

28 May 2013

Transport Access Section
Road Safety and Transport Access Branch
Department of Infrastructure and Transport
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

Enquiries to: Tom Scanlan

File Ref: 2867100

Dear Sir/Madam

2012 Review of Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the 2012 Review of Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002.

Knox City Council convenes a Disability Advisory Committee which has provided feedback on the Standards in conjunction with Council officers from Council Traffic and Transport team and Community Access and Equity team. The Knox City Council Disability Advisory Committee comprises of people with a disability; unpaid carers of people with a disability and service providers for people with a disability.

As an overall assessment of the implementation of the Standards, Council believes the Standards have improved the lived experience of people with a disability however there are still many challenges associated with accessing the public transport system. The connectivity between services and the inconsistent nature of upgrades provide a difficult and hard to navigate transport system for people with a disability, their carers and families.

Knox City Council's feedback has been provided in response to the questions outlined in the issues paper under Section C: For disability sector and public views. The feedback is attached as Appendix 1.

If you require any further information or clarification regarding this feedback, please contact Tom Scanlan, Community Development Officer - Access and Inclusion, on 9298 8524 or tom.scanlan@knox.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



KATHY PARTON
Manager Community Wellbeing

Appendix 1: Section C: For disability sector and public views

How has your accessibility to information (eg maps, timetables, announcements, etc) changed? Can you provide examples?

With some bus companies it is often hard to find out which buses will be wheelchair accessible and often these are changed without notifying the users until they arrive at the bus stop. The access to up to date information needs to be improved.

Announcements at low use stations are often only over the loud speaker which makes it difficult for people who are deaf or have low hearing to receive this information. An example was given of a transport user who is deaf who read the TV screen saying wait for announcements, however when the announcement did come it was only over the loud speaker. The individual was then unsure of where the replacement train would arrive. Information needs to be presented in varying formats.

How has your accessibility to infrastructure immediate to boarding a conveyance changed? (eg, any structure or facility that is used by passengers in conjunction with travelling on a public transport service). Can you provide examples.

A Committee member explained how they use a wheelchair and have concerns for their safety while accessing bus stops. The space between where a bus shelter is situated and where the actual bus stops is too narrow. As the bus pulls in or away from a stop it encroaches on this space making it difficult to leave or enter the area.

Further to the above, Committee members expressed their concerns with being a wheelchair user and having to wait close to the edge of train stations to signal the driver as the train approaches.

Recommendation: install a simple call button on the station that notifies the driver with a signal that a passenger will require assistance at the next station.

The gradient of ramps into train stations provides ongoing concern for Committee members. Further to this the actual space allocated to enter the station can sometimes be too small for mobility and wheelchair users; impeding their ability to access the station.

While using the new Myki system in Victoria, a committee member noted that there is not adequate time to move through the barrier at the entrance to stations. After swiping their card the barrier opened and let their child in a wheelchair through, however the gates then closed, causing their child to be stuck on the other side.

Recommendation: if the Myki card has a C for Carer on it, then more time should be allocated to keep the gates open.

At some bus stops the connectivity to the nearest pathway is sometimes nonexistent. There needs to be a whole system approach to creating access rather than upgrading parts of the system. Committee members also noted that at some bus stops, with the return journey stop on the other side of the road, there is a lack of refuge islands to safely cross the road. This example reinforces the idea of upgrading the whole system rather than ad hoc parts.

The Committee notes that many bus stops have been upgraded but there doesn't seem to be a priority system associated with this.

Recommendation: There needs to be more consultation with community to understand where the upgrades are needed. It can feel as though that stops are upgraded to tick a box to comply but doesn't necessarily benefit the users.

It is noted that some major interchanges are not socially or physically inclusive to those with a disability despite being advertised as an accessible stop. For example, ramps may be available at particular train stations but they are too steep to be accessible. Similarly, paths of travel for mobility aid users may be socially exclusive by directing them to "dingy" or "back of house" areas. At one large transport interchange, the path of access for people with a disability between modes is through the dumpster and loading area. From a human rights perspective all people, regardless of their individual abilities, have an inherent dignity and value and must be respected and treated equally. To access a station via the dumpster area is not being treated equally. This human rights approach when planning upgrades can assist with improving access and inclusion at various stops within the service.

As a body representing the views of people with a disability, do you have any specific responses or perspectives with regard to the issues raised in the questions above?

Public Transport is a common issue raised during Knox's Disability Advisory Committee meetings. As raised above, the common theme for our community is the accessibility of the infrastructure prior to boarding the conveyance. Many examples were given of the lack of accessibility within stations, particularly for people with mobility aids or wheelchairs. From announcements in one format to the width of the entrance to stations to the gradient of ramps, people are still having difficulty accessing public transport.

Other key issues you would like to see addressed?

Some users of mobility aids and other equipment need overhead hoists and a change table facility to fully access a toilet. Most accessible toilets don't have these facilities. Currently there is an initiative being run to campaign for the implementation of these Changing Places toilets. [A page has been set up to advocate for this](#) and further to this, [a successful campaign was used in the UK](#). The Australian Federal Government has the chance to be world leaders in implementing this initiative in all new upgrades of stations to have fully accessible toilets with overhead hoists and change table facilities.