



Frequently asked questions—Reform of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002

October 2026

What are the Transport Standards?

The Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards) are made by the Attorney-General under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (the DDA). The Transport Standards outline the responsibilities operators and providers of public transport services have under the DDA and help to remove discrimination against people with disability when using public transport. The Transport Standards set minimum accessibility requirements for public transport services, such as trains, trams, buses and coaches, ferries, taxis and aircraft. They also apply to premises and infrastructure, such as bus stops, train stations, tram and light rail stops, ferry terminals and airports.

Why did we reform the Transport Standards?

The Transport Standards were introduced in 2002 to provide certainty to operators and providers of public transport services about their responsibilities under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*. There have been significant changes in public transport technology and usage since the Transport Standards came into effect over twenty years ago, including improved safety practices, electronic ticketing, and greater availability of passenger information delivered online and in real-time. As such, there was a need to modernise the Transport Standards to meet Australians' current and future needs.

How were the reforms developed?

In 2019, the Australian Government commenced the reform process to modernise the Transport Standards and to identify accessibility barriers and develop reform options. The reforms were developed in consultation with people with disability, operators and providers of public transport, state, territory and local governments. In 2024, the government announced the list of reforms to the Transport Standards. These reforms are included in the amended Transport Standards, which took effect on 13 October 2026.

What type of changes have been made?

There are a broad range of changes. For example, there are:

- new requirements for training to ensure staff understand their obligations and can support people with disability
- new requirements to make sure information is clear and is provided in different ways to support people with different types of disabilities
- new and improved design requirements for public transport conveyances, buildings and infrastructure so they are safe and easy to use.

The reforms also improve alignment with the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 and contemporary Australian Standards references.

When will the changes happen?

Each new requirement has a unique implementation timeframe depending on size and planning processes, meaning some changes can happen quickly and other changes will need more time. For example, operators and providers are required to make some changes to their conveyances, buildings and infrastructure within 5 or 10-year timeframes. For other requirements, changes will not become available until operators and providers purchase new assets or substantially upgrade their existing assets.

What happens to existing requirements and compliance obligations?

Some of the pre-existing requirements in the Transport Standards have been retained, and some have been updated. There are no changes to the compliance dates that were previously set out in Schedule 1 of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002. The reforms do not provide existing assets with any additional time to comply with the requirements of the Transport Standards that existed before the amendments were made.

Why does the updated Transport Standards still have '2002' in its title?

Although the Transport Standards have been updated, the full title of the instrument is still the 'Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002'. This is because the Transport Standards were originally made in 2002, and the 2026 amendments update the existing Transport Standards, rather than replace them with a new instrument. This is standard practice for updates to legislative instruments.

What is the difference between the Transport Standards and the Transport Standards Guidelines?

The Transport Standards are a legislative instrument made under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. The Transport Standards provide requirements for operators and providers to make their services accessible and remove discrimination against people with disability. Operators and providers must comply with the Transport Standards. The Transport Standards are supported by the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport Guidelines 2026 (Guidelines). The Guidelines provide additional information to assist operators and providers to understand and implement their obligations under the Transport Standards.

Are these changes linked to ongoing work to develop new aviation-specific disability standards?

The amendments to the Transport Standards and the development of new aviation-specific disability standards are separate processes but will work together to improve accessibility for people with disability. The amendments to the Transport Standards will improve accessibility across all forms of public transport, including air travel. For example, airlines and airports will need to provide disability awareness training for staff and make information available in accessible formats. The aviation-specific disability standards are being developed through a separate co-design process focused on air travel. Once finalised, they will become part of the Transport Standards as additional requirements for airlines and airports. These requirements will add to the existing Transport Standards, not replace them. The department will publish guidance material to help airlines and airports understand and meet their accessibility obligations.