

**RESPONSE TO THE 2nd 5 YEAR REVIEW OF THE DISABILITY STANDARDS FOR
ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT 2002**

Submission by the Bus Industry Confederation



May 2013

30 May 2013

Disabilities Transport Access Secretariat
Road Safety and Transport Access Branch
Federal Department of Infrastructure and Transport
GPO Box 594
Canberra ACT 2601
Email: DisabilitiesTransportSecretariat@Infrastructure.com.au

BUS INDUSTRY CONFEDERATION RESPONSE TO THE 2nd 5 YEAR REVIEW OF THE DISABILITY STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT 2002

Introduction

The Bus Industry Confederation (BIC) provides this submission for the 2nd 5 year review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002.

BIC is concerned about the lack of progress on many of the issues raised by the industry as part of the first 5 year review. As a starting point BIC presents a number of high level aspects of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport that should be considered. Most of these were raised in a joint submission to the first 5 year review by the Bus Industry Confederation, Australasian Railways Association, The Australian Taxi Industry Council and International Public Transport Association. This is followed by a number of specific issues related to the bus and coach industry.

Also attached is a supplementary discussion paper that was provided to the Accessible Passenger Transport National Advisory Committee (APTNA) in April 2012.

High Level Issues

The second 5-year review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Disability Standards) provides an important opportunity to check that these standards are –

- a) efficient and effective at removing discrimination against persons on the grounds of disability; and
- b) not creating unforeseen or unintended safety, operational or practical problems for disabled persons, public transport passengers in general, and the staff (including contractors) of public transport providers

Equal Access Versus Removing Discrimination

At the outset the Bus Industry Confederation would like to say that the Industry supports the spirit and intent of the Disability Standards and the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA).

However, it is matter of significant concern that the legislation has progressively begun to be interpreted much more literally than was intended or envisaged. Worryingly, provisions and targets in the Disability Standards are being interpreted by many members of the Disability Community, and sector advocates, as a blunt instrument to remove discrimination no matter what the cost. Applying the Disability Standards in a literal sense without

consideration of reasonable practicability can work counterproductively, especially when compliance becomes physically, technologically or economically impossible for public transport providers. This submission contends that such an approach is at odds with the intent of the legislation, namely, to increase accessibility to, and by, public transport services.

A concern is the gap between the intent of the legislation, the implementation of the legislation and the enforcement of the legislation. There is no body or responsible department that a bus operator can approach where an issue arises that can clarify the intent, the implementation or enforcement of the Disability Standards. The complaints process through the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) provides little clarity in relation to definition or interpretation and often results in expensive legal proceedings that do not resolve the issue. There is a need for a body to be able to “make the call” and provide clarity in relation to the interpretation and implementation of the Disability Standards to all public transport providers. **This should not be the courts.**

As a result of Industry experience since 2002, industry is uniquely positioned to articulate opportunities to improve the Disability Standards. It is the BIC view that a process should be established for industries, through their national peak bodies, to develop co-regulatory arrangements for the application and amendment of the Disability Standards as they apply to their respective sector. The BIC supports the work that the Attorney Generals Department has been undertaking in this area but is concerned about the lack of progress since this was raised in the first 5 year review.

As a further case in point, a range of exemptions for the purpose of providing clarity and certainty of obligations for both operators and passengers has been sought over time by public transport providers including bus operators through the Australian Human Rights Commission. This exemption process has worked effectively in most cases and provided the required flexibility for public transport providers to meet the requirements within a reasonable timeframe and without unjustifiable hardship. The recognition of these difficulties as evidenced by the granting of a number of temporary exemptions to the requirements of the Disability Standards by AHRC highlights the need for specific amendments to the Disability Standards and/or the need for agreed Industry Codes of Practice to provide clarity to public transport operators, people with disabilities, State and Territory jurisdictions and enforcement authorities, (who ever they might be).

From a bus industry perspective, a “Code of Practice for Bus Operations and Disability Standards” will provide practical advice and guidance to operators at a national level on how to meet the requirements of the Disability Standards, and provide guidance on appropriate equivalent access provisions. A further benefit of the Code will be an increase in the consistency of approach being adopted by operators across Australia, thus providing people with disabilities with greater confidence and certainty on the layout and operation of public transport services nationwide. These Industry Codes should be recognised by the law.

