



## Stage 2 Reforms of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002



# Waiting areas and seating: Appropriate seats on booked services

The requirements for booking accessible seats in the Transport Standards are no longer fit-for-purpose as they do not account for modern booking systems or adequately consider requirements to book seats appropriate for the diverse and nuanced needs of people with disability. There is an opportunity to update the accessibility requirements for booking appropriate seats to accommodate contemporary and future booking technology.

## Reform options

### Maintain current requirements in the Transport Standards

Transport Standards Section 28.4 *Accessible seats to be available for passengers with disabilities*, would remain unchanged and no additional guidance would be issued.

### Non-regulatory option

Guidance would be updated to include advice on booking seats appropriate to a passenger's needs and to specify the nature of appropriate versus accessible seats and is pertinent to booked services on aircraft, coaches, ferries, dial-a-ride services and trains, including:

- People with disability should be able to book seats that are located in parts of a conveyance that are appropriate for their travelling needs
- Booking policies should be able to accommodate the varying seating needs of people with disability
- Appropriate seats definition
- Passenger responsibilities, including identifying seating needs at the time of booking if possible
- Passengers with disability should be able to request appropriate seating in any class of service offered by the operator

### Regulatory option

Transport Standards section 28.4 would be amended to include requirement for booking seats appropriate to a passenger's needs and specify the nature of appropriate versus accessible seating for people with disability, including the following requirements (including any requirements retained or amended from the status quo):

- Passengers with disabilities must be able to book seats that are located in parts of the conveyance that are appropriate for their travelling needs.
- Operators and providers must appropriately accommodate passengers based on their needs unless all seats on the service are already booked.
- If different classes of travel are provided by a service, seats appropriate to the travelling needs of people with disability must be available in each class.

These requirements would apply to aircraft, coaches, ferries, dial-a-ride services and trains.

The Whole Journey Guide and / or the Transport Standards Guidelines would be updated to reflect the changes to the Transport Standards.

## Case study

Vlad occasionally catches a long-distance train to visit family a few hours away from home. He has a medical condition meaning he often has to use the bathroom without much warning. When travelling by train, Vlad likes to sit close to the bathroom for comfort and peace of mind. His next trip is the same weekend as a popular food festival, so he knows the train will be busier than usual.

### Vlad's experience today

Vlad books his train ticket online a few weeks before his trip. He likes to sit in the back row so he's close to the toilet, however he notices that there is no allocated seating. Vlad calls the train operator and asks if he can reserve a seat that suit his needs. The call centre operator apologises and explains that the only allocated seating is in first class, which is twice the price. Vlad decides to go ahead with his trip and plans to arrive at the train station 90 minutes early, which is stressful and inconvenient.

### Vlad's experience under the proposed reforms

Vlad goes online to make a booking for his next train trip in a few weeks' time. He likes to sit in the back row so he's close to the toilet, and notices a new feature on the website that allows passengers to reserve seats. Vlad is relieved he can choose his seat as he knows how busy the train can get. He selects an aisle seat right beside the bathroom for no extra cost. Because he no longer has to arrive so early, Vlad also chooses an earlier service so he can spend more time with his family.

## Have your say

Public consultation on the Stage 2 reform of the Transport Standards will open from 15 March to 9 August 2022.

For further information:

- **Website:** [www.infrastructure.gov.au](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au)
- **Call:** 1800 621 372
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