

Submission on the Third Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002

City of Sydney
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Introduction

The City of Sydney (the City) welcomes the opportunity to make a submission to the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities on the *Third Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* (Transport Standards).

The City is committed to making Sydney truly inclusive and accessible for everyone. This commitment is reflected in our fourth *A City for All: Inclusion (Disability) Action Plan 2017-21*. Adopted in June 2017, the City's plan seeks to address barriers faced by people with disability and harness new and emerging opportunities for inclusion.

The City believes inclusive cities are easy to get around, providing everyone opportunities to participate in the diverse social and cultural life of the city, as well as access to meaningful employment. An inclusive city benefits everyone – not just people with disability.

City of Sydney Local Government Area

Sydney is a vibrant, cosmopolitan city, made up of diverse community groups spread across 26.15 sq km. The City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA) is home to over 233,000 people¹, with the population predicted to increase by an average of 2.2 per cent per annum to reach 315,000 people by 2030². Over 498,000 people work in the city³ and 4.7 million visitors stay overnight in in the City of Sydney LGA annually⁴.

City of Sydney and people with disability

In 2016, more than 5,000 residents of the City reported needing help with day-to-day activities, including self-care, body movement, and communication due to disability⁵. In 2015, 5.3 per cent of residents surveyed identified as a person with a disability.

However, we know there are many more residents who identify as a person with disability, and many people with disability who daily visit and work in the City's local area.

City of Sydney and transport

On any given day, an estimated 615,000 day visitors and students come to the city to shop, be entertained or inspired, to learn, to visit friends and/or to conduct personal or corporate business.⁶

People travel through the city using different modes of public and private transport, including; trains, buses, cycling, walking, light rail, ferries and private vehicles.

¹ Population – *ABS Regional Population Growth Catalogue*, No. 3218.0, July 2017

² Projected 2030 Population – NSW Planning and Environment, Population Forecasts 2016

³ Workforce – City of Sydney Floorspace and Employment Census, 2012

⁴ Visitors – Tourism Research Australia, International Visitor Survey and Domestic Visitor Survey, year ended Dec 2016

⁵ ABS, Census of Population and Housing 2011, compiled and presented by profile.id, available at: profile.id.com.au/Sydney/assistance

⁶ City of Sydney - *The city at a glance – People and places*, available at: <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/learn/research-and-statistics/the-city-at-a-glance>

Compared to more than 88.4 per cent for greater Sydney, only 58.7 per cent of households in the City's local area own a car, reflecting a higher dependency on public transport.⁷ In addition:

- The average number of cars per household at 0.75 is around half the rate for households Sydney-wide (1.54)⁸
- Public transport use accounts for 39.4 per cent when commuting to work while just over a quarter (25.1 per cent) drive to work
- Nearly a third (30.4 per cent) of commuters used active transport to work such as riding a bike or walking⁹.

A large number of residents, workers and visitors use public transport to get around the City each day. Ensuring that public transport and associated infrastructure is accessible enables everyone to be able to participate in city life.

This submission applies the principles of inclusion, the rights of people with disability, and the City of Sydney's expertise in the areas of social and transport policy, urban design, infrastructure management and maintenance and inclusive major events.

⁷ City of Sydney - *The city at a glance - urban landscape 2017*, available at:

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/learn/research-and-statistics/the-city-at-a-glance>

⁸ City of Sydney – *Number of cars per household* available at <https://profile.id.com.au/sydney/car-ownership>

⁹ City of Sydney – *Method of travel to work* available at <https://profile.id.com.au/sydney/travel-to-work>

Section A: For operators and providers: Compliance against Schedule 1 of the Transport Standards

Question 1: Have you been able to meet the 2017 Transport Standards legislated targets? If not, can you elaborate on the reasons for not being able to meet these targets?

The City has met the 90% compliance target for the Installation of Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSIs) required for *Infrastructure: Bus stops* by 2017 as per the compliance schedule in part 3 of the Transport Standards, and is on track for 100% compliance by 2020.

Question 2: Are there requirements that have proven to be impractical or difficult to implement? If so, please specify these.