Conflict with Safety Standards

There is concern that requirements of the Disability Standards can at times conflict with workplace health and safety standards, as well as other legislative and regulatory requirements, that bus operators are obligated to meet.

Compliance with the Disability Standards has led to many instances where passenger safety, vehicle standards, occupational health and safety, and workplace practices have been compromised. As a consequence, industrial injuries have been sustained, passengers have been subjected to additional risk, and bus operators exposed to possible new legal liabilities.

It is grossly unfair for any service provider, yet alone those operating small to medium sized passenger transport businesses, to be placed in a position where they are expected to make critical judgements that potentially trade off safety and compliance with requirements of the Disability Standards. The specifics of these concerns are outlined later in this submission.

Unrealistic Compliance Timeframe

When the Disability Standards' compliance timetable was originally designed, it would not have been reasonable to expect it to fully anticipate -

- the realities of future passenger transport demand by people with disabilities (i.e. as venues become increasing accessible there has been consequent surge in the demand for accessible transport);
- c) the increased demand for public passenger transport services more broadly driven partly by escalating world oil prices, higher density urban planning, as well as community concerns about the environment;
- d) levels of state and federal government funding directed to accessible passenger transport services;
- e) whether all of the requirements mandated were workable or achievable within the design and maintenance life of passenger vehicles operating in Australia, or
- f) that the ambiguity of the interpretation of the legislation and standards has allowed the purchase of non-complaint vehicles

The BIC believes that it is reasonable to reconsider the Disability Standards' timetable, and as necessary, reprioritise certain elements and their associated target dates. In the absence of unlimited resources, it is absolutely essential that public transport providers in partnership with Government(s) and the Disability Community pursue the elimination of discrimination in a structured manner that realistically seeks to deliver achievable outcomes in a sequence or order designed to promote the greatest benefit

APTNAAC – APTJC Effectiveness

The BIC is a member of Australian passenger Transport National Advisory Committee (APTNAAC).

Notwithstanding our support of and participation in the recently reconvened APTNAAC, BIC holds concerns about the effectiveness of the APTNAAC and the APTJC Committees. The fact that APTNAAC and APTJC were not convened between the announcement of the first 5 year review of the Disability Standards, the Allen Consulting Report and until after the Commonwealth Governments response to the Allen report (2012?) highlights the dysfunction that exists between the Commonwealth legislation, State and Territory Government implementation and public transport providers ability to understand and comply to the laws.

The structure and functionality of both these committees has been inadequate to progress a number of issues to a satisfactory resolution. It is to be noted that APTNAAC is merely an advisory committee, and the merit of maintaining APTJC as a separate committee is unclear. BIC believes that in the context of interpretation and implementation of the disability standards, the APTNAAC and APTJC committees should have the power to agree and recommend to the Attorney General, the Federal Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and AHRC on:

- interpretation of how the disability standards can be met by public transport providers and
- practical implementation, (including compliance timeframe changes) practices.

Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC)

AHRC has played a key role in keeping an even-handed approach to the implementation of the Disability Standards and in addressing exemption issues as they have arisen.

However, there is a concern that discretion exists with complainants as to where they direct their complaints about disability discrimination in a public transport context. Presently, complaints can be directed to HREOC or to a respective State / Territory based Anti Discrimination Commission, Tribunal or Board. There appears to be no mechanism in place to ensure congruency of decision making between these entities, especially in terms of penalties, sanctions or remedies, and accordingly the potential exists for markedly different outcomes to spring from what are otherwise similar circumstances. This lack of national consistency creates uncertainty for bus operators. AHRC should be the sole agency to deal with complaints related to Disability Standards for Accessible Transport

Local Government

Part of the objectives of the Disability Standards was to ensure that the “whole of trip” eliminates as far as possible, discrimination for those with a disability.

While it is generally true that each of the different transport modes have used their best endeavours to meet, or progress toward meeting, the Disability Standards, unfortunately, the same cannot be said for some local government authorities, in relation to the provision of infrastructure, access to services, bus stops, buildings and so on.

As a result, inaccessible surrounds in some local government areas effectively isolate fully compliant passenger transport access points, (bus stops, rail stations, taxi ranks). Furthermore, bus stops in outer urban areas might not only lack concrete footpath access but not even have kerb and channel associated with them.

The Local Government have not been able to achieve outcomes compliant with the Disability Standards’ timetable because they have not been provided with the required funding. Accordingly, special State and Commonwealth financial assistance is urgently required, as is an extension of the compliance timeframe for public transport providers and local government to make “whole of trip” accessibility a reality.

