

Participant Input Summary

Aviation Disability Standards Co-Design

Workshop 3 – At the Airport

August 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 **arriving and leaving the airport, navigating the airport, and facilities at the airport.**

- **Closer, clearer and more consistent accessible parking options for drop-off and pick-up:** Airports should provide more accessible parking bays near kerbside drop-off zones, with ramp access and clear signage.
 - Disability parking permits should be recognised consistently across airports, including for those picking up at destination airports.
 - Kerbside staff must be trained in disability awareness and assistance.
- **Equal support for arrivals and departures, and across the journey:** Assistance when arriving and exiting the airport, including baggage claim, transfers to taxis/public transport, and connections. Support should link to the traveller profile for continuity across airports and trips.
 - This could include a dedicated disability support service (concierge model) to assist from drop-off through boarding, and again on arrival through to pick-up.
 - Concierge and information desks at airports should clearly mark that they can offer support to people with disability (information and assistance) and could include more tailored information to make people feel comfortable as they begin their journey.
- **Make it clear who is responsible for providing accessibility support:** Airlines should be responsible for accessibility support, even when delivered by contractors or airports so that passengers are clear who should be providing the support.
- **Consistency across airports:** The standards should make sure there are nationally consistent processes across airports for security, wayfinding, facilities, and customer support.
- **Provide an accessible, reliable check-in and information service:** Airlines to provide a universal accessibility desk, separate from business class, with staff trained in disability support.
 - Standards should mandate accessible counters (height-adjustable or dual height).
- **Consistent and accessible navigation:** Require consistent signage, colours, and symbols across airports, with large print, high contrast and tactile formats. GPS-style navigation apps and static “you are here” maps must be available for travellers to locate facilities and gates.

- **Dignity and clarity at security checkpoints:** Standards should set rules and include training and guidance to improve the experience through security checkpoints. This should be made consistent across Australian airports. Specifically, the standards could cover:
 - Airports to provide at least one clearly marked accessible screening lane at each checkpoint.
 - Security staff must receive training in disability awareness and communication. This should include training and guidance on how to handle disability aids and awareness of how screening equipment interacts with different bodies (e.g. that scanners cannot recognise or process limb difference).
 - Screening protocols should maintain traveller dignity—allowing choice in pat-downs, avoiding separation from mobility aids, and permitting interpreters.
 - Noise-cancelling headphones should be permitted for sensory regulation.
 - Require tactile or audio guidance so that blind or people with low vision can position themselves without being touched or manoeuvred.
 - Remove tripping hazards at scanner exits.
 - Staff should respect and maintain the independence and autonomy of travellers with disability, rather than staff assuming or providing assistance.
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- **Practical and inclusive spaces:** Airports should be required to improve accessibility in public spaces, supported through rules in aviation standards. For example:
 - Accessible bathrooms must be available at multiple points, including near gates. Bathrooms must be kept to a clean and hygienic standard for users.
 - Private spaces should be available for wheelchair transfers and personal care.
 - Food courts need to have dedicated accessible seating, including wheelchair-accessible tables.
 - Quiet rooms and sensory spaces are required at airports.
 - Assistance animal toileting facilities must be mandated at major airports, with natural surfaces and co-located human toilets where possible.
- **Lift access:** Use signage or additional facilities to prioritise lifts for those passengers who need them or are separate from those using lifts to transport their luggage. This should apply in busy airports or where there are limited facilities to move between areas.
- **Information for everyone, every time:** Communication about facilities, check in, security, wayfinding must be provided in multiple accessible formats. Participants noted this be in: Easy Read, Braille, audio formats, and with option to have SMS/email and visual boards.
- **Communicating flight changes:** Gate changes and delays should be communicated clearly and accessibly. This includes options for people to have information sent to their personal devices and by having a help desk with trained staff.
 - Gate changes and delays need to be provided as soon as they are known to ensure accessibility arrangements are able to be made to accommodate changing gates or being

delayed. People with disability who have flagged additional requirements may need to be prioritised in the communication – e.g. specific and timely texts and updates provided.

- **Staff training and disability awareness:** Staff at the airport must be trained in accessible communication and this should be audited as part of the standards.
 - Training should include how staff can identify and respond to disability-related behaviours, such as distress or sensory overload without defaulting to exclusion or punishment.
 - Staff should also have consistent understanding of airline policies and regulations for dangerous goods and carriage of disability aids.
 - Training should include awareness of how to respectfully interact with people with disability and their aids and equipment, including deferring to the expertise of people with disability in their own equipment and needs, and with respect to their personal autonomy and independence.
- **Independence and autonomy of travellers with disability should be protected:** Travellers with disability should not be forced to wait unnecessarily or rushed through processes at the airport.
 - Travellers should not be made to transfer from personal mobility devices until absolutely necessary. There need to be consistent processes in place for what stage this is required at, with clear reasoning for why leaving the device is necessary at that point.
 - Standards should ensure travellers have freedom to explore food and retail before boarding on the same basis as other people.
 - Airports should provide infrastructure and equipment that makes autonomous actions and movements accessible, such as wheelchair-adapted luggage trolleys.
 - Policies and staff training must explicitly reinforce respect for autonomy and dignity.
- **Duty of care for travellers vulnerable to communicable illnesses:** Airports and airlines need to implement systems and procedures to minimise risk to travellers of exposure to communicable illness. This includes considering seating and spaces for people at risk, and maintaining standards of hygiene.
- **Nationally consistent policies and procedures for all airlines and airports:** All accessibility policies and procedures must be applied consistently across airlines and airports.
 - Accessibility must be considered in all refurbishments and redesigns. The standards should make this a requirement, including engaging an accessibility consultant or using advisory groups to inform the design of services, facilities, buildings, and technology.
 - Standards should require airports to go beyond minimum compliance by incentivising investment in best-practice accessibility.
- **Consulting people with disability on changes:** People with disability must be consulted on refurbishments and infrastructure changes through co-design or advisory groups. People with disability should lead these changes so that the refurbishments or changes are accessible and fit-for-purpose.
- **Wheelchair booking transparency:** Airlines to notify passengers in advance of any limits for carrying wheelchairs or mobility devices. Where possible, airlines should notify passengers in advance if this limit has been reached to secure an alternative flight.