Placement of bus shelters on the footway

The City has experienced some challenges in delivering accessible bus stops, and accessible bus shelters, while maintaining appropriate access and clearances on the footways.

The City works with bus operators to locate stops and establish infrastructure requirements on stop locations based on patronage and site conditions, including street space¹⁰.

The Human Rights Commissions interpretation of the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* is that a bus stop is not a resting point, and therefore there is no obligation to provide seating and a shelter at every bus stop in order for it to be accessible. Indeed, the Division 2 s1.18 of the Transport Standards defines infrastructure as boarding points, but notes that

At times, the provision of a bus shelter, while providing amenity to bus patrons, can in fact hinder pedestrian access and mobility, particularly where there are narrow footways in older parts of the city, high pedestrian activity areas and other existing public domain infrastructure. Of most concern is that the bus shelter can obstruct the continuous accessible path of travel, and make it difficult for a pedestrian, in particular people using a wheelchair to pass safely behind a shelter. In the City during peak hours, the area can become so crowded with pedestrians and bus patrons, the person using the wheelchair cannot safely pass in the front of the bus shelter, or behind.

While the Transport Standards require a continuous accessible path of travel to the boarding point (1200mm), given that the current legislation does not require the provision of a bus shelter, there is a dearth of guidance on how to appropriately locate bus stop shelters on footways while maintaining appropriate pedestrian access on the footway.

¹⁰ Parfitt., B (2014) "Parameters: the role of the City of Sydney in Bus shelter provision" in *Interchanging: Future designs for responsive transport environments* Hank Haeusler, Nicole Gardner, Briedy Maher(Eds)

In order to ensure a whole of journey approach to accessibility, there is a need to balance comfortable pedestrian space, access to boarding points, and the provision of shelter in a way that does not hinder access or create pinch points.

The City has drafted some criteria for minimum clearances front and back of the bus shelter (where provided). The City will ensure the installation of new bus stop shelters complies with these requirements.

- 1) Where dedicated bus shelters are provided, a continuous accessible path of travel with clear shoreline will be maintained, in particular:
 - a) Where there is adequate width on the footpath, two access paths will be provided
 - i) Desirable circulation: 1800mm between building boundary and bus shelter rear edge. 1500mm between front of shelter and kerb face
 - ii) Acceptable circulation: 1200mm between building boundary and bus shelter rear edge. 1200mm between front of shelter and kerb face
 - b) At minimum one access path of 1200mm minimum width will be provided in accordance with Transport Standards , and
 - c) Where more than one bus shelter is provided, regular passing points of minimum 1800mm will be provided at least every 20 metres.
- 2) The installation of dedicated bus infrastructure will be co-ordinated with other elements in the street scape.
 - a) Placement of bus shelters will take into account the location of existing street furniture and other infrastructure to ensure the area around the bus stop infrastructure is free from obstructions, and the footpath is not over crowded.

Recommendation:

1. The review of the Transport Standards to consult with infrastructure providers and operators to develop minimum requirements for the continuous accessible path of travel, both behind and in front of any bus shelter, and more detailed guidance on how to locate a bus shelter on the footway.

Question 3: Can you provide detail of any initiatives and actions you have undertaken, not currently detailed under the Transport Standards or other legislative requirements, in relation to removing discrimination against people with disability?

The City recognises that there is a need for a whole journey approach to transport, and that accessibility needs to be considered in every part of the journey. From the street, to public transport infrastructure, premises and conveyance.

The City sees the public domain as a critical link between accessible public transport and destinations for employment and social and cultural activities. An inclusive and accessible public domain provides equitable opportunities for people to work and access services. The City's ongoing program of access improvements to public spaces including streets, footpaths and parks will provide improved access to public transport.

In addition, the City's [Online Accessibility Map](#) is an initiative that aims to help people with disability understand the built environment, by identifying where barriers or challenging areas exist, and plan their journey according to their own abilities.