Specific Bus Issues

Mobility Devices – Identification

The Bus Industry Confederation calls on the Commonwealth Government to make it a requirement for mobility device manufacturers to ensure that all devices are appropriately identifiable as being safe and suitable to be carried on a public transport conveyance and that purchasers of such devices are made aware of the limitations that the standards impose, for example in the areas of size, mass and maneuverability.

Currently there is no requirement or mechanism for bus and coach drivers to determine which mobility devices are suitable for use on conveyances.

The BIC recognises the work being undertaken by the mobility device labeling working group under the auspices of APTNAC currently but looks to Federal, State and Territory Governments to implement the recommendations of this group when work is completed.

Mobility Devices – Safety

A concern for bus and coach operators in relation to mobility devices is the safety of people using them and the safety of other passengers.

The areas of concern relate to:

- Mobility devices and their impact on the safety of the user and other passengers on buses in the event of an accident, heavy braking or swerving incident if the device/passenger is not secured.
- The inconvenience caused to other public transport users and the dignity of people with disabilities when mobility devices, which are not suitable for use on a conveyance results, break accessibility ramps on entry, or are not able to be maneuvered into allocated spaces due to their size and turning circle.
- The safety consequences of mobility devices of the “scooter” type that carry wet cell batteries. Wet cell batteries are a major concern due to possible leakage; the fluid is very acidic and flammable. Wet cell batteries have also been known to explode on impact and may be a safety hazard in the event of an accident or some form of impact on the battery.
- The effective restraint of mobility devices is a major concern to the industry. The bus and coach industry is required to meet stringent seat strength and anchorage requirements under Australian Design Rules, ADR 68. Key issues to be considered include seat strength of the mobility device and its safe restraint, unsecure mobility devices and the risk of becoming projectiles, the fitment of anchorage points close to, or affixed to the floor which could inadvertently create trip hazards for other passengers.

The Bus Industry Confederation is concerned that wheelchairs and other mobility devices do not meet any equivalent seat strength or anchorage standard and the actual restraint of such devices to the ADR 68/00 standards is improbable.

In addition, mobility devices vary in their stability and are often at risk of being tipped over, even when restraints, either active or passive, are applied. It should also be recognized that the use of prams with children inside of them are being placed in the wheelchair space unrestrained. This is a significant safety problem and also can prevent a wheelchair from occupying its designated spot.

It is clear that people with disabilities being carried on a bus or coach in a mobility device is receiving a lower standard of occupant safety attention compared to other passengers in ADR 68/00 seats, which raises a number of legal and safety issues that need to be investigated and addressed.

A further issue for all State and Territory Governments who contract bus services is to fully consider the impact of “on – time running” and Key Performance Indicators when people with disabilities are boarding and egressing buses and having to restrain mobility devices. This can, and does, impact on timetables and can result in operators being penalised under contractual arrangements.

Allocated Wheelchair Spaces

The bus and coach industry has concerns in relation to the two allocated spaces that are required by the Disability Standards.

Due to the positioning of the spaces, the first seat on the bus has no 'compartmentalisation' for passengers and has resulted in this area becoming a safety concern for passengers traveling in these positions. This is of greater concern as these positions are usually reserved for the elderly.

After 12 years of monitoring the actual use of allocated wheelchair spaces on bus and coaches, BIC is calling on the requirement to provide one or two allocated spaces for wheelchairs to be relaxed. A reduction to one allocated wheelchair space would also assist in addressing the problem identified above and also provide greater scope to have holding devices and poles in place for standing passengers.

Regional and Remote Bus and Coach Operators

The 'one size fits all' approach to implement the disability standards for public transport has created significant financial concerns for rural and regional operators.

For regional and remote operations, the standards have resulted in increased costs for maintenance and reduced longevity of low floor accessible vehicles operating life. These vehicles are often operating on dirt roads, hilly terrain, frequent road culverts and floodways which take a heavy toll on the vehicles, often when there is little or no demand for such vehicles.

The BIC believes that a review of actual operating circumstances and demand for accessible transport services needs to be undertaken to assess whether bus services in many circumstances are the most cost effective and sensible approach to removing discrimination in many operating circumstances.

This situation is exacerbated in regional and remote areas where the lack of complimentary infrastructure, for example curbing, makes it pointless to operate low floor vehicles.

