is that Digital Accessibility initiatives will come right from the top (Board or Vice President).
- Department heads are more likely to oversee Digital Accessibility at large organisations with revenue of \$50m+.
- Trailblazer organisations have board oversight for Digital Accessibility, with the CEO or a CTO as the owner for Digital Accessibility.

Who is responsible for Digital Accessibility?

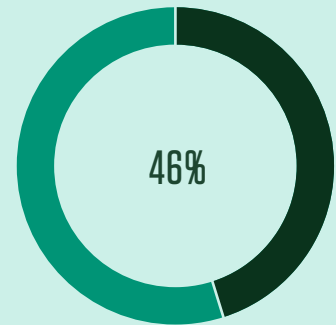


General accessibility comes first

The more improvements to general accessibility a business is making, the more mature their Digital Accessibility is likely to be. Perhaps addressing general accessibility needs is therefore a good starting point.

Among all respondents, **equal opportunity policies and diversity and inclusion policies** are the most common steps being taken to improve general accessibility. Two-thirds of respondents have written one of these policies or have one in development. This is followed by **physical access improvements, hiring practices, and training**.

The need for an internal champion



46% of businesses building Digital Accessibility into most of their assets use an in-house team. This indicates that having an inhouse team tasked with responsibility over Digital Accessibility helps enable progress.

“Key passionate people formed a group of like-minded people and kept working until senior leadership accepted that change needed to be made.”

- Respondent's quote

GESB: HOW ONE PERSON CAN INSTIGATE CHANGE

Jane Ots, Digital Communications Specialist at GESB was recently inducted into the Australian Access Awards Hall of Fame. The WA superannuation provider has been focused on integrating accessibility into its digital resources since 2019 and in her role Jane was motivated to take ownership of embedding accessibility into the firm's culture – with award-winning outcomes.

"I felt my existing skills and personal experience with accessibility qualified me to take on the challenge of becoming GESB's accessibility champion," said Jane. **"Accessibility isn't just about compliance. It's about helping make a difference in people's lives,** and having a key contact or group of people within the organisation who are dedicated to improving accessibility outcomes helps drive change."

Jane facilitated team training, created comprehensive content management system guidelines, and was involved in the development of a Disability Access and Inclusion plan which outlines GESB's ongoing commitment. She also stressed the importance of **partnering with accessibility experts in the field.**

"GESB's partners have played a key role in our accessibility journey, providing training, auditing, consulting and support. We work closely with the Centre for Accessibility Australia, the Centre for Inclusive Design, and our web developers DaNiro and Squiz to make sure our assets are easy to use for all members," she said. "Include your accessibility experts early and often. It's much easier to consider accessibility early on in a project, than to fix things after the website or tool has been created."

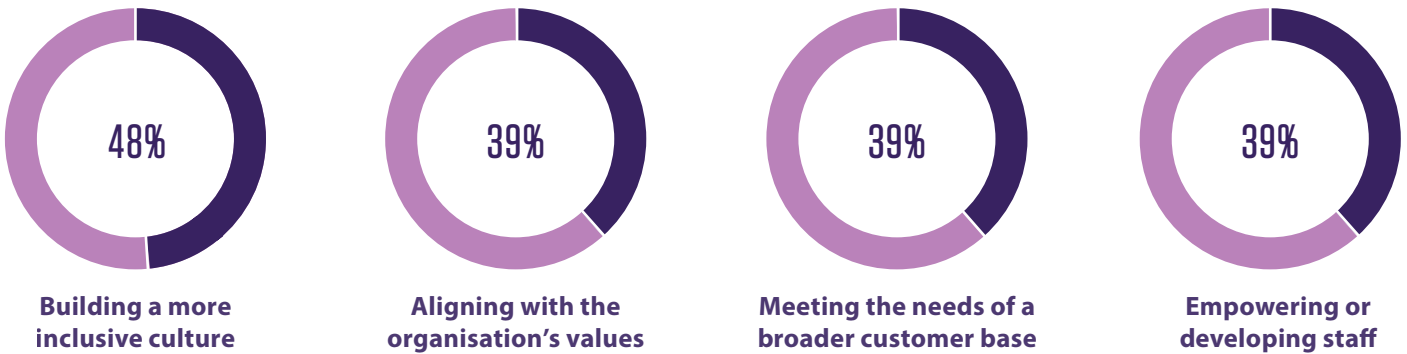
"Training is key to ensuring all staff understand the importance of accessibility to our members and the wider community."

