

# Reform of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 – Summary of decision

On 20 March 2024, the Australian Government announced that it had decided to reform the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards). This document provides an overview of the reform process and a summary of the reforms.

## Context

One in six people aged 15 years and over with disability have difficulty using public transport. Access to public transport enables Australians to work or study, visit family and friends, and access critical services such as healthcare. Without equitable access to public transport, discrimination can arise.

In Australia, public transport operators and providers are required to make their services accessible for people with disability. This is managed through the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards). The Transport Standards are developed under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA).

In 2019, state, territory and the Commonwealth infrastructure and transport ministers agreed to reform the Transport Standards to make sure they are efficient, effective, fit-for-purpose and meet the needs of Australian society.

## Process

The reform process has been undertaken in two stages. Stage 1 identified 16 areas of reform, and public consultations were held in early-2021. Feedback from this consultation was used to inform the Stage 1 Decision Regulation Impact Statement (RIS), which was considered by ministers in February 2022. Stage 2 considered 60 reform areas and implementation arrangements for the full package of reforms (Stage 1 and 2). Public consultations were held in mid-2022. Feedback from this consultation was used to inform the Stage 2 Decision RIS, which was considered by ministers in June 2023. Further information is available on the department's website:

[www.infrastructure.gov.au/transport-standards-reform](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/transport-standards-reform).

## Reform options

For each reform area, three policy options were proposed:

- **Regulatory** – Legislative changes made to the Transport Standards to include new requirements.
- **Non-regulatory** – The provision of guidance material to support the Transport Standards.
- **Status quo** – No changes to the Transport Standards or guidance material.

Following analysis of all available evidence, including public submissions and cost-benefit analysis data, one policy option has been chosen for each reform area. The Stage 1 and Stage 2 Decision RISs provide the rationale for the selected options, balancing the regulatory impacts of new or updated requirements against the overarching goal of the DDA and the Transport Standards.

In total, there are 76 reforms, which include regulatory reforms that apply to new and substantially upgraded assets (30 reforms), regulatory reforms that apply to existing assets (19 reforms),

regulatory reforms that apply on commencement (4 reforms), and changes to guidance that supports the Transport Standards (16 reforms). In some cases, further work is required to determine the scale and scope of the problem or if there are more appropriate solutions to address the problem (7 reforms). Additional research and targeted consultation with relevant stakeholders will be undertaken by the Australian Government to resolve these issues.

## Implementation

Three options were considered for the implementation of regulatory reforms:

- **New or substantially upgraded assets** – new requirements would apply to all new assets and will only apply to assets that are currently in service, if the asset is substantially upgraded. Based on the outcomes of consultation, this approach has been selected where implementation of the new requirements would be complex, costly or would see an asset out of action for an extended period.
- **Existing assets with a compliance schedule** – new requirements would apply to all new assets and all assets that are currently in service, in accordance with with determined timeframes. Based on the outcomes of consultation, this approach has been selected where implementation of the new requirements will incur a low to modest cost and can occur without significant disruption to services.
- **On commencement** – new requirements would apply from the date the amendments to the Transport Standards come into force. Based on the outcomes of consultation, this implementation approach has been selected where a regulatory option relates to definitional or deregulatory changes, which would benefit the community and industry immediately.

Non-regulatory reforms will be implemented through updates to the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport Guidelines and the Whole Journey Guide.

The Australian, state and territory governments are working together to explore the feasibility of developing implementation plans for the 19 reforms that apply to existing assets. If agreed, these plans would be available as an alternative implementation option to set timeframes.

## Next steps

The Transport Standards will be updated to reflect the reforms where a legislative change has been agreed. These will become the new requirements that public transport operators and providers must meet. Once drafted, the updated legislation will be tabled in the Australian Parliament. The updated Transport Standards will come into force following tabling in Parliament. In addition to the changes to the Transport Standards, there have been agreed changes to the guidance material that support the Transport Standards. Updates to this supporting material will occur alongside legislative changes. Further information will be provided prior to the updated Transport Standards coming into effect, including updates on the progress of further work agreed through the reform process.

You can keep up to date by visiting our website, emailing us at [DisabilityTransport@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:DisabilityTransport@infrastructure.gov.au) or calling **1800 621 372**.