Charter Services

The Bus Industry Confederation would like to confirm if bus and coach charter services are required to meet the accessible transport standards.

Charter services are services carrying specific groups of people who have booked a dedicated and defined service.

If accessible transport is required, this will form part of the charter request by the customer.

The Bus Industry Confederation would like to see the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) confirm in the standards that bus and coach charter services are excluded from the requirement to meet the accessible public transport standards.

Coach Tours

The coach sector has had to deal with a considerable level of financial hardship in relation to the installment of wheelchair chair lifts that are rarely used.

The coach sector is seeking greater clarity and a revised guideline regarding equal access to coaches for disabled persons and a common procedure to follow in the absence of wheelchair lifts and/or an accessible toilet. Greater flexibility must be given to allow operators to meet the needs of people with disabilities.

Coach operators are also seeking clarification in relation to destinations and tour visit locations that are not DDA compliant.

Many areas simply do not provide the facilities and/or infrastructure for people with disabilities and it remains outside the coach operators control.

The Bus Industry Confederation believes that the exemption in relation to 'adventure travel' should be extended to allow coach operators the flexibility to assess the suitability of publically available coach tours and destinations. Whilst it is clear to the industry that toilets on coaches do not need to meet accessibility standards due to the aisle width restrictions of buses and coaches, some confusion still exists within some jurisdictions on this requirement, for example when specifying vehicles for rail /coach services. A clear statement from AHRC or the Federal Department of Infrastructure and Transport in regard to accessible toilets on buses, in accordance with the ADR requirements for aisle width on buses and coaches, would provide clarity on this matter.

Workplace Injury and Practices

The Bus Industry Confederation is concerned about workplace injuries that are occurring as a direct result of the disability standards for accessible transport.

These injuries tend to occur in the event of drivers assisting people in mobility devices; that are not suitable to travel on buses or coaches; where infrastructure does not provide easy access to accessible buses; or in attempting to provide equivalent access to a person with a disability.

These issues are an unexpected outcome following the introduction of the DDA standards. The current AHRC process, which relies on consumer feedback and complaints, provides little scope to refuse access to a service for fear of complaint, compromising existing safe workplace practices for bus and coach industry staff and imposing significant costs on the industry in the form of injury, rehabilitation and compensation.

The BIC would like confirmation that Work Place Health and Safety regulations override the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, Accessibility Standards for Public Transport.

State Government Contracts

An important aspect of the implementation of the accessible transport standards that needs to be addressed by State Governments, AHRC and this 2nd 5 year Review is the nature of contractual arrangements that are entered into between State governments and private bus operators to provide contracted route services.

In some States route service contracts do not provide the funding to allow bus operators to upgrade their fleet to meet the compliance timeframe of the disability standards.

For example in NSW and Victoria the Government contracts include a minimum age of fleet requirement as well as including the cost of capital as an inclusion in the contract to assist operators meet the age of fleet requirements.

The BIC believes that this review should recommend that contractual arrangements in each state be assessed, and where contracts do not provide incentives, or the financial support to renew the bus fleet and meet the compliance timeframe of the Act, as outlined above, consideration be given to providing a general exemption to the bus and coach industry in that State.

A further issue is the definition of service and what percentage of services need to meet the compliance requirements of the disability standards for accessible public transport. This creates confusion amongst State Governments and operators and the requirements within a service contract. Industry holds the view that a service is a trip. For example and inward and outward trip is two services unless it is a circuitous route then it is a single trip.

So 55% of services having to be compliant to the standards is how industry defines the requirement. 55% of trips must be compliant, not 55% of the bus fleet in a bus operation.

School Bus Exemption

The BIC does not support the recommendation of the initial 5 year review to have school buses require disable access. These services are provided currently through specialised school services or directly by parents.

Whole of Trip Accessibility

The Bus Industry Confederation would like to raise concerns in relation to the provision of compliant infrastructure. Both State and Local Government have lagged behind in relation to investing in infrastructure that is compliant with the disability standards.

This often results in bus and coach operators unable to provide accessible trips as the surrounding infrastructure, for the “whole trip”, does not allow such a trip to occur. Where an operator does provide accessible vehicles in these circumstances it often relies on significant assistance by drivers and other passengers to assist the person with a disability. This often compromises their dignity, puts both driver and passenger at risk of possible injury and generally results in the bus operator being accused of not providing an accessible service.