- Jane Ots, Digital Communications Specialist, GESB



DRIVEN BY CULTURE AND VALUES

For organisations already on the journey, the main drivers for improving Digital Accessibility centre more on culture and values than reputation or regulatory need. This values-driven motivation bodes well for the future, as **businesses are in this for tangible, human reasons** – and not just for show. The most popular motivations include:



The influence of complaints or legislation

- Only the largest organisations (\$50m+) are more likely to see Digital Accessibility as a function of corporate social responsibility or brand reputation.
- Public sector organisations are more likely to enhance Digital Accessibility due to legislation.
- New Zealand organisations are more likely to be motivated by complaints than businesses in Australia.

Why improve access for employees?

When asked about the key benefits of making digital assets and services more accessible for employees, respondents cited increases to **inclusivity** (17%), **equality** (13%) and **productivity or job satisfaction** (13%).

Not-for-profits are the most likely to cite “promoting inclusivity” as a benefit for employees (25%), while **privately-owned** businesses are the least.

Most interestingly, **38% of respondents are unsure about the benefits to employees**. An opportunity exists to educate organisations about the benefits of making employee-facing assets and services digitally accessible.

“We wanted our business to be inclusive for people and employees with disability, we wanted to show we valued them as employees and well as customers.”

- Respondent's quote

The benefit to customers

When asked about the benefits of designing digitally accessible assets and services for customers, respondents cite “equitable access for all customers” (35%) and “providing better customer experiences and support” (30%) as the key drivers.

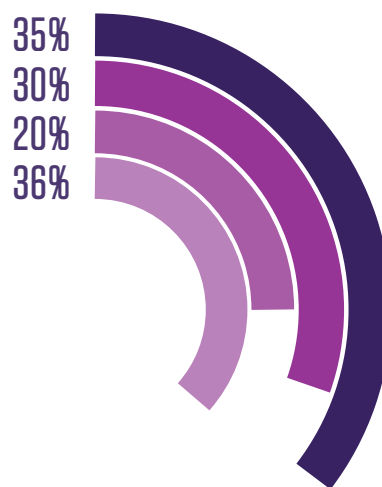
- Public sector organisations are markedly more likely to think Digital Accessibility enables equitable access for customers.
- 20% of respondents feel that Digital Accessibility helps them to reach a broader customer base.
- Many are unsure of the benefit to customers (36%), which highlights a general need to increase awareness.

35% equitable access for all customers

30% providing better customer experiences and support

20% feel that Digital Accessibility helps them to reach a wider market

36% are unsure of the benefit to customers



“There’s a need to drive more awareness and education on the benefits of enabling better digital access for people with disability. While very significant, it’s not surprising to see that more than a third of respondents were not aware of the benefits of enabling digital access for their employees or customers. Normalising an inclusive culture is crucial if organisations are to accelerate their Digital Accessibility journeys.”

- Stewart Hay, Intopia’s Managing Director

Good for business

Beyond moral imperatives, Digital Accessibility can have a positive impact on a company’s bottom line. While this isn’t the main driver for most organisations in Australia and New Zealand, understanding its benefits may offer some extra encouragement. The business benefits of Digital Accessibility can include:

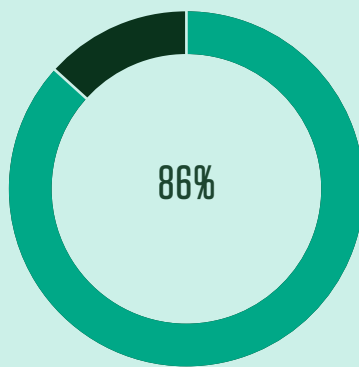
- Increased customer acquisition (since more people are able to access your services).
- Increased loyalty from communities who value accessibility (it’s been estimated that 71% of users with disability will click away from sites with access barriers).
- Improved SEO performance (as Digital Accessibility standards often overlap with good SEO practices).
- Strengthened brand image and reputation.
- Improved user experiences for all (Digital Accessibility improves ease of navigation, understanding and readability for all).

