



DISABLED PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION, SINGAPORE

Access to River Safari Feedback Report 2014

General Feedback from DPA

14 August 2014

Overview

On 7 June 2014, Disabled People's Association (DPA) visited River Safari to enjoy the park as well as to give feedback on how the experience was for visitors with disabilities. The management of the River Safari had contacted DPA to ask its members to come to the park and let them know how they can improve their facilities and services for those with disabilities. A group of DPA members with mobility, hearing and visual impairments as well as two DPA staff were treated to a guided tour of the River Safari and a meal together. Afterwards DPA conducted a feedback session.

DPA hopes that our findings will provide the management of River Safari with a better understanding of the disabled customer experience. We also hope that the management will adopt the recommendations and work towards improving accessibility to their public attraction.

Methodology

DPA staff conducted a feedback session at River Safari after the visit. There were a total of 13 participants with disabilities at this session and they are members from various disability organisations. They have visual, physical or hearing disabilities.

The questions asked at the feedback session were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Participants were asked a variety of questions ranging from the accessibility of the attraction to customer service satisfaction using a standard questionnaire designed by DPA. DPA then amalgamated all responses into a write-up which was sent to the management of River Safari for perusal.

Findings

All participants found the visit enjoyable and generally accessible, and would recommend the visit to a person with disability. All participants were also happy with the customer service at River Safari.

But participants commented that it was not easy to find the location of River Safari due to the lack of clear signage at the taxi stand and car park.

All but one participant said that they were able to get to River Safari using public transport. The one participant who disagreed has quadriplegia. Only one participant has to arrange special transport to River Safari. He required special wheelchair transport so he booked a van.

All participants said that the entrance is not signposted in a manner that is accessible. They explained that the low position of the shelter obstructs their view. All participants also

commented that it was not easy to find the entrance; they had to ask for directions. But all participants agreed that the entrance is accessible.

All participants, except for those with a visual disability, agreed that the signage of the various aquariums and/or information is accessible to them.

Participants also faced issues getting around the river paths and attractions:

- Some of the park exhibits are indoors, in dark areas, making it difficult for eyes to adjust in time (when coming in from outside where it is sunny).
- Some of the indoor paths and exhibit areas have low rock walls at head or face level, which may pose a danger.
- The lighting in some sections of the dugong/aquarium exhibit area is too dim.
- Some exhibits are too high for wheelchair users to view comfortably, i.e. above their eye level. (One wheelchair user had to be supported to a standing pose to view the exhibits.)

Participants also shared their experience on the Wild Amazonia ride:

- When boarding or alighting from the boat, the colours of the pavement and the interior of the boat itself are similar, causing disorientation. Some people, especially those with a visual disability may have difficulty seeing the "step" downwards into the boat.
- Boat passengers are supposed to call a number in case of emergency, but this poses a problem for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- The Emergency information sign (in the boat) is not in Braille, so it is not accessible to people with a visual disability. (see Image 1)
- The boat ride is also physically inaccessible to wheelchair users. (see Image 2)



Image 1: Emergency information sign is not in braille.

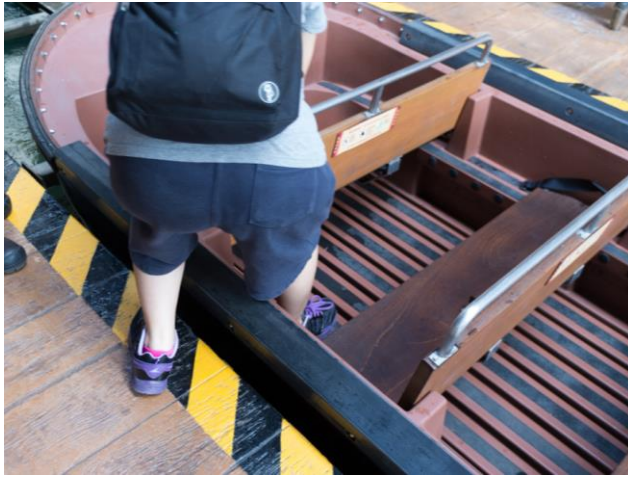


Image 2: Boat ride is not wheelchair-friendly

When asked about the River Safari shop, all participants shared that the shop is too narrow. They also commented that the toilets are not easy to find.