The real need is for greater coordination and investment by State and Local Governments to address the “whole of trip” gaps that are evident in the system as a result of inaccessible infrastructure that is not suitable for the provision of low floor bus services.

Consideration needs to be given to how the compliance time frame for accessible vehicles and services can more fairly reflect these circumstances, to allow operators to meet compliance requirements in alignment with the provision of infrastructure that is compliant with the standards.

Grab Rails

Since December 2012, operators are required to be 100% compliant with grab rails according to the standards. The BIC notes the recent 5 year exemption provided to Brisbane Transport for grab rails that are fitted to buses where retirement is within the 5 year timeframe. The BIC raises this in the context of any possible future complaints (unlikely) and future consideration of this along similar lines to Brisbane Transport for other operators if a complaint were to be made.

Yours Sincerely



Michael Apps
Executive Director
Bus Industry Confederation

Mobility Device and their Restraint on Buses and Coaches
Accessible Public Transport 2012
Bus Industry Confederation

April 2012
Issues Paper

Updated May 2013

Introduction

This paper reflects specific issues and concerns as they relate to the bus and coach industry, the use of mobility devices, their restraint, identification of compliant mobility devices by drivers and practical operational issues that impact on the ability of bus operators to meet the requirements of the accessible transport standards.

Mobility Devices – Identification

The bus and coach industry believes that a system is required to have mobility devices clearly identifiable as being able to be carried on relevant modes of public transport.

Currently there is no satisfactory requirement or mechanism for bus and coach drivers to determine which mobility devices are suitable for use on accessible buses and coaches.

The Bus Industry Confederation would like to see a requirement introduced for mobility device manufacturers to ensure that all devices are appropriately identifiable as being safe and suitable to be carried on a particular public transport conveyance and that purchasers of such devices are made aware of the limitations that the standards impose, for example in the areas of size, mass and maneuverability

Larger buses are expected to have useful life of 20-25 years and the need for suitably labeled device is going to grow, not diminish.

This labeling process should be supported by a State by State education program for people with disabilities to understand the requirements of the standards for mobility devices.

Bus and Coach drivers need to be authorised to refuse access to a device that is not appropriately labeled.

Mobility Devices – Safety

A concern for bus and coach operators in relation to mobility devices is the safety of people using them and the safety and amenity of other passengers.

The areas of concern relate to:

- Mobility devices and their impact on the safety of the user and other passengers on buses in the event of an accident, heavy braking or swerving incident if the device/passenger is not secured.
- The inconvenience caused to other public transport users and the dignity of people with disabilities, when mobility devices which are not suitable for use on a conveyance results in accessibility ramps breaking on entry or the devices not being enabled to be maneuvered into allocated spaces due to their size and turning circle. Devices are getting stuck requiring “man handling” to free the device.
- The safety consequences of mobility devices of the “scooter” type that carry wet cell batteries. Wet cell batteries are a major concern due to possible leakage, the fluid is very acidic and flammable. Wet cell batteries have also been known to explode on impact and may be a safety hazard in the event of an accident or some form of impact on the battery.
- The effective restraint of mobility devices is a major concern to the industry. The bus and coach industry is required to meet stringent seat strength and anchorage requirements under Australian Design Rules. Key issues to be considered here are seat and mobility aid strength and mobility devices that are not secure becoming projectiles.
- The restraint of mobility devices is an ongoing area of uncertainty. The actual restraint of mobility devices is an imperfect science that results in people with disabilities being put at greater safety risk in order to obtain equal access to services.

- Australian Design Rules provide for seat strength and seat anchorage requirements that provide a level of occupant protection that cannot possibly be met by the mobility device, whether it is restrained or not. Further the wheelchair spaces on buses do not provide the compartmentalization benefits provided to other seated passengers.
- In relation to the restraint of mobility devices the accepted wisdom and practice is for mobility devices to be rearward facing against what is known as an "ironing board device". Some passengers with disabilities tether their device to the ironing board device. The practice of facing rearward is not accepted by many people with disabilities who wish to face to the front of the vehicle like most other passengers. This is a less safe option.
- Some discussion has been raised that active restraint of mobility devices be introduced for buses similar to taxis. This option is considered impractical due to the varying types of mobility devices that would be required to be restrained, the cost impacts, the vehicle mass increase, the inconvenience that would be imposed on other passengers and as outlined below driver responsibility issues.
- Bus operators' company policy varies on the instructions to drivers regarding leaving their seat to engage the wheelchair ramp to assist passengers with mobility devices and prams etc. In some cases the driver needs to make an assessment of the relevant circumstances including security of the cash box, number of passengers affected, suitability of the bus stop/kerbside.
- The BIC from broad consultation with Industry has summarized the Industry operational policy and advice given to drivers as:

"the driver should only leave the driving position to assist a passenger to enter or leave the bus to set and return the access ramp. This should only occur after the driver believes it is safe and reasonable that the bus is secure. All other reasonable assistance that is required should be provided by a carer, e.g. getting on and off the bus and maneuvering into an allocated wheelchair space or seating and for any restraint requirements".

Specific Coach Issues

- A number of specific concerns were raised by coach operators who operate in the deregulated long distance, tour, charter and express sector of the Industry.
- Some companies do not allow for people to travel on coaches without transferring to a seat belted passenger seat.
- Some users of wheelchairs and mobility devices request that they travel in their device. Coach operators are inclined to accept this request despite the fact that this is the less safe option and restraint of the device can in no way meet the requirements of the ADR's for seats, seat belts and seat anchorages. There are also concerns that drivers could injure a person in a wheelchair or themselves in attempting to restrain a wheelchair where no restraint or wheelchair strength standard exists and no crash testing simulation has been undertaken for when a wheelchair is tied down in a coach.
- In the above circumstance a coach operator will have to remove 4 seats to accommodate 1 chair space and six seats to accommodate 2 wheelchair spaces. This is a timely and costly exercise in the workshop and requires 2 people to undertake the seat removal task. If the journey is only one way the operator loses the seating capacity for the return trip.
- People using wheelchairs and other mobility devices to travel on coaches are boarded using a wheel chair lifter. A wheel chair lifter if used requires that 4 or more seats are removed from the bus to allow access into the bus and allow maneuverability into a seat or wheelchair space. Due to aisle width requirements for bus and coaches it is impossible for people in wheelchairs or other mobility devices to have access to water fountains and toilets and are restricted to remaining in the left hand of the bus for the duration of the trip. This places an extra burden on the operator and the driver to ensure that the person with a disability is

afforded the necessary rest breaks. This has flow on effects to timetables and driving hour's law requirements. This is further compounded as many refreshment stop businesses are not DDA compliant. Given that refreshment breaks are part of the overall service, operators are concerned that they might be made accountable for non compliance.

- A wheelchair lifter and the required engineering to install and operate it can add up to 600 kilograms to the Gross Vehicle Mass of the bus, this can mean, depending on the type of bus, more seats having to be removed to remain under the legal mass limits. Wheelchair lifts also add up to \$40,000 to the cost of purchasing the vehicle. Operators in effect are double whammied, they pay more for the vehicle to have a lifter and when it is required for use they lose seats and therefore cannot maximize the productivity of the vehicle. Depending on the location of the fitment of the lifter there is also a significant loss of luggage space.
- It should also be recognized that the floor height of some large coaches means that a wheel chair lifter cannot be fitted
- Coach operators thought that greater flexibility was required to meet the needs of people with disabilities and sub-contracting out services to meet the persons need should be accepted as delivering the mobility outcome desired.
- Coach operators strongly believe that based on actual use of wheelchair lifters and seat productivity losses that a strong case exists to argue unjustifiable hardship in meeting the requirements of the Act.

Workplace Injury and Practices

With the increase in safety requirements through operator's accreditation, service contracts, WHS Act, NHVR, there is greater focus on assessing and reducing the risk of bus incidents. The number of wheelchairs, mobility device incidents and driver safety concerns warrant the release of agreed guidelines that are consistent with OHS and other safety mechanism practices.

DDA Compliant Bus Stops

BIC is also concerned about the lack of mobility device suitable infrastructure at bus stops and the path areas to get to bus stops. It would appear local councils are not providing adequate infrastructure to meet the needs of people with disabilities to board and alight from buses. It should be noted that some local councils are working to provide adequate infrastructure such as Brisbane City Council, but much more needs to be done. There are instances of passengers falling from their devices, even with driver assistance because of unsuitable ground areas.

BIC proposes that the Federal Government establish a summit for all the key stakeholders to work out a suitable process that would cover mobility device labeling, overall bus passenger safety, infrastructure challenges and instructions to drivers consistent with safety standards.