**Interview with Leanne and Gary Watson and Liz Wright**

Liz

This is a Women with Disabilities Victoria podcast.

We acknowledge that these podcasts were recorded on the traditional lands of the First Nations Peoples of this country. We acknowledge their Elders, past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge that sovereignty has never been ceded, and that this is, and always will be, Aboriginal land.

From the Outskirts is a series of podcasts featuring women with disabilities who live and work in regional Victoria.

I’m Liz Wright, a disability activist and advocate. I’m also the Manager of Community Inclusion and Women’s Empowerment at Women with Disabilities Victoria.

All the interviews were recorded in each person’s home or workplace, so from time to time there is unexpected background noise.

Leanne and Gary Watson are on a mission to challenging the tourism sector to lift its game when it comes to accessible accommodation.

Please be aware there is some swearing in this episode.

Leanne

Hi, I'm Leanne Watson from Wadawurrung Country in Victoria on the Bellarine Peninsula.

Liz

And Leanne, you've been living down here for how long?

Leanne

This time around, three and a half years.

Liz

So, you've lived down the peninsula before?

Leanne

Four years, actually. Four years now. Yes. 20 years before we came back. We'd been here for four years at that stage too when our children were quite young and with work. And then we decided to move back to… really as empty nesters, to really to re-enjoy all that the Bellarine has to offer.

Liz

Oh, God. It's got so much to offer now, doesn't it?

Leanne

Yeah, definitely.

Liz

Where are you from, Leanne?

Leanne

Originally, Melbourne. I'm Melbourne born and bred. The eastern suburbs. And... yeah, that's mostly it, really.

Liz

Where did you go to school?

Leanne

I grew up in Donvale itself. Went to Donvale Primary, Donvale High School, then moved to then…had 12 months in Parkdale when Mum and Dad were building a new house in Wantirna…

Liz

Yeah.

Leanne

I went to Wantirna and Wantirna High and then that's where I met my husband. Now my husband of 30 odd years.

Liz

You met at school?

Leanne

Yes. Yeah.

Liz

Oh, I love these stories…

Leanne

Year Eleven.

Liz

What were you doing there Gary?

Gary

Trying to convince Leanne that she would one day marry me.

(laughter)

Gary

Oh, well, I grew up in about 14 different places in an air force family and ended up in Wantirna. And we went to high school together for one year before they asked me to leave. But in that year, I was able to convince Leanne that I was actually worth hanging around, so it was a good year.

Liz

Wow. So, you both met at high school, then where did your journey take you after that Leanne? Like, where where did you go?

Leanne

I always sort of had a bit of a hankering to be a teacher to go to uni. I just thought I would go to uni, be teacher, but I did muck around in year 12, so I just missed out on the teaching, the whole teaching thing. So, I thought of the next best option is the bank, surely.

So, I started working for Westpac that year and stayed with them on and off in between having children, three children for another ten years.

And in the meantime, very early on Gary and I moved out together and then we bought a house, we had our first child… so we were mostly in Ferntree Gully for the first few years. And then I… I was saying….yeah…I worked in a bank which was, you know, looking back, it’s sort of a bit of a shame that, you know, I didn't sort of explore more creative pursuits, really, but, but it did us well. And I don’t know, then while I was having kids, I did a bit of the party plan type work, so Nutrimetics …

(laughter)

Leanne

I sold Nutrimetics, Tupperware…I did the…

Liz

I’ve bought all of those things Leanne.

(laughter)

Leanne

Anyway, I did the gamut it was all fun. There was children's clothing company at one stage as well. And yeah, it was all, it was all great.

So, I was always very happy to be the, you know, the mum from the Castle type thing, the, you know, the nurturer, the home keeper. It just, it just was a natural fit for me. I was always happy to…to be that.

Liz

When you worked at the bank, was that in the time where if you were pregnant and you went on mat leave, you couldn't come back? Or it was all fine and…?

Leanne

It was fine by then.

Liz

It was past those days.

Leanne

Yeah, yeah. I was very lucky…

Liz

That’s great.

Leanne

Which was great because I went back, I had the three kids within three years and three months in total. And so, I'd sort of go away and come back again, get pregnant, go away. And in the end, I didn't go back in, and we moved down here...

(laughter)

Leanne

So, I was very…that was fortunate. I genuinely loved… I remember distinctly feeling especially when I had to go back…and we did, we bought a house in the 18% mortgage, you know…

Liz

Yeah, the terror years.

Leanne

As much as I didn't want to, and I like, I went back to work the first two days, I had long hair then…I just had my hair over my face, just crying into my…you know, into the computer and or into the microfiche machine.

(laughter)

Liz

I still love the smell of metho.

Leanne

But I remember the discussions at lunch time and, and, you know, and even around the office and just thinking: No, this is not real life. Like, real life is back with my family, with, you know, with my baby and, you know, with Gary…and so I and I really loved that. And but I did feel…I definitely always felt that sort of - probably self-imposed, but I think societally imposed - pressure of feeling like I wasn't enough by being happy to be a mum and not being a professional on top of that.

Liz

But don't you think that's the real misnomer about feminism, that feminism is about choice for women to live their best lives, and if you want to be with your kids, that should be your choice. And it's great. I love that.

Leanne

Yep.

Gary

So, we made a choice together that as my career started to develop and we had opportunities arise, including moving down here for the first time, that Leanne would do what she enjoyed the most. And, and in doing so she got really involved in all parts of our community. So, if there was a committee, Leanne was on it. If there was a, you know, a social group Leanne was in it and…it meant that we could actually live a really balanced life, even in years after that.

When I was traveling extensively and we were moving around a lot, there was always a really, a really solid base because of the decisions that we'd made - that Leanne had made about being the mum that was connected to the community and doing the things that she wanted to do, despite, you know, this kind of concept maybe that a stay-at-home mum wasn't…wasn't as equal. We didn't see it like that.

Liz

So, you had the three kids. How old are they now?

Leanne

32, 30. And 28 nearly 29.

Liz

And do you have grandchildren?

Leanne

One and three quarters.

Liz

When's the new one due.

Leanne

The 25th of November…

Liz

Fantastic.

Leanne

Both from my eldest, our eldest son, the 32-year-old.

Liz

Yeah.

Leanne

Yes. So, we've got a little girl, Zoe, and we are expecting a little grandbaby boy.

Liz

And how do you think, like with Zoe, how do you think she manages you using a wheelchair and all that sort of stuff? It's just normal for her? Or she comments or she wants to sit on your knee or like…?

Leanne

She's 20 months now and she has just…over the last few months, sort of knows our names. And, you know, she's familiar with that. She loves…at this age, she's gone through the pressing buttons, loving, you know, pressing the buttons. And she… what she really enjoys doing, that she started a few months ago is sitting on my foot plate. And we do the up, up, up, down, down. You know, with that kind of… like learning all that.

(laughter)

Leanne

She really enjoys that…

Liz

Yeah.

Leanne

I get a bit scared of her sitting…like I always make sure someone's completely next to me when she's sitting on my knee just because, like, I…

Liz

You don’t have such good strong arms. Arm strength.

Leanne

No. So that's why I could never do anything. So yeah, so we get to do that, which is great to be able to have that. And I've, I've sat her up at my table and sat her on my knee and, you know, we've sort of done a bit of reading until she wiggles down again. But I can see that being a norm for her as she gets older. And, you know, hopefully when she can climb up herself on my knee and get down without me worrying and that sort of thing that we can, you know, have those sort of times together.

Liz

How’s it been living in this area like just, you know, Drysdale is a small…it's still a small town, although it's been a growing town…

Leanne

Yes, it is.

Liz

Are there many other people that you know with disability who live in this area?

