

**South Australia Department of Planning,
Transport and Infrastructure Submission to the
2012 Review of the *Disability Standards for
Accessible Public Transport 2002***

October 2014

Introduction

The Government of South Australia supports public transport as a significant mode of travel and recognises the substantial community and environmental benefits that can be gained by encouraging its use and is committed to providing a modern, accessible public transport system of which all users can be proud.

The Public Transport Services Division of South Australia's Department for Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) is responsible for the operation and regulation of the passenger transport network, including bus, train and tram services, and the regulation of the state's taxi industry. This includes supporting the provision of regional and community passenger transport networks. The department also manages the delivery of the significant capital investment in public transport, including electrification of rail and delivering initiatives to provide a safe, inclusive, accessible and customer focussed public transport network for all South Australians.

DPTI is committed to "removing the barriers" for people with disabilities. DPTI recognises the rights of people with disabilities to have, as far as it is reasonably practical, the same opportunities as other community members to access and participate in all facets of community life. This commitment is embraced by the Public Transport Services Division.

The public face of the bus, train and tram service is Adelaide Metro. In the 2012/13 financial year, patronage on the Adelaide Metro network was 63.19 million. On average 80% of our passengers are carried by bus, 16% by train and 4% by tram.

As at 30 October 2013, the Adelaide Metro fleet comprises of 976 buses (for regular route services), 99 railcars and 21 trams. New electric rail cars have also started arriving (66) to be progressively introduced into passenger service on our newly electrified and extended line in Adelaide's south in early 2014.

Each weekday our public transport system operates over 9,000 scheduled bus services, over 500 scheduled train services and over 240 scheduled tram services.

Upgrades to public transport facilities to meet accessibility requirements have continued. New and upgraded rail, bus and tram projects and facilities incorporate accessible infrastructure, products and services for the community.

Section A Responses – For operators and providers

Have you been able to meet the 2007 Transport Standards legislated targets? If not, can you elaborate on the reasons for not being able to meet these targets?

DPTI is committed to providing accessible service, but it is difficult to assess compliance against the Transport Standards as currently written. At the 2007 Review of the Transport Standards, the concern was raised regarding clear and consistent understanding of what constitutes compliance. It is difficult to assess percent complete compliance without objective measures. Bus stop compliance was used as an example in the discussion.

Some specific actions taken by DPTI as of the 2007 targets are below.

- H class tram were still in service (steps and not accessible) mixed with new compliant low floor Flexity trams.
- Tram stations were continually being rebuilt or upgraded as part of the track upgrade. This included upgrade of pedestrian crossings directly related to tram stations.
- Some Intermediate (mid-block at grade) pedestrian crossings were included in above tram works program.
- Railcars were continually being refurbished.
- Train stations were upgraded based upon a ranking system chosen by the Board of the previous rail service provider, TransAdelaide.

Have you been able to meet the 2012 Transport Standards legislated targets? If not, can you elaborate on the reasons for not being able to meet these targets?

As was discussed in the 2007 Review of the Transport Standards, the need for clear and uniform understanding of what constitutes compliance is a significant hurdle to assessing how targets are achieved.

While there remains investment still to be made, DPTI has made significant advancement in DSAPT compliance since 2007. Investment to date has been applied throughout the business. Specific initiatives are discussed in later sections of this report.

Are there requirements that have proven to be impractical or difficult to implement? If so, please specify.

As mentioned above, there is a general lack of uniformly accepted method for measuring compliance. As compliance with the Transport Standards provides a defence against the Act, further guidance for determining and measuring compliance is necessary for Operators/Providers to effectively manage and report on their obligations. A specific example is the standard for equivalent response time between accessible taxis and other taxis. DPTI is in support of the intention of the standard, but believes implementation is problematic as there is no clear definition of response times or of equivalence and because of the attribution of responsibility for compliance.

One specific issue which is difficult to implement relates to the interface between train/tram and platforms. This is an issue that is being worked through, but has been identified across the industry as difficult to achieve compliance.

Can you provide detail on any initiatives and actions you have undertaken, not currently detailed under the Transport Standards or other legislative requirements, in relation to removing discrimination against people with disabilities?

DPTI has developed a number of initiatives and modifications to the public transport system intended to assist people with disabilities. These initiatives are largely in the rolling stock, communications and infrastructure arenas. Specific examples are provided in Section B below.

Section B Responses – For State and Territory Governments

Has the accessibility of public transport within your jurisdiction improved since 2007?

Yes, DPTI is committed to providing an accessible public transport service and will continually strive to improve access throughout the network. Specific examples of improvements are provided in the bullets below.

