



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



# Infrastructure access paths: Stairs on ferries

Currently, there are no specific requirements in the Transport Standards for internal ferry stairs. This poses a safety risk to people with disability as they may not be able to traverse stairs safely. There is an opportunity to update references to Australian Standards for stairs on ferries to provide modality specific requirements that are aligned with industry standards and have appropriate accessibility features.

## Reform options

### Maintain current requirements in the Transport Standards

The Transport Standards would remain unchanged and no requirements concerning stairs on ferries would be added.

### Non-regulatory option

Guidance would be updated to include advice for stairs and handrails on ferries, including:

- Stair design, including risers, nosings and luminance contrast
- Handrail design
- Operators and providers can choose to adopt the following:
  - AS1428.1 (2009) *Design for access and mobility – General requirements for access – new building work*
  - AS1428.1 (2009) *Design for access and mobility – General requirements for access – new building work*
  - NSCV, Part C Design and construction Section 1 Arrangement, accommodation and personal safety (2018) Section 5.13.3.4.

### Regulatory option

The Transport Standards would be amended to include new requirements for ferry stairs and handrails along ferry stairs, including:

- Where stairs and steps are provided, they must have opaque risers and comply with AS1428.1 (2009) Clause 11.1 (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g).
- Stair and steps risers and goings dimensions must comply with:

**Sub-option 1**

NSCV, Part C Design and construction section 1 Arrangement, accommodation and personal safety (2018), section 5.13.3.4.

**Sub-option 2**

National Construction Code, Table D2.13.

**Sub-option 3**

Riser and going dimensions that are safe and fit for purpose.

- The minimum access path width on stairs and steps in the conveyance must be 900 millimeters as per NSCV, *Part C Design and construction Section 1 Arrangement, accommodation and personal safety (2018), Table 19.*
- Stairs and steps must not intrude into access paths.
- TGSIs are not required at ferry stairs and steps.

The Transport Standards would include the following new requirements for handrails:

- Handrails must comply with the NSCV *Part C Design and construction Section 1 Arrangement, accommodation and personal safety (2018) Clause 5.12.*
- A handrail on steps and stairs need not extend beyond the top or bottom of the stairs or steps.
- If the handrail is interrupted or abruptly terminated, a domed warning indicator with a height of between 4–5 millimeters and a diameter of between 10–12 millimeters must be provided on the top of the handrail 150 millimeters from the end of the handrail.
- Handrails must have at least 30% luminance contrast with any background wall or surface adjacent to the handrail, within a distance of 2000 millimeters from the handrail.
- Handrail profile must be as per AS1428.1 (2009) *Clause 12 (b).*

These requirements would apply to ferries.

The Transport Standards Guidelines would be updated to reflect new requirements and include specific guidance for ferries.

## Case study

Declan likes to catch the ferry across the bay to go to the botanic gardens. Declan has a cognitive disability and medical condition that affects his balance. Declan sometimes travels with his friend Nancy and he likes to sit on the upper deck to see the view of the bay.

### Declan's experience today

Declan and Nancy board the ferry. Declan would like to show Nancy the view from the upper deck so they approach the stairs. The stairs have clear risers and are positioned in front of a large window looking out on the bay. The light coming through the window behind the stairs makes it difficult for Declan to locate the first few steps, which are high and shallow. The light from the window casts shadows and as the ferry moves up and down, the shadows move, making it seem to Declan like the stairs are moving. Declan starts to feel a bit dizzy and isn't confident he can make it up the stairs without hurting himself. Declan apologises to Nancy and suggests she go upstairs by herself. Nancy goes upstairs alone while Declan waits downstairs frustrated and disappointed.

### Declan's experience under proposed reforms

Declan and Nancy board the ferry. Declan would like to show Nancy the view from the upper deck, so they approach the stairs. The stairs are of a familiar height and are a comfortable depth. The ferry's

movements start to make Declan feel nauseous and dizzy so he reaches for the handrail to steady himself. The handrail contrasts the dark wall so Declan is able to confidently hold on and make his way up the stairs. Declan and Nancy are able to enjoy the view on the upper deck.

## 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:** <https://www.infrastructure.gov.au>
- **Call:** 1800 621 372
- **Email:** [DisabilityTransport@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:DisabilityTransport@infrastructure.gov.au)
- **Survey:** <https://edm.infrastructure.gov.au/survey.php?sid=28721&name=stairs-on-ferries>