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Dear Ms Cristofani

Submission to the consultation draft of the Whole Journey Guide

The Heart Foundation welcomes this opportunity to make a submission to the consultation draft of the *Whole Journey Guide: A guide for thinking beyond compliance to create accessible public transport journeys (the guide)*. As well as feedback through this submission, our Healthy Living Manager provided input into the process via attendance at the Brisbane consultation workshop last year.

We strongly support the delivery of the guide as a planning tool and its implementation as soon as possible. Our interest in the guide is its potential to improve access to affordable public transport for all and in doing so, support and improve the health and wellbeing of all Australians.

Addressing the social determinants of health such as access to transport, housing, education, employment and healthcare will go a long way towards supporting people with a disability to have greater engagement in economic and social life.

Increasing accessibility to the whole public transport journey for everyone will also deliver economic benefits by easing congestion on our roads, reducing pollution and delivering on many health benefits by supporting people to be more physically and socially active. This access includes the surrounding infrastructure and amenities to help people with disabilities (and all Australians) get to and from public transport, which is often overlooked due to silos of responsibility across the different levels of government.

Imagine a society in which it was extremely easy to get around in a wheelchair, with a walking stick or pram, carrying luggage or delivering goods; and where commuting via public transport was the first and easiest choice. This would significantly support most people to have greater access to affordable, reliable and frequent public transport.

We vigorously promote the need for Australians to be more physically active, with inactivity a largely under-recognised risk factor. One estimate suggests it is responsible for a disturbing 16,000 premature deaths in Australia each year¹.

Public transport use helps people to be more physically active. With nearly 65% of Queenslanders being overweight or obese², the increased use of incidental physical activity through public transport use is crucial. For people living with a disability, greater access to affordable, reliable and frequent public transport services can provide more opportunities to get out and about and be more physically active as well as more socially connected.

According to the latest [Transport Affordability Index report](#)³, public transport costs borne by Australian households has increased significantly due to fare rises in Melbourne, Hobart and Canberra. This highlights the need for more policies and infrastructure investments that will make public transport more affordable. The Government needs to develop a new transport infrastructure funding model that is fairer, more transparent, and more sustainable and which eases the cost to Australian families.

The Heart Foundation has used Australian data to develop interactive [Heart Maps](#)⁴ that show that most residents are not active enough to gain a health benefit. We know that people who use public transport walk at least 30 minutes more a day compared to people who drive private vehicles⁵.

A healthy economic future for Australia will be shaped by the health and wellbeing of the population². That is why we need a coordinated, systems approach across whole-of-government and industry to prevent and manage chronic diseases and mental health and a focus on sustaining health and wellbeing for all. This includes both physical infrastructure and social infrastructure that enhances productivity, the economy and the community.

Car dependent and sedentary behaviours are significant contributing factors to the prevalence of preventable chronic disease. The built environments in which we live, work, shop, play, learn and pray need to be conducive to healthy living by being walkable, closer together and intermingled, not spread apart^{6,7}.

Recent research has confirmed that commuting by walking was associated with a lower risk of adverse cardiovascular disease outcomes. Commuting undertaken totally or partially by bicycle was associated with a lower risk of a range of adverse health outcomes. These findings, if causal, suggest community health may be improved by policies that increase active commuting, particularly cycling, such as the creation of cycle lanes, cycle hire or purchase schemes, and better provision for bicycles on public transport⁸.

Understanding the relationship between design and people's physical activity levels will be important in reviewing the guide. We recommend a 'streets for people' approach be applied, where access for people of all ages and abilities is under consideration. The guide must proactively support high patronage by people walking, cycling or wheeling to the stops/stations to reward, rather than punish, them for arriving without a car⁹.

Access and adequate end of trip facilities should also be of high priority. We envisage stops/stations and the surrounding streets will be connected, vibrant hubs with world class liveable public spaces to make access to and from these areas easy and enjoyable. Built or natural shade (e.g. street trees), appropriately placed benches, path lighting, water bubblers and bicycle racks/lockers, once considered "amenities", are now recognised as functional and important street furnishings for users of all ages and abilities¹⁰. We applaud the inclusion of such supporting infrastructure in the guide.

It is an exciting prospect to provide more accessible, affordable, reliable and frequent public transport journeys for everyone. Well-designed, quality street environments not only support increased physical and social activity but are also good for business. Our discussion paper, [Good for Business](#)¹¹ shows creating better environments for walking and cycling not only increases the property values for the area, but also encourages people to spend time outside, increase footfall and potentially generate more local business.

In addition to the guide being used as a planning tool, there also needs to be greater investment in accessible infrastructure where gaps are identified (e.g. lifts and ramps at train stations). Having this available at only some public transport stops is not inclusive. The guide

also needs to help meet the needs of people living in regional, rural and remote areas of Australia who have limited access to affordable public transport.

Other inclusive strategies for positive pedestrian flow we hope to see encouraged for all abilities, including provision for vision impaired pedestrians are:

- pedestrian positive street crossings with timers of increased duration
- more footpath ramps, wider footpaths and more mid-block crossings
- traffic restraints/disincentives
- 30kph speed limits (or less)
- innovative pedestrian boulevards
- reallocation of road assets (car park repurposing)
- points/destinations of interest, with no blank walls, activating the city
- destination hooks, way finding signage/maps

We look forward to receiving updates on the progress of the guide and appreciate the opportunity to have positive input.

Yours sincerely



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