

Transport For People with Disabilities Draft Report Call For Public Comment

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Sydney Legacy is a voluntary organisation caring for the dependants of deceased Australian war veterans and of service personnel killed on hazardous service or in training accidents. There are currently 360 people with disabilities enrolled with Sydney Legacy and 17,635 widows some of whom are people with limited mobility. Sydney Legacy would like to take this opportunity to provide feedback on behalf those dependants.

The comments provided in this document are based on the questions posed in the "Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport".

Accessibility Of Infrastructure.

The installation of lifts has commenced or lifts are already available at some railway stations. Transportable Ramps have been located at some stations to assist a person with disabilities to access trains.

Tactile sensors are now present on the edge of some platforms.

Have The Changes Matched Expectations?

Not all city rail stations are staffed all day. Therefore a staff member may not be present to provide ramp access to the train.

There are still a large number of railway stations that do not have lifts and have stair access only.

Room for people with disabilities who have mobility aids/wheelchairs is extremely limited due to old railway stock and buses.

Due to the crowding of public transport in peak hour, access onto train and buses is extremely difficult for a person with disabilities this is due to the lack of room for the person and their mobility aid. A person with disabilities may have to wait for other trains or buses or travel outside peak periods.

Ticket machines are difficult to access due to their height as are the ticket windows at railway stations.

Aircraft.

Toilets on aircraft. These are very narrow and access is extremely difficult for people with disabilities.

Increased travel costs can be placed on a person with disabilities as the Airline may insist that a person with disabilities is required to travel with a personal carer.

Buses.

There is a wheelchair symbol on the side of wheelchair accessible buses. Bus time tables have a symbol next to wheelchair accessible buses.

Currently 50% of the government bus fleet is wheelchair accessible. Hand rails and grab rails are present in most buses.

In areas where government buses are not provided access to privately operated buses is extremely limited for a person with disabilities due to the majority of these buses not providing suitable access.

Taxis.

Access to Taxis that meet the needs of a person with disabilities continues to be difficult. There can be additional costs on the person such as a charge to lift a walking frame into a boot.

Accessing a Taxi specifically in the school pick up and drop of times for adult people with disabilities can be difficult as a large number of Taxi's are required in those hours for younger people with disabilities who require these Taxi's to access schools.

Accessibility Of Information.

Announcement's on railway stations and information such as time tables are available at some stations.

Announcement on trains are often blurred or unable to be understood. The newer trains do have screens which display destinations.

Some of the newer trains do have brail near the emergency button. However the height and size of the information is very difficult for people in wheelchairs or people who are sight impaired to access or use.

Clarification Of Rights And Obligations.

The information on how to make a complaint is difficult to obtain and not readily available. It is suggested that information on the complaint process is made more readily available in the community. This would enable people with disabilities to be made aware of their rights in relation to making a complaint or a suggestion.

It is suggested that audits on the progress of the implementation of the Transport Standards based on the performance of transport providers are required if not already occurring.

The Disability Discrimination Act-Transport Standards.

The major issues regarding access to public transport system for people with disability have been considered over the last 6 years. Only a small percentage of rail stations are, as yet, accessible. This has resulted in people who have a mobility impairment in having to use taxi transport.

It is recognised that the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme does provide a 50% subsidy towards taxi costs. Even though this assistance is provided to those who qualify for taxi transport this type of transport can be cost prohibitive to a person with disabilities.

Currently the upper limit on the subsidy is \$30, this limit has not kept pace with the increase in Taxi fares. Rural travel often involves travel over greater distances but the subsidy through the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme is the same as that for the Sydney area.

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