“The world is becoming more digital, and we need to make ourselves more discoverable on a platform that will grow.”

- Respondent’s quote

DIGITAL GOVERNMENTS

In research conducted earlier in 2021 asking citizens about their experience with digital government services, Infosys found that eight in every ten people in Australia and New Zealand were accessing government services online.



86% of respondents called for more inclusive digital government services – particularly for people with disability

We asked them for recommendations on how digital government services could be improved. While many complimented the progress being made, **86% of respondents called for more inclusive digital government services** – particularly for people with disability. Here are some verbatim quotes from people using those services:

- “I am almost deaf and, although I have hearing aids, they can be annoying so to do things online is easier for me.”
- “Due to my disabilities, I cannot stand for long periods of time so I can’t be standing in line for an hour waiting to be served as they don’t offer chairs!”
- “Some people with dyslexia struggle to go through written text. Live voice communication is vital. Thus personal (or video) interaction is crucial.”

WHAT'S HOLDING US BACK?

This report uncovers some of the digital accessibility barriers faced by Australia and New Zealand organisations. Interestingly, most barriers are not related to lack of priority or sponsorship from leaders but other areas including a lack of **clear objectives, dedicated budget** and of **in-house expertise**.

- Budgetary constraints appear to be a significantly greater challenge amongst **Health and Welfare** and **Public Service** organisations.
- Interestingly, a lack of awareness of the needs of people with disability is significantly less of a barrier for **privately-owned** companies.
- A perceived lack of relevance to the organisation is more of a barrier amongst **IT and Telecom**.

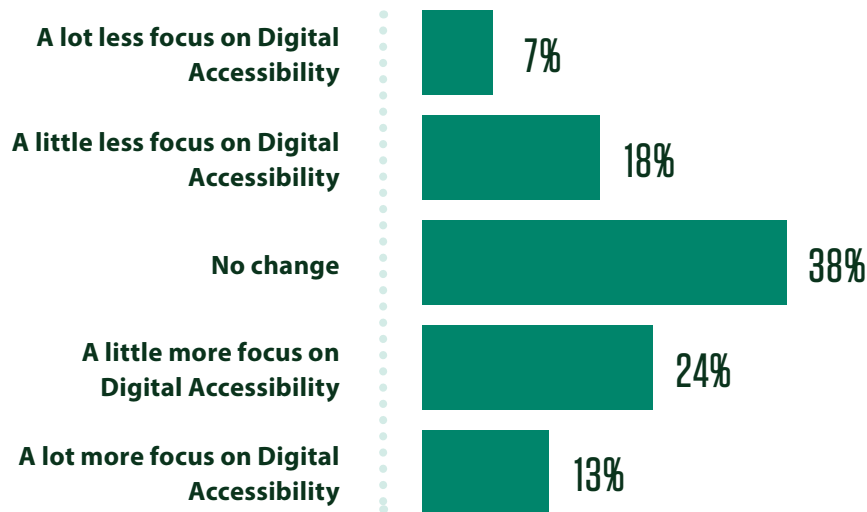
Industry	Key barriers to improvement
Public Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget commitment• Setting clear objectives
Health and Welfare	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget commitment• Lack of in-house expertise
Retail	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of in-house expertise• Setting clear objectives
IT and Telecom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of in-house expertise• Perceived lack of relevance• Setting clear objectives
Enterprises (eg. finance, marketing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of in-house expertise• Setting clear objectives
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget commitment• Setting clear objectives
Hospitality and Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of in-house expertise• Perceived lack of relevance

For a third of respondents, there are simply **“more pressing initiatives at hand.”** Other reasons include a lack of budget or resources, lack of awareness about benefits, and lack of awareness about the needs of people with disability.

