

Speaking Notes – Sandie Grant (Ability Adventures)

Date: 10 September 2025

Who am I?

- Sandra (Sandie) Grant – Occupational Therapist with 30+ years' experience.
- Owner of Ability Adventures – specialising in accessible travel.
- Deep clinical, practical and business understanding of accessibility needs.

Why does this proposal matter?

- People with disabilities want the same joyful, restorative experiences as everyone else.
- Coastal access is extremely limited – especially in remote areas like Taieri Mouth.
- Current accommodation often lacks dignity, design, and connection to nature.
- NZ Disability Strategy promotes accessibility – but progress is slow and uneven. Opportunities like this will help correct this deficiency.

What barriers can people with disabilities face?

- Wheelchairs struggle with sand; beach access is uneven and lacks infrastructure.
- Water-based activities are often inaccessible and undignified.
- Support facilities (e.g. hoists, beach wheelchairs) are rare or non-existent.
- Disability accommodation is normally the two worst rooms at the back of a main chain hotel, in the main centre. There are often no facilities in the smaller rural towns nor outside of the main hotel chains.
- At our business, we generally turn in towards Te Anau as soon as we head south of Christchurch. There just aren't many places that provide good quality accommodation for people with disabilities. This is limiting for people seeking those experiences in Otago.

What This Proposal Offers

- Purpose-built, accessible accommodation on the water.
- All-tide pontoon and hoist for safe, independent water access.
- Two-room setup supports carers and reduces financial burden.
- Enables hygiene and prosthetic management – critical for wellbeing.
- Other benefits.

Closing thoughts

- The proposal will help empower disabled people to explore and enjoy nature independently.
- Opens up new tourism and recreation opportunities in Otago.
- Attracts families and groups seeking inclusive travel options.
- Supports inclusive tourism and aligns with national strategy goals.