

The Whole Journey

Comments from Kingborough Council’s Access Advisory Committee

This response comes from Southern Tasmania where public transport options can be limited for residents of all abilities.

Comments on Section 1 - Introduction

A key factor has been identified in the Introduction, the Whole Journey’ 1.1 states ‘...providing an alternative to private vehicles’

This stand-alone comment has relevance to this submission.

A disabled driver can have more control over their whole journey in a private vehicle because they are in control of braking and acceleration, steering etc. They are belted in, holding onto the steering wheel. If travelling by other means, their comfort is often severely compromised, because in reality bus travel can cause stresses and strains on passengers with ‘hidden disabilities’ – such as chronic pain sufferers. Some people use private vehicles as a whole journey because there is no other option and it is part of their independence.

Comments on Section 2 – Influencing Factors

General Comments

Taxis -will most probably still remain a preferred mode of transport for many people in Tasmania, but the make and model of cars converted for taxi use is inadequate. Fleet owners should be encouraged to look at smaller makes and models when replacing existing vehicles. Grab points in taxis are not serviceable for a passenger. Some people need the door fully extended to get in and are immediately propelled down into a bucket seat, especially if vinyl, making door grab handles out of reach and a struggle. When getting out, the door threshold is usually high, people struggle and again grab points are out of reach.

It would be easier for some people if seating was more level and the seat mounting higher, this would allow the passenger a slight lifting of their feet over the door threshold and down onto the ground. If this applied to smaller vehicles the door would be shorter when opened and grab points easier to access.

Buses – A thoughtful re-design of buses which might involve removing front



seating and providing more grab handles for ambulant passengers is a simple solution to providing space for people using mobility aids. Stand-up resting pads rather than seats could free up much needed space, move more people over shorter distances and perhaps even create greater ease when embarking and disembarking

Comment on 2.5 Integrated planning - The type of bus and routes should be considered carefully outside peak times, as those who are no longer in the workforce still access their local communities through the day. Articulated busses are not ideal for some routes that require sharp turns into narrow streets, rear wheels on these busses and mount the kerb, giving an uncomfortable experience. Routes changes outside peak times would allow more connection for people to visit friends, access leisure and health facilities and shopping. Forward planning of new developments need to consider making transport more inviting than car use.

## Comments on Section 3 – Parts of Journey

### General Comments

All bus stops should have paved areas, seats under shelter. All bus stops need real-time visual and audio considerations, away from sunlight and traffic noise. Ideally, buses should have a 'look out' person (conductor) to assist people on busses. Seatbelts should be standard.

Comment on 3.2.2 Pathway Quality - Pathway quality dramatically affects people's confidence and ability to access public transport options.

Comment on 3.2.3 Obstructions – As above with inadequate pathways, obstructions dramatically affect people's ability to attempt a journey optimistically. The possibility of obstructions being present is enough to deter people with mobility challenges.

Comment on 3.4.5 – *"...driving in a manner that considers passenger safety and comfort" and "helping travellers alight from vehicles"* – often lacking with both bus and taxi drivers. A Driver Education program could be developed to help public passenger drivers understand how travellers can be adversely affected by their actions.



# Kingborough

## Comments on Section 4 – What Does this Mean for Us

### General Comments

Stakeholder collaboration to achieve acceptable '*whole journey*' outcomes:

The reach for input to the discussion needs to extend beyond 'user groups' to individuals who do not identify with any 'user group'. The people who have never owned a car, cannot afford taxis and who are not necessarily considered disabled are often isolated and may be able to contribute enormously to the discussion around problems of access and use of public transport .

The Federal Government could consider holding series of public daytime meetings encouraging all bus patrons and potential bus patrons to contribute ideas and issues around achieving the best possible outcomes for all passengers and potential passengers.