Access Advisors’ New Zealand Managing Director, Dr Chandra Harrison said **“Businesses need to recognise they’re effectively cutting off a quarter of the population by not embedding accessibility** in all their digital platforms. They are also missing out on potential revenue, improved reputation, improved usability and reduced costs.”

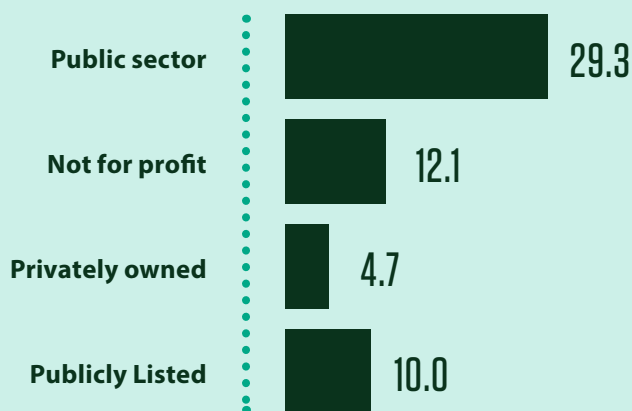
DID PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS OF THE PANDEMIC ACCELERATE DIGITAL ACCESS?

Extent pandemic has shifted the focus on Digital Accessibility:



The restrictions caused by the pandemic have significantly accelerated digital adoption and transformation in all sectors. For two in five businesses, this has welcomed a stronger focus on Digital Accessibility. But a difficult and disruptive pandemic has also meant that priorities have shifted away from Digital Accessibility for a full quarter of survey respondents.

Net shift in Digital Accessibility progress:



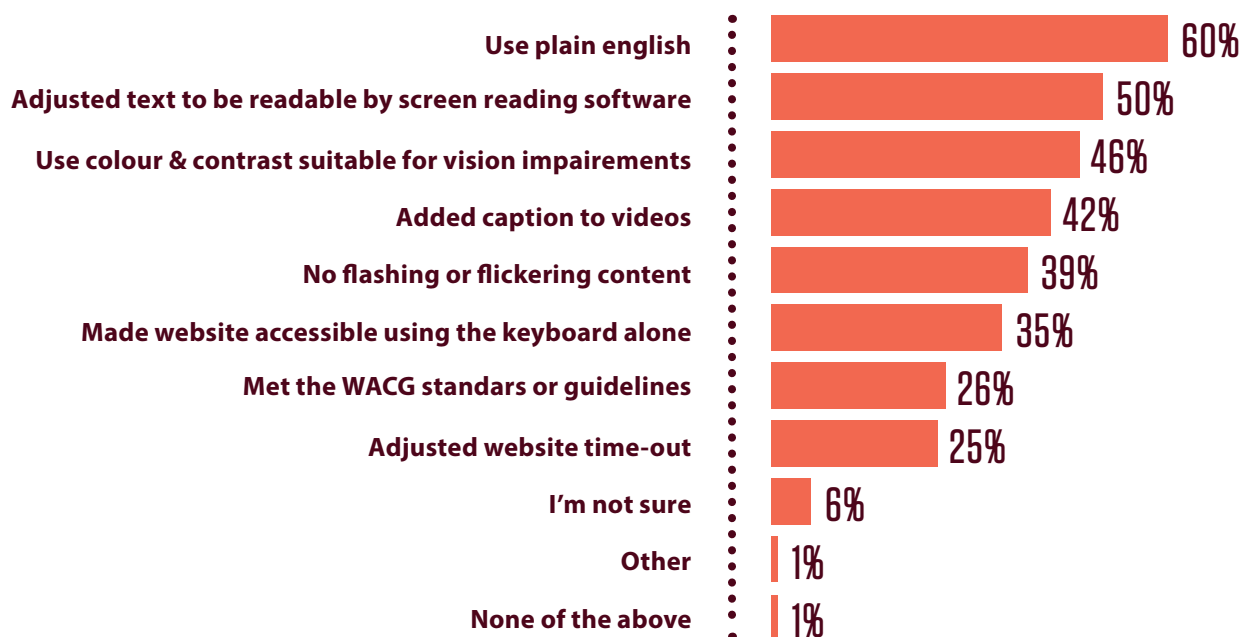
- The **public sector** saw the biggest positive shift, while progress in **privately-owned** businesses slowed.
- **Hospitality and Tourism** was significantly impacted and demonstrated the least progress.
- **Larger organisations** with revenues of \$50m or more are more likely to experience a positive shift.