## Summary of reforms

A summary of reform areas, agreed options and implementation arrangements is provided below. For further information, see the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Decision RISs: [www.infrastructure.gov.au/transport-standards-reform](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/transport-standards-reform).

### Stage 1 reform areas

#	Reform Area	Description	Agreed option	Implementation approach
1	Staff training and communication	Requirements to conduct disability awareness training to meet the specific roles and responsibilities of staff.	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe
2	Mobility aid safety	Guidance for mobility aid designers to improve the safety of mobility aids on conveyances.	Non-regulatory	The Whole Journey Guide
3	Priority seating	Requirements regarding the quantity, location and identification of priority seats.	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe
4	Allocated spaces	Requirements regarding the dimensions, location and usage of allocated spaces, including related access paths and manoeuvring areas in public transport vehicles.	Regulatory, sub-option 3	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
5	Digital information screens	Requirements regarding the location, luminance contrast and polarization requirements for digital screens.	Regulatory	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
6	Lifts	Stage 1, reform area 6 Lifts is superseded by Stage 2, reform areas 34 and 18.	N/A – covered in Stage 2	N/A
7	Website accessibility	Setting accessibility (WCAG) requirements for websites	Regulatory, sub-option 3	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets

#	Reform Area	Description	Agreed option	Implementation approach
8	Communication during service disruption	Requirements to communicate the details of the disruption and alternate travel options in a variety of formats.	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe
9	Gangways	Requiring regarding maximum gradients to suit tidal environments.	Regulatory	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
10	Assistance animal toileting facilities	Guidance on the location, design and information provision for assistance animal toileting facilities.	Non-regulatory	The Whole Journey Guide
11	Emergency egress	Guidance on emergency egress related to public transport infrastructure.	Non-regulatory	The Whole Journey Guide
12	Fit for purpose accessways	Guidance on ensuring accessways are fit for purpose including (but not limited to) universal design principles, continuous accessibility and anticipating future demand.	Non-regulatory	The Whole Journey Guide
13	Wayfinding	Requirements regarding luminance contrast of objects, tactical ground surface indicator usage and braille and tactile sign installation.	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 10 year set timeframe
14	Tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs)	Design requirements for directional tactile ground surface indicators.	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 10 year set timeframe
15	Passenger loading zones	Requirements for the first and last vehicle space to be accessible in a passenger loading zone in a public transport site.	Regulatory, sub-option 2	Existing and new assets – 10 year set timeframe
16	Provision of information in multiple formats	Require that online information is not the sole means of providing information.	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe
17	Australian Standards and definitional amendments	The Transport Standards will be updated to reference all 32 relevant Australian Standards.	Regulatory	Other (refer to implementation chapter in Decision RIS).

## Stage 2 reform areas

#	Reform Area	Description	Agreed option	Implementation approach
1	Reporting	Guidance to encourage operators and providers to develop and publish plans on how they are meeting, and progressing towards compliance with the Transport Standards. A working group will be established to develop the reporting framework.	Non-regulatory	Standalone guidance
2	Equivalent Access	A web-based centralised repository of equivalent access solutions (i.e. examples).	Non-regulatory	Standalone guidance
3	Rideshare	A working group will be established to undertake a holistic review of the point-to-point transport, including rideshare, industry to determine the scope of the problem.	Status quo	N/A
4	Dedicated school buses	Further work to be undertaken to understand the scale of the problem.	Status quo	N/A
5	Better communication of accessibility features	Requirements to define accessibility terminology used by the operator and communicate accessibility features of public transport premises and vehicles.	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe
6	Timely provision of information	Requirements that information in infrequently requested formats (e.g. large print) must be provided in a timely manner if not immediately available.	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe
7	Real time communication	Guidance to encourage operators and providers of public transport to improve real time communication with passengers.	Non-regulatory	The Whole Journey Guide