Leanne

I…well, it's an aging population here. So, I think the people that I've met - and we've made some really lovely, lovely friends and I think a lot of the time through, even though they're not necessarily disabled, I think just the wisdom of and education that comes of age, they're…they're very understanding and accommodating and that sort of thing that might…our local friends…there's a few friends that we've known for 20 odd years since we were here last time.

So, they've known me in all my forms and that, you know, that's been lovely to still catch up with them when we can. They come here, we go to their place and then of course I got…I started being…I was about to become involved in Women with Disability, their outer, a south-eastern group before I moved here.

Liz

Yeah.

Liz

The southwestern group?

Leanne

No, the Amanda May one.

Liz

Oh, yeah, yeah.

Leanne

Yeah, yeah.

Liz

Yeah. The outer east.

Leanne

Yes, that's right. Yeah. And…I had just finished doing or I was just doing in the middle of a leadership course through another organisation that folded…Opening Doors. They'd, they'd run for a few years, and they started off in Melbourne or like more Malvern sort of area and then yeah, they expanded out to our suburb and then they didn't get funding a year… the year after that.

But, but then yeah, so through Amanda May found Deb Haygarth at Barwon WDV and had a lovely coffee with her and sort of now I do know people with disability because I have found a new group of really lovely, strong, interesting, you know, incredible women.

Gary

Could I just step back to when you asked about Zoe and how she is with the wheelchair. She doesn't see it. Our neighbours have got a granddaughter who loves Leanne, and she doesn't see it either. When little Hayley next door comes running in, she looks for a place to hug Leanne. So, it's typically her leg or a knee or something like that.

Liz

Yeah.

Gary

Yeah. Doesn't see the wheelchair at all. Just loves Leanne. Her uncle is a little person, he’s short statured, has suffered a life of bullying and aggression against him. Decided not to have children because of that.

Liz

Is he like an older man now?

Gary

He’s in his thirties? But Hayley doesn't see any of this, and neither does Zoe.

Liz

Yeah.

Gary

And this is the beauty of children, I think, is that they don't, they don't see this stuff.

Liz

But it's also the beauty of visibility. So, the more visible we all are, you know, and there's more than one of us in this room with disability, that the more visible we are, the less dramatic it seems to other people.

Gary

Let me, let me rephrase, they don't see it, to: they don't see it as being anything out of the ordinary.

Liz

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Leanne

It's not an ‘other’. Which is why it was important to me to create my blog.

I started that in 2017 and that was one of the reasons because I wanted to get my story or, you know, for a start, my story out there of sort of what it felt like to go from taking everything for granted to not being able to anymore, almost everything. In the hope that and, you know, a lot of me, my friends read all the articles, which is great. And I'm on Instagram, but in the hope of also extending to other non-disabled people as well, to just to make it normal, like this is a person stories and, you know, and there's many people on Instagram and Facebook doing that now. And I think that's what we need.

And it's not like we're we just want to be this enclave sharing each other’s disabilities…

Liz

You know, we know we don't want to be a colony. No. And we want to be we don't want to preach to the converted.

Leanne

No.

Gary

One of the things that Leanne always said was that the blog was to do two things: one was to educate people without disability and the other was to provide support for people with disability.

Liz

Yeah.

Gary

And most of the feedback that we get, particularly from people that we know, is: Gee, you know, we didn't know, but, but now we do.

Liz

Yeah.

Gary

And we tell other people, and we understand and so on, isn't it?

Leanne

Hmm. And hopefully I hope it, I mean…it seems to be happening in some places, still not quick enough, but hopefully that will, you know with, you know, so many more structural things will change.

Like we were just talking about Judy Heumann earlier. That's a really dramatic…like the people have sacrificed and worked so hard and, you know, so incredibly tirelessly, like genuinely tirelessly to, you know, for things to change for policies and that sort of thing. And we're still fighting, you know, still battling, really. People with disability are battling change in every aspect from schooling upwards, you know, to shops to…

Gary

I reckon you got to take a no tolerance attitude to this in a lot of ways. You know if something that Judy Heumann taught us and more recently Grace Tame, is there a zero back down, zero tolerance, maybe get angry…is required. It's required because otherwise, you know, one of the things that I notice about Leanne and other people that I know that have disabilities is that you and they spend a lot of time apologising.