HOW ARE WE DOING IT?

IBM committed to implementing an agile and simple Accessibility Governance Model across the entire IBM organisation to ensure easy access to information, communication and productivity tools for all. This includes IBM's landmark Corporate Instruction 162 which applies to all internal products, tools, applications and services worldwide, as well as ensuring that every IT solution and training material from external vendors is accessible. It also includes a designed [Equal Access Toolkit](#) for businesses to create inclusive experiences.

"Accessibility is not just a practice, it is a culture and a mindset," said Prachi Rastogi, Diversity and Inclusion Leader, IBM APAC. "Every IBMer is called to be an advocate and we have developed learnings that facilitates fundamental and discipline-specific knowledge for designing and developing accessible products, helping IBM maintain its commitment to making its information technology available and usable, regardless of the ability of the user."

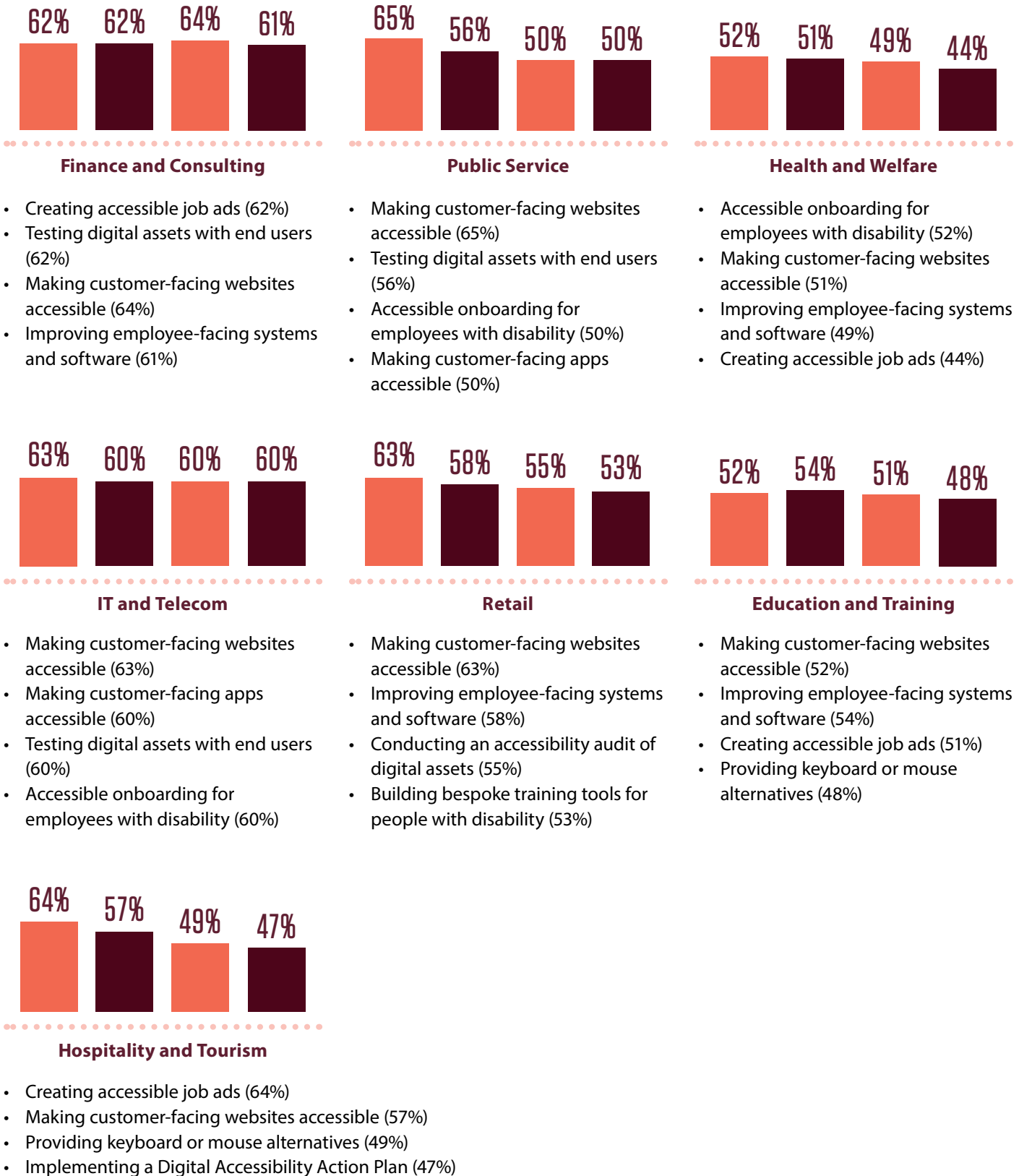
This is one example of the innovations, training and roadmaps that businesses on the Digital Accessibility journey are putting into practice. Common digital accessibility actions being undertaken by respondents in this report include:



"We have set up a community of practice and a self-help learning hub to support employees to create accessible content. This provides checklists, video tutorials and FAQs." - Respondent's quote

How different sectors are progressing

Finance and Consulting are leading amongst sectors when it comes to implementing a wider range of Digital Accessibility solutions, followed by IT and Telecom. Health and Welfare organisations appear to be less advanced – particularly when it comes to auditing their assets. Hospitality and Tourism, on the other hand, are mixed in their implementation (ahead of the curve when it comes to creating accessible job ads, but well behind in most other regards). Below are the actions each sector has made the most progress in:



WHAT IS WCAG?

The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) develops well-known web standards like HTML or CSS. They've also developed a set of digital access standards called the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). These standards are separated into three levels (A, AA and AAA) and provide businesses with detailed advice and checklists to help enable accessibility of their digital content. But awareness and adoption among large businesses is surprisingly low.

- A third of respondents are completely unaware of WCAG.
- A further third say they are aware but don't know much about its guidelines.
- Only one in ten are fully aware of what WCAG entails.
- In Australia, only government agencies are required to adhere to these standards.
- Awareness of WCAG is high among those in UX roles, followed by marketing and comms, however significantly low amongst respondents in sales roles.
- Those who are aware of WCAG are implementing different levels of the guidelines, highlighting that if education increases, these standards would likely be implemented.

“Understanding the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) is critical for organisations to embed digital accessibility into their solutions and services. The guidelines can appear complex and there's certainly more that can be done to drive awareness and provide education on WCAG. For instance, simplifying the guidelines and making them role specific can help organisations use them more effectively”

- Scott Hollier, CEO, Centre for Accessibility Australia and an active participant in the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) Research Questions Task Force (RQTF)

Picking a partner

Public Service, and Education and Training organisations are significantly less likely to engage a third-party consultant for guidance or support on Digital Accessibility. They're also lower in maturity, which may signify the importance of engaging external partners. In fact, 79% of Trailblazers and 55% of Adopters were found to have engaged a consultant.

The more advanced the organisation, the more likely they are to believe that **there's plenty of support available if you need it (56%)**. This may signal an opportunity to educate Emerging organisations on what kind of assistance is available.