Ongoing program of streetscape upgrades

The City's program of improvements to public spaces includes the following accessibility improvements:

- Upgrading non-compliant kerb ramps at intersections to provide ease of access between footpaths
- Provision of TGSIs where they were missing or non-compliant to ensure people who are blind or have low vision are able to safely access the city's public domain
- Footway renewal and upgrades that include the access improvements such as new surfaces or pavers with appropriate slip resistance, appropriate camber and crossfall, the widening of footpaths where feasible and ensuring that street furniture and vegetation is placed so as not to create obstructions that impact pedestrian access and to maintain the continuous accessible path of travel on the footway
- Kerb and gutter renewal and upgrades that ensure a smooth transition from road to kerb by removing any lips on kerb ramps that may cause an obstruction or trip hazard
- Paver infill program that includes removing and replacing damaged pavers, upgrading footpaths to reduce hazards for wheelchair users, mobility scooter users and pram users
- Improving street lighting to support access for people with low vision and enhance safety; and
- A network of tactile street signs at every signalised pedestrian crossing throughout the City local area, making it safer and easier for people of all abilities to navigate our streets.

The program uses the City's [Liveable Green Network](#) to identify which pedestrian routes to prioritise for access improvements. The Liveable Green Network aims to create a pedestrian and cycling network that connects people with the city and village centres as well as major transport and entertainment hubs, cultural precincts, parks and open spaces.

City of Sydney Online Accessibility Map

The City of Sydney area - especially northern parts around Sydney Harbour - can have some challenging topography which can make getting around difficult for people with disability.

The City of Sydney's [Online Accessibility Map](#) provides information about key access features such as lifts, mobility parking, accessible public toilets, key transport nodes and barriers such as stairs and steep inclines.

The map helps people with disability understand the built environment, by identifying where barriers or challenging areas exist, and plan their journey according to their own abilities.

The map allows users to select which barriers and access supports are shown on the map, and determine the best route for them. For example, some people may need a mobility parking space and others may need to avoid steep inclines and stairs.

Where available, additional information such as whether there is a kerb ramp available at a taxi rank, or whether an accessible toilet is a left hand or right hand transfer toilet, is provided.

Information on the map is also available in a text list view that is compatible with e-readers, to ensure information is accessible to people who are vision impaired or prefer text over reading maps. The map is optimised for use on mobile devices and desktops and currently covers most of the City's Central Business District (CBD).

The City continues to review, update and include new and relevant data on the map and seeks opportunities to share the map and data with other organisations through open data platforms.

Section C: For disability sector and public views: Accessibility of public transport

The following outlines a number of recommendations to be considered as part of the Third Review of the Transport Standards. A number of the recommendations below have been provided to Transport for NSW within the City's submission to Transport for NSW on the Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2017-21.

Lift access at train stations

The City acknowledges the NSW Government has made significant investment accessibility improvements such as new lifts, ramps and footbridges through its Transport Access Program, which will take the NSW Government's total investment to over \$2 billion between 2011 to 2021-22¹¹.

The City acknowledges that the NSW Government's funding of the Transport Access Program will make more than 90 per cent of customer journeys accessible over the forward investment period to 2021-22, but notes that all public transport services need to fully comply with the Transport Standards by 2022, which includes the provision of lifts (where required), access paths and ramps compliant with standards, to enable step free access to all train services.¹²

At present, in NSW only 173 of the 307 stations (56 per cent) on the suburban and intercity networks are accessible¹³. Of the approximately 44 per cent of train stations in NSW which are inaccessible, three are located within the City's local area: Redfern, Erskineville and Macdonaldtown stations.^{14 15}

The City is concerned that that Redfern train station will not be fully accessible by 2022. Redfern station is a major hub of the Sydney Trains network, with up to 50,000 customers passing through the station every day.¹⁶ It is currently the seventh busiest station in NSW, and is a major gateway to Australian Technology Park, the University of Sydney, Carriageworks, numerous Aboriginal services and cultural organisations of importance to communities across NSW, Redfern Community Centre, and the Redfern/Waterloo area.¹⁷

¹¹ Transport for NSW – *NSW Budget: Public Transport access upgrades set to reach \$2 billion* available at <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/media-releases/nsw-budget-public-transport-access-upgrades-set-to-reach-2-billion>

