



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts

Statement on the Aviation Accessibility Co-design Workshops

Aviation Accessibility Co-design Partners

In its 2024 Aviation White Paper, the Australian Government committed to improving the accessibility of air travel. It agreed to develop new aviation disability standards – co-designed with people with disability – to set out the obligations of the aviation industry to support people with disability throughout their aviation journey.

As part of work to develop the new aviation disability standards, the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications, Sport and the Arts has partnered with the Australian Federation of Disability Organisations, People with Disability Australia and the Justice and Equity Centre (the ‘co-design partners’) to convene three workshops with people with disability during July and August 2025. The workshops identified a wide range of possible solutions to the barriers people with disability often face when travelling by air.

The solutions identified at the co-design workshops will help shape the new requirements and make air travel safer and more dignified for all passengers.

The co-design workshops involved 27 people with a broad range of lived experience of disability and air travel for three full day meetings, facilitated by people with disability. Two workshops were held online. The third workshop was held online and in person at Sydney Airport and provided an opportunity for participants from across the country to come together for the discussion.

Participants also heard from the Hon Catherine King MP, Minister for Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government, and Senator the Hon Jenny McAllister, Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Both ministers provided their support for the co-design process.

Each of the three workshops considered a segment of the aviation passenger journey, namely planning and booking a flight, moving through the airport, and onboard the plane. Workshop participants drew on their lived experience and expertise to identify potential solutions to be considered for the new standards.

Airlines, airports and relevant government agencies also provided input to the workshops during dedicated technical discussions.

Principles to guide a more accessible aviation sector

Solutions put forward at the workshops covered a wide range of issues, insights and proposed ways to remove the barriers and discriminatory practices and procedures regularly encountered by people with disability during air travel.

Drawing on these solutions, four guiding principles to inform more accessible practices across the aviation sector have been identified by the department and its co-design partners:

Include people with disability directly in the design of any policy, process or infrastructure that impacts their air travel experience. This could be through the establishment of disability advisory or co-design groups to provide lived expertise in the design of services and facilities for people with disability, and ensures that the lived experience of people with disability is a central consideration.

Be consistent. People with disability frequently experience a lack of consistency in how airline and airport policies and procedures are implemented. Passengers are entitled to know what services and requirements they can expect at each airport and from each airline, every time they travel. This includes clear responsibility for who is providing that support at all points of a passenger's journey. Workshop participants noted that improved consistency is needed not only by each airline and airport but also across the aviation industry as a whole.

Staff training is critical. Workshop participants advised that their negative experiences of air travel are frequently due to policies and procedures being poorly implemented and communicated by airline and airport staff, both direct employees or contractors. Participants agreed that regular and high-quality training in disability awareness and consistent service delivery – designed and delivered by people with disability – should be mandatory for all aviation staff. This includes training for passenger screening personnel and other contractors. This training will support airlines and airports to create a culture of accessibility and an aviation industry that affirms the rights of passengers with disability.

Be transparent. Policies, procedures and other information that impact a passenger's air travel journey need to be transparent, easily available to all passengers, and provided in a range of accessible formats. This includes clear information on support available for passengers who require assistance, how passengers can expect this service to be delivered, and the entity responsible. Passengers also want clearer information in order to plan their journey. Improved transparency will assist accountability and consistency in service provision, and in providing a safe and dignified aviation journey for passengers with disability.

More detailed summaries of the ideas put forward at each of the co-design workshops will be made available at infrastructure.gov.au/aviation-accessibility.

Next steps

The department and its co-design partners thank all participants for the time and expertise they provided at the co-design workshops.

The detailed ideas that came out of the workshops will be used to develop options for the new standards. These options will be published in a consultation paper later in 2025 for public and industry comment.

The department and its co-design partners welcome continued input to the development of the aviation disability standards. Updates on the co-design work and how to contribute are available at infrastructure.gov.au/aviation-accessibility.

[September 2025]