The types of consultants that organisations engage were found to range from specialist **Digital Accessibility agencies (22%) to IT and management consultants (31+%)**. This highlights the importance for generalist consulting firms to be on the digital accessibility journey, as people will be coming to them for help.

BUILDING A DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY ROADMAP

The more advanced an organisation is on its Digital Accessibility journey, the more importance they place on formal policies. This indicates that the single biggest step an organisation can take may simply be to build a Digital Accessibility roadmap. Along with our respondents and advisors, we've put together the following three step process to help businesses plan their way forward:

Step 1: Assess current maturity before making a plan.

Our advisors suggest that assessing your organisation's current state of play is essential before a solid plan can be built. Once you have tested all assets, it's time to put a roadmap in writing. According to respondents in this report, a written plan needs to include "what needs to be done, how it will be achieved and how to maintain compliance over time." And it needs to be easy to understand and implement. Here are some ways to get started.

- a. **Audit your current accessibility confidence:** Organisations can start the journey by undertaking a free 10-question analysis of Disability Confidence across their organisation via the Access and Inclusion Index (by the Australian Network on Disability). This is helpful to understand where improvement is most needed.
- b. **Test your digital assets and services for accessibility:** Internal teams and external consultants can help with auditing your employee and customer-facing digital assets and services. There are numerous tools that can be leveraged, such as: WAVE, Accessibility Insights (from Microsoft), Lighthouse (from Google), among others.
- c. **Budget for it:** Many respondents flag that better financial resources are required to progress Digital Accessibility in their organisations. As with any business initiative, provisioning budget for accessibility initiatives will better position an organisation to make improvements.
- d. **Make accessibility a KPI:** It is clear in this research that sponsorship from leadership has an important role to play in facilitating progress. Making Digital Accessibility improvements part of the leadership's KPIs will make sure it's taken seriously and done well.
- e. **Align with legislation:** 59% of businesses believe that Digital Accessibility will only become widespread when it's legislated. While regulations in Australia and NZ are being updated, there may be opportunities for businesses to create their own best practice guidelines, following in the footsteps of more advanced organisations or countries. For example, in the EU and Canada, digital inclusion policy deadlines are catalysed by COVID-19 and in many places are now legislated across all businesses with 20+ employees.

"Significant planning and consultation at the beginning saves a lot of time and cost."

"It can't all be fixed in one go. Commit to starting and move forward."

- Respondents' quotes

Step 2: Accelerate progress.

With only 3% of organisations categorised as “Trailblazers”, it is clear that more can be done in Australia and New Zealand. The good news is that various practices and tools are available for businesses to improve the effectiveness of their Digital Accessibility journeys.

- a. **Appoint an internal champion:** 67% of respondents believe it takes passionate individuals to drive organisational commitment or prioritisation. While many businesses choose to take this in-house, others suggest “employing someone with the necessary experience to implement a Digital Accessibility strategy, making sure all procedural changes are delivered.”
- b. **Do your own research:** There are myriad resources available to guide you along your digital accessibility journey, helping understand the barriers faced by people with disability and the benefits of improving Digital Accessibility. Here are some to start with, among others:
 - [HW3C Web Accessibility Initiative](#)
 - [Online Accessibility Toolkit – South Australian Government](#)
 - [Human Rights Commission: Disability Rights](#)
 - [Australian Network on Disability](#)
- c. **Involve end users:** According to businesses on the journey, “lived experience is important” when it comes to designing successful solutions. Respondents suggest consulting people with disability throughout your journey, whether through direct consultation, end user testing or by hiring a third-party expert. [Purple Space’s Five Trust Test](#) is a great tool for understanding when it’s okay to ask someone about their personal experiences, and how to go about collaborating respectfully.
- d. **Consider formal training:** Sometimes the most efficient way to gain total workplace confidence and open up lines of communication is through formal education across all levels of staff. There are various agencies that offer structured courses on disability awareness, inclusion and Digital Accessibility specifically.
- e. **Make it a priority:** 63% of businesses in Australia and New Zealand believe Digital Accessibility only happens when it is embedded into culture. To make a significant impact, attitudes and awareness must be addressed through research, collaboration and discussion.