Liz

I don’t

Gary

Sorry, can you help me? I'm sorry you have to move that.

Leanne

I’m getting better.

Gary

You are getting better.

Liz

Yeah. Yeah, I'm better. Better than you. No, no, I'm just saying, like, the apology stuff…is all the criticism, side eye, you know…being, being assertive is not necessarily being angry.

Gary

No.

Liz

I'm not apologising. No way.

Leanne

What I found…a lot of people…most people are…I've been really lucky. And maybe because it's my disability is more recent, too. But people are really accommodating. They're very happy to…I don't need to apologise. They’re, you know, quite often…

Liz

You don't ever need to apologise.

Gary

But what they want to know is what have they got to do, to help.

Leanne

Mmmm.

Gary

And they're the best ones that say: What can we do to help? What do you need? They are best ones, except when they ask me what she needs…

Liz

Yeah.

Gary

That's a whole different story, isn’t it? My funniest one…in a in a women's shoe shop pushing Leanne in a wheelchair. The woman who is attending the shop asked me: What does she want to look at? And I said, expletive, deleted: How would I know!

Liz

Ask her.

(Music playing)

Liz

Leanne, I'm really interested in how people that you've known for a hundred years are talking about you or talking to you nowadays and who's managing it better than others and how the kind of disability versus Leanne person stuff going?

Are people struggling with you being different or are they struggling with old Leanne versus new Leanne?

Leanne

I…most… almost everybody I know closely that I regard…and we've got a pretty good social network and including my friends and especially my sister, the one that lives in Bendigo, are incredible. They're really wonderful. They have always…they've always been, you know, what can we do for you?

We know…there's one friend of mine in particular, she, she's quite an emotional girl. So sometimes that's a little bit hard because, you know, you get the tears and you go: I don't want you to be crying like, I don't need that. But she's quite honest too. She goes, I don't really know what I can do. There's nothing…I can't change what's happening. So please tell me, you know, if you want me….and she's a beautiful cook. So, for a while there, she was helping out and bringing…when Gary was working really long hours. And I had sort of stopped being able to cook. She was bringing, you know, bringing stuff over for us to freeze, which was really lovely. But yeah, most people are really incredible. There are some that I…they probably weren't that…they weren't in my close kind of set to begin with anyway…

Liz

Yeah. Yeah.

Leanne

But you know, you sort of just find that you don't really, you know, you kind of get… oh no…no…that's not true; I was, I still was invited to places but there's just some places just aren't accessible for me…their houses…

Gary

I would say, in addition to what Leanne said, that most of our friends mostly want to know what they can do to help. So, if we're going out for dinner, can we book or would you rather book? But not a single one of our friendship group, I think, responds any differently to you than they did before.

Part of the difference is that they don't know what to do to help if we're going out, what they need to do to support. So, they tend to ask sometimes… they're a little trepidatious. But generally speaking, the friends we had before, are the friends we've got now. And the other thing that I would say about it is that Leanne has a profound disability physically, and I don't think that a lot of people appreciate just how significant the physical lack is because she's generally upbeat and positive and so on. So, I don't think that our friends respond too much differently to you.

Liz

But what about initiation? I would initiate stuff. I would be saying: Oh, let's go to Gold Class, let's go to Gold Class and see a movie. How would that work for you? And initiate some dialog with you around that? So how do we do that?

Leanne

That's a really good point because I think that a lot of the time over the years I've predominantly - when I'm talking about me and my girlfriends - one of the very maybe two that are the organisers. So, I have… that's a really good point because I've noticed that doesn't happen. Yeah, you're right. It doesn't because it's only if I if I said let's go to the movies or that sort of thing.

