

To whom it may concern

I am contributing the following response in relation to the **Reform of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport**, which is being undertaken by the Disability and Transport Standards Section, Land Transport Policy Branch, Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Communications. As I wish to ensure that this feedback is reviewed and addressed I have copied two other relevant organisations for further input, PWDA and Every Australian Counts.

I lobbied Brisbane City Council last year about the inaccessible parking on Wickham Tce Springhill where I and everyone who is unwell and with disabilities must go to see their medical specialists. Wickham Tce is a hill with a steep gradient. There is multiple parking for able bodied people who can traverse the incline but for those of us who have a disability, in a wheelchair, using a walker, physically weak, poor mobility, with poor balance, only 3 wheelchair spots exist for us to receive critical life saving specialist care.

This must be clear that due to my disability I can not catch public transport.

As my goal in life is to maintain my dignity and independence like any other Australian my own age, I drive myself to my appointments. Once I get there, there is no accessible parking to any of the buildings in the entire street and if your specialist is way at the top of the hill and you must park in the paid parking either nearby or at the bottom of the hill, unless you experience physical inability, you have no idea how **unachievable** it is to access your appointment **and in time**,

So those who rely on the system the most and who are the most disadvantaged, are given the least amount of access.

I understand there are physical limitations of the environment and by laws and regulations about safety but this means Transport is a massive and radical issue for genuine survival. If you don't have access to quality medical care, you will deteriorate.

The Brisbane City Council's solution was to put one wheelchair park in the street behind Wickham Tce, Astor Tce. Again, when you are physically unable to walk more than a hundred metres, I challenge you to walk up to the top of Wickham Tce from down in Astor Tce within a reasonable 15 to 20 minute time frame that it would take an able bodied person who can park the same distance away.

Hence, for transport purposes, I have had to rely on my 84 year old father to drop me off at the door of the building I need access to, so I can walk the 100 metres and he must wait for me to take me home.

This brings in a massive myriad of other issues: What happens as my father ages further and is unable to take me, my dignity is compromised as I need my father to deliver me to my appointments, I don't have agency or control on my pressured time schedule because I don't know how far I need to park away from the building I require access to and therefore if I need an hour to physically get up the hill, I will miss my appointment. If I need to push my own wheelchair up the gradient of the hill, this is literally not possible to do.

How does one achieve their daily tasks, let alone career or social goals when you are faced with barriers at the basic level?

Always remember, illness, accidents, genetic disposition can and does happen to anyone at any time in their life span. If not today, possibly tomorrow. If not you, possibly your child or parent or sibling or cousin or friend or spouse. How would you want your world or their world to look like if these circumstances arose?

The character of a nation can be judged by the way it treats its most vulnerable.

There is a lot for consideration here. Rights of an individual for equal access to quality medical care through accessible transport issues and for those who can't catch public transport, accessible parking to their destination, elderly carers issues, environmental and legislative restrictions on access for disability challenged individuals and the list goes on.

So a review of Public Transport must also review the situation for this who can't use it. Also this issue applies not just to medical care but to any community access for every life purpose: work, socialisation, study, etc.

I would appreciate acknowledgement of this email and forwarding this information to the relevant body reviewing these issues for the Reform on Disability Standards.

I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this and hope that these issues are not only considered but addressed.

Kind regards
Jane Gauci