Key attributes to making Digital Accessibility a priority:



Step 3: Create an inclusive culture

Digital Accessibility is an ongoing journey. As digital technology evolves, digital assets and services need to be improved to address accessibility needs. Making enhancements on an ongoing basis is easier if accessibility is embedded into the organisation's culture. Our respondents and advisors provided some ways to create this inclusive environment, including everything from training employees to incorporating feedback from end users on an ongoing basis.

- a. Incorporate feedback:** Engaging end users on the Digital Accessibility journey is paramount. Ongoing testing of digital assets can also ensure that platforms and tools remain relevant. One respondent suggests “engaging in feedback both internally and externally, then acting on that feedback to help ensure what is being needed is actually being actioned and to ensure that there remains a budget for these things.” Proof that solutions are working can help secure ongoing senior support.
- b. Embrace inclusive design:** Improving CX or UX doesn't mean much if people can't access your platforms. Embedding accessibility in all phases of design is vital, as accessibility by design is the goal rather than adding it on at the end. Consider training development and design employees in building accessible digital assets from the start, including only licensing software that includes capabilities for those with disability.
- c. Become a Disability Confident Recruiter:** Leading Australian organisations understand the benefits of a diverse workforce and are committed to ensuring their recruitment and selection processes are accessible to people with disability. To do this effectively, it is important to assess and enable all recruitment processes to be more inclusive – including those of any recruitment agencies that might have been engaged to support the talent search.
- d. Build a culture that normalises accessibility:** Removing barriers for employees or customers with disability involves bringing in a cultural shift. This may include training managers and HR on how to effectively work with people with disability, designing for digital accessibility for every digital asset or service, participating in programs that help understand the benefits of accessibility or continuing to embed general accessibility practices into the organisation.



LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

One respondent in this report predicts that “in future, every organisation will have a dedicated team for Digital Accessibility.” Ideally, Digital Accessibility should be business as usual, naturally included in everything they do. But while this level of dedication and responsibility would certainly be desirable, most businesses are not yet at this point.

Digital Accessibility is a whole-of-business exercise, and should not just sit with the IT team. We all have a role to play, whether in raising awareness, improving our own understanding, or taking the lead with embedding Digital Accessibility within our specialties. Making the commitment is the first step to realising this important and powerful human right.



THANK YOU

This research and the report were made possible with advice from specialised accessibility organisations including, the Australian Network on Disability, the Centre for Accessibility Australia, Intopia, Vision Australia, Accessibility Tick and Access Advisors. We'd like to thank them for their contributions on top of the good work they already do in helping address accessibility and digital access across Australia and New Zealand.

**CENTRE FOR
ACCESSIBILITY**



ABOUT INFOSYS

Infosys is on the path to reducing digital barriers for people with disability. We appreciate that improving Digital Accessibility is a continuous journey of assessing platforms and processes to improve access and enable a more inclusive workplace.

At Infosys digital accessibility is core to our values and [ESG vision](#). Our on-demand digital learning platform LEX, that is leveraged by over 200,000 of our employees, complies with WCAG guidelines. In May 2021, we launched the Digital Accessibility Certification Program (Infosys Certified Digital Accessibility Associate) on LEX. The Accessibility Lab on LEX, as the name suggests, is a source for curated learning resources from practitioners in accessibility design and development.

Infosys is a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting. We enable clients in more than 50 countries to navigate their digital transformation. With nearly four decades of experience in managing the systems and workings of global enterprises, we expertly steer our clients through their digital journey. We do it by enabling the enterprise with an AI-powered core that helps prioritise the execution of change. We also empower the business with agile digital at scale to deliver unprecedented levels of performance and customer delight. Our always-on learning agenda drives their continuous improvement through building and transferring digital skills, expertise, and ideas from our innovation ecosystem.

Visit our [Australia and New Zealand page](#) to learn more.

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