Leanne

So yeah, yeah, that that's a really, really good pick up. And, having said that, I do miss that… like I do. I do know my social setting isn't as active as it used to be. And part of that, you know, like…

Liz

And none of its malicious. We know that…

Leanne

No, no, no…

Liz

It’s just more about…

Leanne

And even girls weekends we used to like once or twice a year would go away a few of us for girls weekends and predominately that was also organised by me. And then they kind of left it up to me to as I my progression and you know, as my physical abilities sort of kept progressing. But they were unsure about what to what to look for in accommodation or you know, adventures and that sort of thing. And I was still struggling trying to figure that out as well.

So, I get why they would leave that up to me. And then I ended up well…it ends up you feel quite defeated sometimes with the, you know, the lack of accessible accommodation and, you know, the lack of people's awareness, their attitudes when you ring up and ask questions…

Liz

And when they say: Um is it accessible? Yeah, there's only one step…

Leanne

Yeah.

Liz

And we've got an ambulant toilet, not a accessible toilet.

Leanne

Yeah, yeah. And it's still happening, but we're good at it now, aren't we? We're pretty polished.

Liz

Well, you’re doing reviews, so I love that. I love that you're reviewing accommodation.

Gary

And we also have a kind of no steps back attitude towards it when we get told we can’t put bed risers under beds, for example, for a variety of reasons, we have a specific sequence of actions that we take to demonstrate to them that they can and that they will.

Liz

So, tell me what a bed riser is? I'm sorry, I don't know.

Leanne

No, and a lot of people don't. So, I was thinking I might even do a specific like, a blog about that…and bed rises are exactly that…they raise furniture so…

Liz

Like Jason Recliners?

Leanne

No. They're actually just little plastic cones sort of thing those sort of upside-down cones and you sit your bed legs or your chair legs inside these and that raises them, you know, like however, two inches, three inches, whatever you need and…

Liz

Which means when you're transferring from a chair onto the bed. It's at the right height for your hips.

Leanne

Well, it's for people who self-transfer. If they need to have a bit higher. Generally, though they need it a bit lower. But it's also for people like me who need a hoist to do the transfers, and the hoist feet have to go in under the bed and the various hoists that… our latest hoist now, which will be the only one I'll have for the rest of my life, is quite a super duper one. And we need a 14-centimetre clearance comfortably. So, I think we can just do 12 centimetres maybe, but 14 centimetres. And that's quite difficult for hotels to get around…

Liz

Accommodate…

Gary

Some hotels. So, some are very good, and some are very poor. And the good ones ask what you need and then accommodate it.

You know, we went to a fabulous hotel in Hobart. We'd planned this holiday for three years, COVID knocked that back a few times, and they accommodated by simply stacking up blocks of wood under the bed. Perfectly safe, perfectly well structured. They just got it done. And other leading hotel chains have come at us with everything from: we would suffer from liability issues to it's too expensive to buy those things…

Leanne

We've never been asked about this before…

Gary

Never been asked about this before. So now we have a sequence of approach, educating them as to why they don’t get asked, partly because their website, how they promote and how they respond, partly because of their legal requirements, which I have an educational process that I undertake with them.

Liz

An educational process or do you mean…a dialogue…

(laughter)

Gary

They learn from it.

Leanne

They get schooled. They get Gaz schooled.

Liz

Well, I always think…Stella Young was a friend of mine and I remember her saying to me how one of the best things that ever happened to her. She went to a bar in Austin, Texas, and she was having a great time. She's in the pub with…she's with her support worker. And she went to the dunny and she came back, and she said to the guy at the bar: This pub is great. If that door opened the other way, I could just get in and out on my own without someone. And she said they got another drink and a guy walked past with a drill. Just undrilled everything turned it around…

(laughter)

Leanne

How lovely is that?!

Liz

And he was an Australian guy. So, he obviously knows that we've got massive standards and all that sort of stuff....but in Austin, Texas, you know, just walked past with a drill, you know fine…

(laughter)

Liz

You know, it's so easy to accommodate sometimes without this kind of blindingly damming bullshit around…yeah, like we can’t do this…

Leanne

It's just a brick wall straight away…

Liz

They don’t want us, at times. They just don't want us at times because it would, you know, muck up their routine.

Leanne

Yes. Yep. Yep. That's right. That’s what you feel. And I, I start now, I'm getting stronger... Well, I think I've always been reasonably good, so we've kind of got a routine now. I do the first couple of phone calls and the emails back and forth, depending, you know, try and give them, you know, pictorial information and the links to the website, like for bed rises, for instance, bedrises.com.au, and they're all you know, to Australian standards and that sort of thing…all the, all the bed risers they have…and then if I'm still getting crickets or you know, getting hit over the head with a baton or whatever, then then I send it off to Gary - which kind of annoys me. I don't love to do that - I'd love to…well I do solve them on my own…

Liz

Sometimes it’s just exhausting being your own advocate.

Leanne

It's tiring. It is because it's tiring. It actually is tiring having a physical disability.

Liz

Exactly.

Leanne

It's fatiguing and tiring just generally, which I've only just started kind of admitting to myself in the last six months.

Liz

But being a duo, you know like a tap in tap out, kind of couple, I think is it's very strengthening.

Leanne

It is.

Liz

But it's not saintly.

(laughter)

Gary

But we’re lucky as well. We're lucky that we've got… so I've got a degree in law, and I've got, and I've worked in in very senior roles in corporate positions for many years.

So, these things for me are not difficult. And when I talk to them, it's not: You should do this, because. I tell them exactly what reasons exist and what actions we're going to take if they don't. If you don't have the capacity to do that, if you don't have the time or the energy or the…or that the training or anything, then, then where are you?

Liz

So, the thing about having a great partner and, you know, good family and education and all of that stuff behind you, it's really different to a lot of other people who don't have the ability to do that sort of private advocacy and stuff. Some people just can't have, have no one.

Leanne

Yes. And that's why I think WDV’s mentoring program is fantastic., I know one lady I was talking to…working with, she hadn't had a holiday for 15 years or more and, you know, and just the…my connections, you know, with accessible accommodation the website and with Kerry Williams and, and my knowledge myself of you know of being able to, to go out was you know has been really helpful for her and I… that's something that's crossed my mind so many times you know that I've thought about so many times just how lucky like I, you know, disability aside, I'm genuinely recognise and appreciate my privilege, our privilege, in the way we live our lives.

And there must be some way, like the mentoring program for a start that you're talking about, where people can feel confident and comfortable and you know, maybe be able to tap in and sort of say, we tried to go to this restaurant, we still want to go. But, you know, I'm too scared to ask them for, you know, if they've got an accessible toilet or something and then have sort of like a little support, you know, a body that can just ring up on their behalf or something like that, I don't know.

Liz

Yeah, there needs to be something. I mean, yeah, something, something on a practical, logistical level where it's not just up to us women with disability having to manage it all.

It should be something that becomes a very mainstream business-like proposition that all restaurants, cafes, you know, accommodation places go, oh yeah, well we can actually, you know, I mean they, they can milk the disability dollar if they want to.

Leanne

Well, they should. That's the silly thing, they are missing out…

Liz

People want to go places. They want to go on holidays.

Leanne

And the disability dollar is exponential. It's, you know, it's all their family, their friends, for instance.

Gary

Talk about what you said to that hotel about why they don't get asked for…

Leanne

Yes. One of her this was in the last sort of…boxing ring, recently, a boxing ring round we've had, which was pretty…it's been a great outcome.

But the conversation I had with her; she clearly didn't want to add bed rises. Everything else seems like it would really work for us. Their room and it's a modern new hotel and all that sort of thing.