#	Reform Area	Description	Agreed option	Implementation approach
8	Passenger location during journey	Requirement that passengers are informed of where they are during a journey.	Regulatory, sub-option 1	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
9	Hearing augmentation on conveyances	A working group will be established to consider the feasibility of installing hearing augmentation systems in public transport operating environments and the viability of emerging digital solutions.	Status quo	N/A
10	Hearing augmentation: Infrastructure on premises	A working group will be established to consider the feasibility of installing hearing augmentation systems in public transport operating environments and the viability of emerging digital solutions.	Status quo	N/A
11	Print size and format	Requirements regarding print size, format and contrast for documents.	Regulatory	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
12	International Symbol for Access and Deafness	Size requirements for the international symbol for accessibility and deafness on signs.	Regulatory sub-option 2	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
13	Letter heights and luminance contrast of signs	Size requirements for the international symbol for accessibility and deafness on signs.	Regulatory option 2, sub-option 2	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
14	Location of signs	Requirements for sign location.	Regulatory, sub-option 2	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
15	Braille embossed (printed) specifications	Requirements for the standard of braille to be used on printed formats. A working group will be established to determine final technical specifications.	Regulatory in-principle	Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe

#	Reform Area	Description	Agreed option	Implementation approach
16	Braille and tactile lettering for signage	Requirements for braille and tactile sign design. A working group will be established to determine final technical specifications.	Regulatory in-principle	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
17	Lifts - Braille and tactile lettering for signage	Requirements for lift landings to have braille and tactile signs identifying the platform landing.	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe
18	Lifts- Audible wayfinding	Requirements that lift cars must deliver audible wayfinding announcements.	Regulatory, option 2	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
19	Lifts- Emergency communication systems in lift cars	Requirements for hearing and speech impaired passengers to be able to communicate from a lift in an emergency.	Regulatory	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
20	Lifts - Reference for lift car communication and information system	Guidance on best practice accessible lift car communication and information systems.	Non-regulatory	The Whole Journey Guide
21	Information and communication technologies (ICT) procurement	Accessibility requirements for ICT procurement.	Regulatory, option 1	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
22	Mobile web systems	Require that all information provided by an operator or provider must meet minimum technical (WCAG) specifications.	Regulatory, option 1	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
23	Accessible fare system elements	Accessibility requirements for the use of fare system elements (e.g. ticketing machines).	Regulatory option 2, sub-option 2	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
24	Doors on access paths	Requirements that unisex accessible toilet doors on trains must be power assisted.	Regulatory, option 2	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
25	Continuous access on access paths	Requirements that access paths must allow for continuous access.	Regulatory	On commencement

#	Reform Area	Description	Agreed option	Implementation approach
26	Flange gaps within access paths	Guidance to minimise the flange gap and encourage good design and safe traversing of flange gaps.	Non-regulatory	The Whole Journey Guide
27	Resting points	Requirements for resting points on long access paths.	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe
28	Requirements for handrails in overbridges and subways	Requirements that bridges and subways must have continuous handrails except in specified situations.	Regulatory	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
29	Location of fare system elements	Accessibility requirements for the location of fare system elements (eg ticket machines).	Regulatory	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
30	Allocated spaces and priority seating in waiting areas	Requirements for the number of allocated spaces and priority seats in waiting areas	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe
31	Accessible toilets with equal proportion of left- and right-hand configurations	Requirements that new trains must have accessible toilets with equal proportion of right and left-hand configurations (this includes support rail layout, door handles)	Regulatory	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
32	Emergency call buttons in accessible toilets	Guidance on the provision of emergency call buttons in accessible toilets.	Non-regulatory	The Whole Journey Guide
33	Ambulant toilets	Guidance on the installation of ambulant toilets, including design considerations.	Non-regulatory	The Whole Journey Guide
34	Lift specifications and enhancements	Updating the Australian Standards reference to the current version.	Regulatory	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
35	Specifications for escalators and inclined travellers	Requirements regarding minimum width specifications for escalators and moving walk ways	Regulatory	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets



#	Reform Area	Description	Agreed option	Implementation approach
		and requirements that they are not the sole means of access for passengers.		
36	Poles, objects and luminance contrast	Requirements that poles and other objects must not project onto access paths and must meet minimum luminance contrast specifications.	Regulatory option 1, sub-option 1	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
37	Lighting	Requirements that lighting at public transport facilities must be provided at a level that ensures safety and accessibility.	Regulatory, option 1	On commencement
38	Signals and processes for requesting boarding devices	Requirements for signals and processes for requesting boarding assistance on public transport vehicles.	Regulatory, option 2	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
39	Notification by passenger of need for boarding device	Guidance to advise operators and providers on how to accommodate for passengers who notify the need for boarding device, noting passengers may communicate the need for boarding assistance in 'real time' for unbooked services.	Non-regulatory sub-option 1	Transport Standards Guidelines
40	Portable boarding ramp edge barriers	Design requirements for portable boarding ramps.	Regulatory option 2	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
41	Boarding ramp and removable gangway definitions	Inclusion of new definitions for boarding ramps and removable gangways (linked to the reform below).	Regulatory	On commencement
42	Removeable gangway design – ferries	Requirements for the design and construction of removable gangways. A working group will be established to determine a revised regulatory option, noting proposed amendments to the National Standard for Commercial Vessels Part C1	Regulatory in-principle	Other (working group)

#	Reform Area	Description	Agreed option	Implementation approach
		(Design and construction – Arrangement, accommodation and personal safety).		
43	Nominated assistance boarding points	Direct and independent boarding must be available at nominated boarding points.	Regulatory option 1, sub-option 5	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
44	Identification of lead stops	Requirements for identifying lead stops at bus stations, bus interchanges and bus zones.	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe
45	Pontoon boarding points on infrastructure	Guidance on ensuring pontoon boarding points have maximum stability and the lowest possible gradients in their operating environment.	Non-regulatory	The Whole Journey Guide
46	Bus, tram and light rail boarding points on infrastructure	Clarifies the requirement for ‘flat and stable’ surfaces at bus, tram and light rail boarding points.	Regulatory option 2	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
47	Hail-and-ride boarding points on infrastructure	Requirements for the boarding points used by operators of hail-and-ride services.	Regulatory	On commencement
48	Accessible taxi ranks	Requirements for the first and last vehicle spaces to be accessible and connected to access paths.	Regulatory sub-option 1	Existing and new assets – 10 year set timeframe
49	Accessible passenger loading zones on-street	Requirements for the first and last vehicle spaces to be accessible and for tactile ground surface indicators and kerb ramps.	Regulatory sub-option 1	Existing and new assets – 10 year set timeframe
50	Accessible parking spaces in infrastructure off-street carparks	Requirements that off-street public parking areas must provide one accessible parking space for every 50 parking spaces where there are more than five parking spaces.	Regulatory sub-option 1	Existing and new assets – 10 year set timeframe
51	Grabrails on access paths	Requirements for the luminance contrast, height and size of grabrails on access paths.	Regulatory	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets

#	Reform Area	Description	Agreed option	Implementation approach
52	Grabrails in allocated spaces	Requirements for the luminance contrast, height and size of grabrails in allocated spaces.	Regulatory	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
53	Mobility aid movement in allocated spaces – passive restraints	Guidance on the containment of mobility aids in allocated spaces for buses, ferries, trams and light rail.	Non-regulatory	The Whole Journey Guide
54	Mobility aid movement in allocated spaces – active restraints	Guidance on the safe use of active restraints and ensuring mobility aids meet safety requirements.	Non-regulatory	The Whole Journey Guide
55	Appropriate seats on booked services	Passengers with disabilities must be able to book seats that are located in parts of a public transport vehicle that are appropriate for their travelling needs.	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe
56	Conveyance dwell times at stops	Guidance that conveyances should not depart from stops until passengers are safely seated, securely located or securely positioned in allocated spaces or have safely alighted.	Non-regulatory	The Whole Journey Guide
57	Stairs on trains	Requirements for the size, luminance contrast, handrails and access paths of stairs on trains.	Regulatory sub-option 2	On-commencement
58	Stairs on ferries	Requirements for the size, luminance contrast, handrails and access paths of stairs on ferries.	Regulatory	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
59	Stairs on buses	Requirements for the size, luminance contrast, handrails and access paths of stairs on buses.	Regulatory	New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets
60	Doorway contrast and height	Luminance contrast requirements for doors on access paths for public transport vehicles excluding coaches.	Regulatory	Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe