

Dear Sir Madam

22 April 2013

I would like to submit a private response to the review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport. I am a regular public transport user and a person who has lived with a disability for almost 60 years I am legally blind and have a hearing impairment. I work in the disability field and am in regular contact with people with disabilities who use public transport. I would like to highlight for the review the range of issues which have come to my attention and which if acted upon would bring improvements to the public transport system for people with disabilities

There have been a number of welcome Improvements since the implementation of the Standards in Victoria which include:

- The availability of route and timetable information by phone and on line,
- Availability of audible announcements on public transport vehicles and at stops
- Greater awareness of the needs of people with disabilities by staff on public transport has been a welcome inclusion.

However there have been some areas where Standards have not been met or are being implemented very slowly. My suggestions for improvements are as follows:

- The introduction of electric powered cars must be addressed in the Standards because people with vision impairment can't hear them. Consultation with representative bodies such as Blind Citizens Australia would provide an opportunity for people to provide solutions to ensure these vehicles are introduced safely.
- Parking bays of sufficient size for Wheelchair Accessible Taxis and similar private vehicles at public transport interchanges are not generally available. Bays with sufficient length and width should be made available to ensure that people using wheelchairs in such vehicles can load and unload safely
- The availability of low floor busses is intermittent so people with disabilities don't trust that they can get to their destinations and get home when using them. The development of a simple system to show the availability of low floor busses operated by the bus companies would solve this.
- Wheelchair users don't like sharing the only space they can board trains with bike users. Bike users should be encouraged to use other parts of the train.
- Audible announcements on trains busses and trams are great but they must be turned on and used. A system to enforce the use of such audible systems would be a great improvement.
- There is a concern that Smartphone apps are not accessible to people with vision impairments. A technological fix should be found for this.
- Some big infrastructure projects in Victoria have been disappointing with a new station built at Westall without ramp access. A wheelchair user would be stranded if the lifts at that station are out of order. Announcements on trains

warning of this problem would be a solution. People reliant on using the lifts could then choose to travel to a more accessible station.

- Design for public transport interchanges would benefit from taking a holistic approach to planning. For example the taxi rank at Dandenong Station has been moved to far away from the bus interchange and Station entry, Consultation with local disability groups and flexibility among transport operators would be welcomed in solving such matters.

There is little policing of the implementation of the milestones associated with the Standards. People with disabilities are required to use discrimination law which is slow expensive and time consuming to point out failures in systems. There is a strong argument for the development of a federal body to enforce Standards and ensure that milestones are met.

Finally it appears that there has been little notice taken of the 2007 review of the Access to Public Transport Standards An update on the progress of this review and any subsequent changes as a result of the 15 recommendations that came out of that review would be appreciated.

Please feel free to contact me if you require further information

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