¹² Transport for NSW – *Transport Access Program – current* available at <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects-tap>

¹³ Transport for NSW – *NSW Budget: Public Transport access upgrades set to reach \$2 billion*

¹⁴ Doman, M, Scott, N, & Liu, R, *The 'unconscionable' state of Australia's train stations*, ABC News, 2018, available at <https://mobile.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-29/the-unconscionable-state-of-australias-train-stations/10147174?pfmredir=sm>

¹⁵ Glanville, B, & Ong, T, *Less than half of New South Wales train stations have disability access, records show*, ABC News, 2015, available at <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-19/poor-disability-access-on-nsw-train-stations-records-show/6709200>

¹⁶ Saulwick, J, *Redfern Station to get lift, says Berejiklian*, ABC News, 2013, available at <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/redfern-station-to-get-lift-says-berejiklian-20130815-2rytc.html>

¹⁷ Transport for NSW – *Train Statistics 2014 Everything you need to know about Sydney Trains and NSW TrainLink* available at <https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/media/documents/2017/Train%20Statistics%202014.pdf>

In 2012, the City endorsed work done by the Lift Redfern: Make Redfern Station Accessible campaign which saw one lift installed servicing platforms six and seven at Redfern station in 2015.^{18,19}

Since 2015 there has been little progress in making the station fully accessible. At present there are twelve platforms at Redfern station and a single lift is insufficient. People with disability, people with mobility restrictions and families with prams are often forced to travel past their destination at Redfern station to Central station where they can access a lift to change platforms, only to travel back to Redfern station arriving on platform six or seven so they can exit the station via the single lift.²⁰ The City has on several occasions raised this concern directly with Transport for NSW and Sydney Trains.

While the City commends the present upgrades to the concourse and main entrance to Redfern station that are currently underway²¹, we note this upgrade does not include additional lifts at Redfern, nor is the provision of additional lifts at Redfern station listed in future upgrades as part of the Transport Access Program.²²

Several community groups, employers and universities in the City's local area are advocating to Sydney Trains and Transport for NSW to install more lifts at Redfern station. These include the Lift Redfern group, the University of Sydney²³, and the Commonwealth Bank, who are preparing to move their headquarters to Technology Park in early 2019.

While the City and local community groups and organisations will continue to advocate for access at these stations, the City supports the position of the Australia's Disability Discrimination Commissioner, Alistair McEwan, who argues there is a need for a compliance regime at the federal level that does not put the burden on individuals or advocacy groups to make a complaint through the Australian Human Rights Commission.²⁴

¹⁸ Lift Redfern: Make Redfern Station Accessible – *The Campaign*, 2012, available at <https://liftredfernstation.wordpress.com/>

¹⁹ Moore, C, *Redfern Railway Station Lift Access*, 2012, available at https://www.clovermoore.com.au/redfern_railway_station_lift_access

²⁰ Saulwick, J, *Redfern Station to get lift, says Berejiklian*

²¹ Transport for NSW – *Redfern Station improvement works* available at

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/current-projects/redfern-station-improvement-works>

²² Transport for NSW – *Transport Access Program – current*

²³ USyd SRC Disabilities Collective & Caregivers Network Facebook Event, *Access For All! Protest against public transport inaccessibility*, 2018, available at <https://www.facebook.com/events/253625192015200/>

²⁴ Doman, M, Scott, N, & Liu, R, *The 'unconscionable' state of Australia's train stations*

As per Recommendation 8 of the 2007 *Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport – Final Report*, the City believes that the Australian Human Rights Commission should be tasked to provide greater support for representative complaints on behalf of people with disability, reducing the legal cost and burden on individuals.²⁵

Recommendations:

2. That the Federal Government implement a regime to monitor the progress of both operators and providers in meeting the relevant Standards. To ensure reasonable attempts to comply and limit potential unjustifiable hardships for people with disability and other transport users.
3. That the Australian Human Rights Commission be tasked to provide greater support for representative complaints on behalf of people with disability, reducing the legal cost burden on individuals.

