

Monday 15 May 2017

To the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development,

RE: Feedback on *The Whole Journey: A guide for thinking beyond compliance to create accessible public transport journeys*

I commend you on the publication of the guide *The Whole Journey*, and for your continued extensive consultation with the disability sector and the general public on the topic of increasing accessibility on public transport journeys.

My office is responsible for handling complaints about Victorian disability service providers. We often receive out-of-scope enquiries and complaints relating to the accessibility and usability of public transport and general transport facilities. In fact, 7.2 per cent of all out-of-scope issues received by my office since 1 January 2010 relate to these issues. Our understanding of the frustrations felt by individuals with disability at being excluded from a basic right to access the community correlates with many of the recommendations made in the guide.

By way of example, in one out-of-scope enquiry brought to my office, Joe* wanted to make a complaint about a staff member of a public rail network in Victoria who was refusing to assist people living with disability with accessing the service. We referred Joe directly to the complaints department of the rail network. This issue of transport staff attitude and behaviour is often present in the out-of-scope complaints received by my office.

As you mention in '*Section 4.5: Accessibility throughout the infrastructure lifecycle*' and '*Section 4.5: Communicate don't correspond*', communication and consultation with user groups through each stage of the public transport design journey is crucial for these initiatives to succeed.

Customer focused performance criteria and true customer engagement should be built into all stages of projects to ensure that the work undertaken is appropriately designed for people with physical and cognitive disability. Consideration of plain English in communication assists many in the community who have limited literacy or English as a second language.

I encourage you to continue this inclusive consultation and good work into the future.

Please contact my office if you have any questions.



Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Harkin".

Laurie Harkin AM

Victorian Disability Services Commissioner

About the Disability Services Commissioner

The Disability Services Commissioner (DSC) commenced on 1 July 2007 under the *Disability Act 2006* (the Act) to improve disability services for people with a disability in Victoria. This independent statutory office works with people with a disability and disability service providers in Victoria to resolve complaints.

Our complaints resolution process is free, confidential and supportive and we encourage and assist the resolution of complaints in a variety of ways including informal approaches to resolution, conciliation processes, or under certain circumstances through investigations. Our person-centred approach aims to achieve improved service outcomes while actively supporting the rights of people with disability to live with dignity and respect.

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