She clearly didn't want to. And, and one of her reasons was, which we've heard before, is: We've never been asked that before. I said, I'll tell you why. It's because people, so many of people with disability feel like they're being a burden. They feel like they're….they feel like they're intruding on a space that wasn't built for them. It's not created for them. And also…and the reasons for that is because there's no mention on your website whatsoever of any accessibility at all. And there's also there's no you know, there's no discussion, there's no training with your staff, there's no discussion…there’s not even photos, which is very common, unfortunately, for accommodation providers, but even restaurants.

We need photos. We need to see what the place looks like and, you know, measurements of doorways and that sort of thing. So, I said to her, there are the reasons why you know, and there are two really big reasons and they're easy to overcome. They’re so easy if they, you know, if providers wanted to do it.

(Music playing)

Liz

To find out more about Women with Disabilities Victoria go to: wdv.org.au

Leanne

One example of that, of how much money people miss out on is…last year for my wonderful mother in law's 80th birthday, we…the family Gary sisters…so both our families with all our adult children and things, wanted to organise a holiday house as you know, not uncommon, you know around regional Victoria somewhere…

Liz

Yeah.

Leanne

And I could not find one for love nor money, even through accessible accommodation at the times we wanted as well. Whereas…you know, so, your choice is limited…you know, just being disabled, your choice is limited to things and that's the really annoying thing, just that choice kind of being taken away. But so, in the end we, we found - can I say the name of the place?

Liz

Yeah, yeah.

Leanne

RACV Healesville were fantastic, like they were great. It obviously cost us a little more, but it was actually ended up being a great weekend and probably even better that we had our own sort of separate rooms and that sort of thing.

But they accommodated so beautifully, and they got all our money and, you know, these sort of, you know, big houses that won't have an accessible bathroom or wider doorways missed out. And that's where you do feel like a burden because I felt bad that everyone just wanted to…

Liz

Be together…

Leanne

Yeah, but the all the stress… our daughter helped us. Gary was doing it too, to try to find the right place.

So, all that kind of stress and tension, you know, all the unnecessary angst, you know, when you’re trying to look forward to a holiday which incidentally, when you're… when you've got a disability, your holiday, the holidays are always never the same…

Liz

Spontaneous.

Leanne

They’re never as spontaneous, but they’re never even as relaxing.

Well not for us anymore as they used to be anymore…. I mean, you don't just pack your bags and run off. It's, it's yeah, it's worse than having, like, three toddlers. I think with all the stuff we have to pack, but…

Liz

But I'm going to finish off. You do your like, you do reviews around accommodation. You've got a great blog which I think you should plug. You should…

Leanne

Thank you. I should get on top of it again, too.

Liz

Yeah. So, tell us the name of it.

Leanne

leanneswheellife.com

Liz

Yeah. And I think that's really important. But the other thing too is I think there should be some sort of collaborative organisation between us all around how we're going to combat this kind of discrimination that happens. And yes, we're weary. I am eye fatigued. You're physically fatigued. You know, things happen, but together, collectively we can do stuff. And our friends and allies, partners, husbands, wives, friends, you know, whatever can be part of this.

I just think, you know, everything about disability seems a deficit rather than a benefit or an investment.

Leanne and Gary

Mmmm.

Leanne

Yep. Yep.

Liz

I'm smart. You're smart. Just because I can't see doesn't mean I can't do.

Leanne

Yes, that's a really good…that's a really good way of saying it.

Liz

Do you know what I mean?

Liz

It’s an investment.

Leanne

Yes.

Liz

You know, we are valuable, valuable investment properties.

Leanne

Yes. Yeah, that's right. Exactly. And just even to know that there's that level of… you know…that that amount of people in our population that that aren't, you know, that can't live in the way…in the normal you know, in, in the normative society.

Liz

That’s right, yeah.

Leanne

The way it stands shows just how important it is. Full stop.

Like, get rid of the money altogether and just realise that we we're a significant part of society.

We all want to kind of contribute in our way, I think. Yeah. And just be functioning. Yeah.

(Music playing)

Liz

You can check out Leanne’s blog at: leanneswheellife.com