

Whittlesea Disability Network

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Submission to the Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 Draft Report

The Whittlesea Disability Network (WDN) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 Draft Report.

WDN is a group of residents with disabilities, carers and service providers who meet monthly to share information and consider and address emerging issues experienced by people with disabilities.

WDN has over 300 members and approximately 30-40 members attend the monthly meetings which are convened and resourced by City of Whittlesea officers. WDN provides advocacy and advice to Council, other levels of government and health and community service providers. WDN oversees a number of working groups, including an Accessible Parking and Transport Working Group. The Accessible Parking and Transport Working Group has a membership of residents with disabilities, carers, service providers and City of Whittlesea staff from the Access, Customer Service, Engineering & Transportation and Local Laws teams.

The information provided in this submission was collected from the personal experiences of the Working Group's members.

The Working Group would like to comment on the recommendations that are included in the draft report.

The Working Group is disappointed that many of the actions are actions that were recommendations from the 2007 Report. We are hoping that further progress can be made on these actions.

The Working Group is also concerned that the recommendations are very general and do not focus on specific improvements that are needed to increase the accessibility for people with disabilities accessing Public Transport. An example of this is including ramps at train stations as a part of the Standards.

Recommendation 1: National reporting on compliance

The Working Group supports this recommendation and approves of the new framework.

Recommendation 2: Modernise the Transport Standards

The Working Group supports this recommendation and welcomes the opportunity to be involved in the discussions regarding modernising the Transport Standards

Recommendation 3: The complaints process

The Working Group fully supports this recommendation. We feel there are many issues around the current complaints process, especially when a complaint is not resolved at an Australian Human Rights Commission mediation.

Recommendation 4: Whole-of-journey accessibility

The Working Group fully supports this recommendation. We would also like to highlight the need for the pre-journey to be included in the whole-of-journey. This includes accessibility guidelines to be developed for the information that is provided on Websites and on Smartphone Apps. These guidelines need to include accessibility in two ways: 1) That the Websites/Smartphone apps are accessible for people with disabilities (e.g. people who are Visually Impaired/people who need Easy English), 2) That there is clearer information on accessibility of pieces of transport on Websites and Smartphone apps for people to use while planning their journey.

Recommendation 5: National motorised mobility aid labelling scheme

The Working Group fully supports this recommendation. Members know of many occasions where people with disabilities have purchased aids and equipment and find out after they have purchased them that they will not be able to use the equipment on Public Transport. The Working Group also recommends that the labelling scheme take the next step and develop a system to easily identify anchor points on all aids and equipment. This might be painting anchor points in yellow. This would stop the issue of transport providers anchoring equipment on parts of the aid that are not designed to be anchor points.

Recommendation 6: National wheelchair accessible taxi compliance milestones

The Working Group supports this recommendation. Wheelchair accessible taxis are the only transport option for many of our local residents with the lack of public transport in our growing municipality. For many residents this is the only way they can get around to do their day to day tasks.

Recommendation 7: Review of Disability Access Facilitation Plan

The Working Group supports this recommendation.

Conclusion

As previously stated, the WDN Accessible Parking and Transport Working Group welcomes the opportunity to contribute to this review process. The Working Group considers that the Government and Public Transport providers need to acknowledge that access to public transport is the right of people with disabilities and not just “best practice”. The Working Group hopes that the findings from this review will influence changes to public transport to make a system that will meet the rights and needs of everyone in our community.

Whittlesea Disability Network Accessible Parking and Transport Working Group

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