Toilets with Adult Change Facilities

Being able to travel comfortably for any period longer than two to three hours, means that people need to be confident they can access a toilet that meets their needs.

People with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well as spinal injuries, spina bifida, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis or an acquired brain injury, often need extra spaces and adult change tables to allow them to use the toilet comfortably. Standard accessible toilets do not always meet their needs.

Additional floor space is required to meet the toileting needs of many people with disabilities who are also reliant on assistance by a carer who accompanies them into the cubicle.

In the absence of appropriate toilets with adult change facilities, people with profound disabilities either must change on the floor of public toilets, typically in unsanitary conditions, or stay at home, risking increased social exclusion and isolation, as they are not able to make journeys of more than 2-3 hours as a return journey from their home.

Toilets with adult change facilities are not currently required under the Building Code of Australia, the *Disability (Access to Premises - Buildings) Standards 2010* or the Transport Standards, and therefore are not currently mandatory in any building.

In the City's 2016 submission to the review of *Disability (Access to Premises – Building) Standards 2010*, the City recommended that the standards be reviewed to include requirements for toilets with adult change facilities or “Changing-Places Toilets” in train station buildings. Buildings such as train stations, major interchanges and ferry terminals that attract large numbers of visitors from the general public provide the best opportunity to deliver strategically located and appropriately distributed toilets with appropriate adult change facilities.

The City welcomes the Australian Building Codes Board's (ABCB) proposal to include a requirement to provide toilets with adult change facilities with the National Construction Code 2019. Specification F2.4 and intends to implement these in shopping centres with a design occupancy of more than 1400 people and also in Class 9b public assembly buildings.

²⁵ The Allen Consulting Group Pty Ltd - 2007 *Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport – Final Report 2009* available at https://infrastructure.gov.au/transport/disabilities/review/files/ACG_DTR_Report.pdf

The City understands that some operators prefer to restrict access to toilets to customers with valid tickets or to MLAK holders, as a way of managing potential anti-social behaviour. The consequence of such restriction is that it becomes harder for people with disability to access appropriate toilet facilities.

Should the amended National Construction Code be adopted, and given the lead time for new class 9b buildings to be delivered, it will take some time before a strategically distributed network of toilets with adult change facilities is in place. It is therefore vital that such facilities are well promoted and available for use by the wider community, including interstate and overseas visitors.

Recommendations:

4. The review of the Transport Standards ensures consistency with the forthcoming changes to the National Construction Code by articulating the requirement for toilets with adult change facilities for new or upgraded public transport buildings.
5. The review should include requirements for the management of such facilities, namely that facilities:
 - must not be used as storage
 - should be well promoted on the national public toilet map, and on information about access features of the station or interchange, and
 - be available to be used by members of the general public.

Use of technology and access to public transport information

The City supports Australian and NSW Government initiatives and projects that embrace new and emerging technologies that can assist people with disability using public transport.

Emerging technologies can empower greater independence for all people, including people with disability, to navigate and access public spaces and transport systems.

Digital technologies in particular, including GPS and Bluetooth, have potential to enable people with disability to access up-to-date, real-time information that allows them to make informed decisions about their journey, and enables them to better navigate public transport interchanges, facilitating greater independence, equity and dignity.

Digital technology can however create new barriers for people with disability. Touch screen technology for example, can present barriers to accessing services for people who are blind or have low vision. While people who are blind or have low vision can touch the screen, they cannot see what they are touching and therefore, cannot use the device effectively. Vision Australia note that older technology that featured tactile button features could assist people in locating and identifying buttons and switches, while technology that includes numbered keypads, such as ATMs and Eftpos machines, feature a relatively uniform layout of numbered keypads, making navigation of the keypad with fingers predictable.²⁶

The recently adopted Australian Standard *Accessibility requirements suitable for public procurement of ICT products and services* provides detailed guidance for procuring digital technologies, such as Opal and Myki ticket machines, to ensure they are accessible.²⁷

²⁶ Vision Australia – *The trouble with touch screens* available at <http://www.visionaustralia.org/news/latest-news/news/2017/05/02/the-trouble-with-touchscreens>

²⁷ Standards Australia – *Accessibility requirements suitable for public procurement of ICT products and services* available at <https://infostore.saiglobal.com/en-au/Standards/AS-EN-301-549-2016-1892396/>

Recommendations:

Online and digital

6. Continue to monitor the developments in digital technologies, including blue tooth and GPS, and consider the inclusion of access to information for online and digital platform as part of the Transport Standards.