Participants then gave general feedback about their experience at River Safari:

- Lack of emergency visual alarms (flashing lights) both in outdoors and indoor areas to warn people who are deaf or hard of hearing of emergencies such as fires.
- Some paths and slope are quite steep and pose a challenge to manual wheelchair users. Also, some of these paths have railings, but some do not.
- In case of emergency evacuation, the escape route is, in parts, along narrow single-file ledges leading to staircases. Not enough space to have people alongside supporting the wheelchair user (to walk) and too dangerous to attempt to carry them out.

Recommendations

- Develop an app (using GPS technology) to be used as a map/guide to give audio information about the exhibit/animals.
- Add lights or signs to warn visitors of low rock walls.
- Add sidelights in poorly lit areas of dugong/aquarium exhibit, and have luminous graphical or text signs on the ground to guide visitors.
- Add tactile pavements for people who are blind to assist them in getting around the park independently.
- Add Braille alongside the textual information plaques which describe the exhibit/animals for people with a visual disability.
- Need more statue replicas of animals for people with a visual disability. (see Image 3)
- Need better anti-slip floor coatings on epoxy lines. (see Image 4)



Image 3: More life-size replicas of animals will help people with a visual disability to visualise



Image 4: Slippery epoxy lines

Acknowledgement

We thank the management of River Safari for treating DPA to a guided tour and for inviting us to conduct an accessibility review of their attraction. We also thank all participants for taking the time to provide feedback.

Appendix 1

River Safari Feedback Form

1. Did you find the River Safari experience enjoyable? (Please count how many said yes and how many people said no)
2. Was the River Safari accessible to you? (Please count how many said yes and how many people said no)
3. Would you recommend a visit to a person with disabilities? (Please count how many said yes and how many people said no)
4. Were you happy with the customer service at the River Safari? (Please count how many said yes and how many said no)

Getting to the River Safari:

5. How easy was it to find out where the River Safari is located?
6. Were you able to get to the River Safari using public transport?
7. Did you have to arrange special transport to the River Safari? If so, what mode of transport did you use?
8. Was the entrance signposted in a manner that was accessible to you?
9. Was the entrance easy for you to find?
10. Was the entrance accessible to you?
11. How could the entrance be made more accessible to you?

Attractions:

Rivers of the World and Wild Amazonia

1. Is the signage of the various aquariums and/or information accessible to you?
2. Did you encounter any issues getting around the river paths and attractions? If so, please list the issues you faced.
3. If you encountered problems getting around the river path and attractions how did you overcome them?
4. Can you suggest any improvements to enhance your experience of the river paths and exhibits (bearing in mind your particular disability)?

Wild Amazonia

5. Is the Amazon River Quest signage and/or information accessible to you?
6. Did you encounter any issues getting on, during and alighting the ride? If so, please list the issues you faced.
7. If you encountered any issues on the Amazon River Quest how was it resolved?
8. Can you suggest any improvements to enhance your experience of the ride (bearing in mind your particular disability)?
9. Was the Amazon Flooded Forest signage and/or information accessible to you?
10. Did the multi-level nature of the attraction present obstacles or pose a safety hazard to you? If so, please list these obstacles or hazards.
11. Can you suggest any improvements to enhance your experience of the Amazon Flooded Forest (bearing in mind your particular disability)?

Amenities

Refreshments:

12. Are the food court/restaurant signage and/or information accessible to you?
13. Did you encounter any issues ordering, getting and consuming your food and drink? If so, please list the issues you faced.
14. If you encountered any issues at the refreshment outlets how was it resolved?
15. If you encountered any issues refreshment outlets how was it resolved?

The River Safari Shop

16. Is River Safari signage and/or information accessible to you?
17. Did you encounter any issues whilst shopping at the River Safari Shop? If so, please list the issues you faced.
18. If you encountered any issues at the River Safari shop how was it resolved?

Toilets

19. Are signage and/or information for the toilets accessible to you?
20. Are the toilets easy to find?
21. Did you encounter any issues trying to access the toilets? If so, please list the issues you faced.

22. If you encountered any issues accessing the toilet facilities how was it resolved?
23. Can you suggest any improvements to the toilet facilities, bearing in mind your disability?
24. Other general feedback? (please ask the group if they have any other general feedback or suggestions to improve the disabled customer experience of the River Safari)