

Participant Input Summary

Aviation Disability Standards Co-Design

Workshop 2 – On the Plane

July 2025

Main themes — ideas and solutions

Following is a collation of the main themes for ideas and solutions that participants suggested could be addressed by or included in the standards for **being on a plane, including boarding and disembarking**.

- **Mandated and certified training for cabin crew and other staff** who have responsibility for helping people on and off the plane and in flight, including in disability awareness, and how aids and equipment are stored or made available to them on board.
- **Guidance documents for cabin crew about appropriately asking and supporting needs of people with disability on board**, such as opening packaging, providing sensory items, providing information about where food or drink has been placed on the tray table etc.
- **Mandated specific emergency protocols, practices and training** for getting people off a plane in an emergency (including involving people with disability in training), and clear briefings for people with disability and what they should do and expect in an emergency.
 - Policies should include that people with disability can access alternative format emergency information if needed e.g. braille, large print or audio access using their own assistive technology or communication aid. A suggestion was an emergency evacuation simulation for passengers and crew to increase understanding for people with disability around emergency and evacuation procedures and to ensure crew have a clear understanding of how to support passengers with disability during an emergency situation.
- **Regular auditing** of airlines and airports – including regional airports – to show they are complying with safe onboarding and disembarking procedures for people with disability (established as part of the requirements in the standards).
- **Consistent policies on the equipment to be made available by an airline or airport** to support people getting on and off the plane.
 - This includes how this information is shared with travellers.
 - Requirement for airports to invest in the best options (e.g. ramps or Eagle lifts) to onboard and disembark a plane safely, particularly at regional airports or where smaller aircraft without a bridge is required.
 - It may require both rules/standards and a guide for airlines and airports to achieve consistency.

- **Improving the handling of equipment and aides**
 - Specific KPIs for airports and airlines on equipment damage and loss. These could be built into a monitoring and audit process (refer above).
 - Safe storage for aids and equipment on board, placed around priority seating for people with disability. Or where a person doesn't require it during the flight, potential to have safe cabin storage spaces similar to what business passengers are offered. Consideration for mobility aid storage needs to include passenger access to the aid during the flight and in an emergency.
- **Clear and consistent protocols for what assistance cabin crew are able to provide**, including to assist passengers to access stowed items. This includes clearly communicating protocols to passengers in advance of flights, to know what additional support they may need to arrange.
 - A clear and consistent policy, standards and communication about carriage of assistance animals.
 - Noting there is a need for flexibility in where assistance animals might sit in the vicinity of the traveller and special circumstances and needs should be taken into account on request. Specific seating preferences for people travelling with assistance animals can be noted on a traveller profile.
- **Additional allowances for cabin baggage** for people with disability - could be linked to their traveller profile. This is already done for people who have gold and platinum status.
- **Allowing time and space to board safely.**
 - Priority boarding or more boarding options - extended to people with disability, those who are using a wheelchair as well as people who may need extra space or time to enter an aircraft or who have other aides and equipment. This could extend to some form of priority disembarking.
 - Airlines required to have a policy for the onboarding process, including order of boarding or blocking off seats between the aisle and window so other travellers don't have to climb over a person with disability who is unable to move from their seat.
- **Accessible information and communication on the plane and about the aircraft.**
 - Airlines required to provide aircraft information prior in accessible formats, including a clear visual and data on dimensions etc once an air ticket is booked.
 - Requirements for airlines to have an Easy Read instruction and safety information available on/for different types of planes - available on board.
 - Requirements for airlines to have braille and large print instruction and safety information available on/for different types of planes - available on board.
 - App with captioning and Auslan of airline safety instructions that people can be prompted to follow along on their own device or a device provided to them (e.g. iPad).
 - Airlines and airports trained in accessible communication and to be audited against the Communication Access requirements. For example, organisations like Scope Australia provides this training and auditing service.

- **Accessible technology, tools and support on the plane.**
 - Technology, apps and charging facilities to support accessibility on board - e.g. provision of iPads by airlines as accessibility aids; apps available for download from all airlines that have additional plane/aircraft information (including about food), access to cabin announcements, and link to a call button for cabin crew.
 - Have in-flight entertainment as an accessible device, like an iPad (e.g. invert colours, plug-in headphones, and pair with Bluetooth devices). In-flight entertainment to also include audio description and closed caption access is available where possible.
 - App to access sign interpreting services and visual interpreting services for orientation, navigation and service on board e.g. Convo Australia app, Be My Eyes or Aira apps.
 - Access to suitable utensils and tools needed for accessibility for meals, such as standard metal cutlery (which is available in business class).
- **More accessible seating on the plane.**
 - Dedicated seating for people with disability who need extra space and to avoid people climbing over top or interacting with assistance animals etc.
 - Requirements for some seating on a plane to have more accessible technology in the seatback monitors and controls.
- **More boarding and disembarking support at airports.**
 - Disability liaison officers provided by airlines or airports to support people through their onboarding and disembarking stages of the journey.
 - For major airports, a clear place at each set of departure gates for people to ask questions or for assistance with boarding - a designated and well-marked area could be available so people don't feel they are interrupting the cabin staff managing the boarding process.
 - Accessible boarding announcements at gates, including clear and accurate visual information. Ensuring PA systems and information is spoken more clearly.
- **Improving public awareness.**
 - On the plane, build disability awareness into the initial onboard announcements as a note / message to consider people around you, including their access needs.
 - In addition, a broader public awareness campaign about people with disability flying (e.g. Queensland Transport and Main Roads has recently done this for train travel).