

General Questions

Do you live in a metropolitan, regional, rural or remote area?

Metropolitan

How often do you use public transport?

Weekly

What sort of public transport do you typically use in an average month?

Bus, Tram/light rail and Train

Overall how would you rate the overall accessibility of the public transport you use?

Somewhat Accessible

Thinking about the public transport you use, what are some features that you like and make public transport more accessible to you?

The Telebus services around Mooroolbark, Victoria. If these services did not exist, I would not be able to leave my house. I know several other people who use these buses for whom this would also be true.

What could be improved to ensure you have better access to public transport?

Preservation and expansion of the Telebus services. PTV are currently trying to shift the Telebuses to a Flexi-ride service that won't operate on weekends which will be deeply detrimental to the disabled and elderly people who rely on the Telebuses to access their community and maintain their independence.

What do you dislike about the public transport you use?

I dislike how much time I have to spend waiting for the next service, especially my local train service. We've been begging PTV to duplicate the line between Lilydale and Mooroolbark so we can have more frequent services but our requests have been ignored.

What is the greatest barrier for you to use public transport?

Location - there are too many gaps between routes that make it difficult to find housing, employment and healthcare that's accessible to me.

Have you ever had a negative experience while using public transport?

Yes

What occurred during your negative experience? If you have had more than one, please describe one.

I frequently trip and stumble on buses when the drivers take off before I've taken my seat. I always take the seat closest to me but this keeps happening.

What could have been done differently to avoid or resolve the situation?

The drivers could simply wait for their passengers to sit down, something I know is a basic principle of bus safety.

How did your negative experience impact your use of public transport?

It makes me anxious. I hate wondering if today's the day I'm going to fall and seriously injure myself. I hate feeling unable to call the driver out for their dangerous driving because I'm afraid of retaliation. I just want to be able to ride the bus safely.

Which areas sound like they are the most important or need to be changed the most to you?

Staff training and communication, Mobility aid safety, Lifts, Communication during service disruption, Assistance animal toileting facilities, Tactile ground surface indicators.

How could the areas you mentioned be changed to allow you to better access public transport?

All of the things I've listed would just make public transport accessible - which it should have been to begin with. Disabled people rely on public transport to access the community - it needs to work for us.

1. Staff Training and communication

What experiences have you (or people you know) had when interacting with frontline staff including when seeking assistance?

Generally, interacting with the staff is pleasant though sometimes when asking for help I feel like I'm being condescended to, that the solution should be obvious. More patience and understanding would make these interactions easier. Though I do wish that when staff are helping wheelchair users or visually impaired people that they would ask permission before touching people or their mobility aides.

How do public transport staff typically interact with you?

Staff are usually friendly and helpful.

Have interactions with staff affected your ability to access public transport?

Yes

How have interactions with staff affected your ability to access public transport?

I have on occasion been hurried along by impatient drivers when boarding the bus. I have a visual impairment and balance problems that make stepping up onto the bus difficult enough without being criticised by impatient strangers.

How have these interactions affected your sense of safety and confidence to use public transport?

These interactions make me very nervous about taking public transport. On my way to the bus stop I wonder "Am I going to be criticised today? Am I going to be made fun of? Are other passengers going to laugh at me?" It's awful.

3. Priority seating

Can you able to easily identify and get to priority seating on public transport?

Yes

Should priority seats be a different colour? If yes, what colour should they be and why?

Yes, this makes it clearer for people who can't see or read the priority seat signage.

Two priority seats are currently required on each public transport conveyance. Is this number appropriate?

No

What would be a reasonable number of priority seats to be provided?

It changes depending on the form of transport. Trains and trams need at least two by each doorway. Buses need space for wheelchairs and walkers and additional priority seating on the lowest level of the bus for people who can't climb the narrow stairways.

How would an increase in the number of priority seats change your experience using public transport?

It would hopefully mean there are enough priority seats for the people who need them, especially for invisibly disabled people.

Would you want to wear or carry identification so that public transport staff and other passengers could recognise you and allow you to access priority seats?

Yes! I feel so unsafe and uncomfortable asking people to give up their seats because I don't "look disabled". I think encouraging abled people not to sit in priority seating at all would also be helpful, to remove the barrier of needing to ask people to move.

4. Allocated spaces in transit

Can you identify and get to allocated spaces on public transport?

Yes.

Do you find there are objects or people blocking the way to allocated spaces?

There are often people with bikes, prams and suitcases in the way of allocated spaces.

What are the experiences have you had where allocated spaces are occupied by people who do not vacate?

Luckily, I've never experienced this.

How have public transport operators responded to such circumstances?

Operators don't seem to respond in these circumstances - they tend to leave it to the passengers to sort out which puts disabled people in a very vulnerable position.

6. Lifts

What experiences have you had when using lifts at public transport sites?

Using lifts is usually a pleasant experience.

What are the barriers to using lifts?

Able-bodied people using them, leading to long wait times.

What features of lifts do you use and find important?

Handrails are very important for me. I often experience vertigo in lifts so having something to hold onto is a big safety concern for me.

How could lifts around public transport sites be improved?

More regular cleaning would be useful - lifts often smell funny. Larger priority access signs would be helpful too to remind abled people not to take up disabled spaces.

What experiences have you had when a lift is out of service for maintenance or repair? What alternatives were available?

Usually the alternatives are ramps or stairs. Ramps are okay for me, though they're often too steep. Stairs are no good for wheelchair users, obviously, but I can manage stairs slowly if I have to - though I wish people wouldn't obstruct the handrails.

8. Communication during service disruption

Have you ever experienced a planned disruption relating to public transport?

Yes

Was this disruption well communicated?

Yes

How could communication be improved?

When footpaths or crossings are being closed, I wish PTV would include maps showing what's closed off. Not everyone knows where north is in relation to station landmarks.

Have you ever experienced an unplanned disruption relating to public transport?

Yes

Was this disruption well communicated?

No

How could communication be improved?

Literally just tell us what's going on. I once sat on a train for 45 minutes with no communication as to what was happening. Other passengers got very antsy and aggressive which made me feel very unsafe.

What communication methods relating to disruptions on public transport currently work well for you and why?

I rely on the overhead announcements for disruption communications but I often have trouble understanding the garbled transmission.

What communication methods during disruptions do not work well for you and why?

Updates via apps or websites. I don't have reliable internet access on my phone so communicating disruptions more thoroughly this way is useless to me.

How will would communication methods for planned and unplanned disruptions affect your sense of safety and security in using public transport?

Clearer, more accessible communication, especially of unplanned disruptions, would make me feel so much safer. Not knowing what's going on is so anxiety-inducing, especially for people who thrive on routine.

11. Emergency egress

If there is an emergency at a public transport site, what is required to ensure that you can safely evacuate?

Flat surfaces to walk over and clear instructions

Have you ever been in an emergency situation at a public transport site?

No

12. Fit for Purpose Accessways

Do you need to use ramps to access public transport sites?

Yes

Do objects or people typically block access to ramps?

Sometimes people get in the way of handrails - on staircases too - which makes it tricky for me to get through.

What is the impact of a blocked accessway at public transport sites for you?

It means it takes me longer or I have to risk losing my balance while going around the obstruction.

15. Passenger loading areas

What experiences have you had getting into and out of taxis at a taxi rank or passenger loading zone?

I have often been dropped off or picked up at the station in the passenger loading zone.

What are the challenges faced and why do they occur?

There are often large puddles in the zone that can be difficult to navigate around. I also find it a little nerve-wracking getting out of the car if there's a line behind us. I need to take my time but often feel others are impatient with me.

What features do you need to get in and out of a car at a loading zone?

A flat surface, preferably without a kerb.

What do you do when you can't get in or out of a car at a loading zone?

Luckily I've never had this problem.