At transport premises and on transport conveyances

7. Include a requirement in the revised Transport Standards for public transport service providers to use the *Australian Standards for Accessibility requirements suitable for public procurement of ICT products and services*. This will guide service provider's procurement practice to ensure ticketing and information and communications technology used in delivering the service is accessible.

Open data

8. Include case study examples of best practice ways to share accessible public transport data between key government agencies and relevant stakeholders within future iterations of *The Whole Journey: A guide to thinking beyond compliance to create accessible public transport journeys*.

Accessible information and alerts on train station lift status

The City recognises that when lifts are out-of-order or under scheduled repair or maintenance, an interchange or precinct that was accessible suddenly may create significant accessibility barriers for people with disability. Unexpected lift closures can be extremely distressing for people who rely on the lift as part of the continuous accessible path of travel, as they may struggle to identify an alternative accessible route, or be required to travel much further distances that they were not prepared for.

Providing real time information on potential barriers such as lift closures will enable people with disability, and others, to avoid distress as a result of becoming stranded and will help people to manage and plan travel and seek assistance in advance if required.

The City commends the Transport for NSW TripView app that provides real-time listed timetabled services for train, bus, ferry, light rail and coach services. TripView's accessibility features include real-time accessibility information and alerts for all services, and is compatible with VoiceOver on iOS.²⁸

Recommendations:

9. That the review of the Transport Standards include a requirement for operators and service providers that already use technology to provide real-time information about service and transport infrastructure, to use those platforms to provide real time information about outages that impact on accessibility to enable people with disability to better manage and plan travel.

²⁸ Transport for NSW – *Tripview* available at <https://transportnsw.info/apps/tripview>

Ride-share, on-demand bus services and automated vehicles

Ride-share, on-demand bus services and automated vehicle platforms have the potential to deliver greater autonomy and independence for people with disability who have traditionally been reliant on taxis as their primary form of transport.

The City welcomes any advances that provide people with disability greater dignity and independence through travel, and encourages government agencies to work with people with disability and peak groups to understand the benefits and assess any potential barriers arising from on demand and automated vehicle platforms.

Recommendation:

10. Monitor impact of ride-share and automated vehicles on the Australian transport landscape. Consider whether future reviews of the Transport Standards should include accessibility requirements for Ride-share, on demand bus services, automated vehicles and other emerging transport innovations.

Whole of journey approach

A number of major transport infrastructure projects are currently being constructed within the City's local area. These projects include the future Sydney CBD and South East Light Rail and a number of future Sydney Metro stations.

The City believes a whole of journey approach to transport planning is integral to accessibility, particularly people with disability, and welcomes the *The Whole Journey: A guide for thinking beyond compliance to create accessible public transport journeys* issued by the Federal Government.²⁹ In particular, consistent and cohesive wayfinding systems are an essential feature of a whole of journey approach to accessibility.

There are often a number of different frameworks employed by different stakeholders when planning and collaborating on major transport projects and infrastructure. Effective governance mechanisms and management of precincts and places that interface with public transport is integral to ensuring a whole of journey approach to accessible public transport.

Recommendation:

11. Review the draft Australian Standards 1428.4.2:2015 Wayfinding and identify appropriate standards to include in the Transport Standards.
12. Include in future versions of *The Whole Journey: A guide for thinking beyond compliance to create accessible public transport journey*, case studies or examples of effective governance and management of precincts and places that interface with public transport. Best practice examples of coordinated approaches and governance would contribute to better accessibility outcomes in urban design within transport initiatives.

²⁹ Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities – *The Whole Journey: A guide for thinking beyond compliance to create accessible public transport journeys* available at <https://infrastructure.gov.au/transport/disabilities/whole-journey/guide/index.aspx>