- *How has accessibility to conveyances (eg trains, buses and coaches, trams, ferries, wheelchair accessible taxis and aircraft) changed? Have compliance targets been met? Can you provide examples? If compliance targets have not been met, can you elaborate on the reasons for not being able to meet these targets?*

The Adelaide Metro bus fleet is currently approximately 86 percent accessible, and is two years ahead of schedule to be at 100 percent by December 31, 2022, as required under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)*. DPTI is very sensitive to the needs of people with disabilities or those who have mobility difficulties, and is seeking to introduce a fully accessible bus fleet as soon as it is financially and operationally possible. The annual bus replacement program introduces approximately 25-30 new fully accessible buses to the fleet each year.

In regional areas, all new Service Contracts established for the provision of regular passenger transport services include the requirement that all vehicles must be fully accessible with space for at least one wheelchair or mobility aid.

Our tram fleet and electric trains are fully accessible. The trains feature disability access compliance with wheelchair spaces and access ramps. The wide-body trains provide more

room for passengers and a host of other features including safety CCTV, high capacity air conditioning, double leaf saloon doors and passenger emergency intercoms at each doorway. All railcars accessible with the use of the direct assistance provision in Transport Standards (Driver or PSA will deploy manual compliant ramp).

Adelaide's existing diesel 3000/3100 railcar series has been refurbished to make them fully accessible. Refurbishments included the addition of audio loops for automated onboard announcements, which are also relayed visually, increased space for people with physical disabilities and priority seating for customers with guide dogs.

A number of initiatives have been implemented throughout the rolling stock fleet. Our 3000-class trains (2/3rds of the fleet) and the future electric trains are fitted with the 'door open' button which has both an audible sound and illumination (flashing light) at the correct door for exit. Priority seating on rollingstock is a different colour to make it easily identified. Handrails and guiderails leading to this seating are yellow to indicate path to the seating. Rail car doors are bordered in highly reflective paint to aid in identification.

The metropolitan Adelaide taxi industry provides transport to people with disabilities with 100 wheelchair accessible Access Taxis (out of 1108 total). This has increased by nearly 45% since 2006/07. As the State government does not licence taxis outside of metropolitan Adelaide, individual country taxi operators are responsible for the provision of wheelchair accessible taxi services in their areas.

For Metropolitan Adelaide, the State Government has set special conditions for Access Taxis. Access Taxis must provide a dedicated service to wheelchair accessible taxi work between 7.30am and 6.30pm daily (that is, they cannot do general taxi work during these times unless rostered off), must all be working on days of dedicated service such as Christmas Day, must belong to a single Centralised Booking Service (CBS) contracted to the government, they must be linked to this CBS at all times and give priority to WAT work from this CBS outside of dedicated hours.

In addition, while the State Government does not pay a lifting fee for WAT work, it provides a performance based "On Time Bonus" payment to drivers if WAT jobs are picked up within 30 minutes and an additional payment to the CBS if the job is picked up under 13 minutes. In addition, the State Government introduced multi-seat tariffs for carrying 5 or more passengers which supports the large WAT vehicles to be on the road outside of dedicated

hours. The State Government subsidizes taxi travel for people with permanent disabilities through the SA Transport Subsidy Scheme.

- *How has accessibility of information (eg, maps, timetables, announcements, etc) changed? Can you provide examples?*

DPTI is committed to providing printed and online information that is accessible to everyone who uses its services and programs. Refinements are guided by user groups as well as disability service and training providers. An example is the removal of graduations in colour on printed timetables for better contrast for people with vision impairments. Additionally, a signage package has been developed for all train customers using both words and pictograms, thus assisting people with cognitive disabilities or English as a second language. Other initiatives include the use of Braille Precinct Maps and both tactile and non tactile directional assistance.

Information and instructional material for the new smart card ticketing system, Metrocard, is available in a range of formats to ensure accessibility and inclusiveness. Instructional video clips, which are available on websites and on DVD, have voice-over with AUSLAN sign-language as well as subtitles to assist a wider audience who are more fluent in written communication. As part of the introduction of Metrocard, information sessions were provided to various sectors of the community to support their transition to and increase their confidence in using the new system.

In 2012 Adelaide Metro launched a new look Adelaide Metro Website with content written in plain English to be simple and understandable to the many diverse populations in the community. The website also has Live Chat - a web based 2-way conversation platform for customers who prefer or need to write rather than speak. This opened another channel for the deaf, hearing and/or speech impaired community to make contact in addition to the National Relay Service.

The Adelaide Metro InfoLine has proudly partnered with Multicultural SA's Interpreting and Translating Centre to assist customers from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds. Staff at the Adelaide Metro InfoCentres are also

trained to identify potential need for Interpreter services to assist customers in a face to face environment.

The installation of large format screens replacing LED signs at key railway stations has provided highly visible real time train arrival information; this coupled with voice annunciators and hearing induction loops provides equivalent information for all customers. Touch Kiosks at the main Adelaide Railway Station incorporated visual, audio and Braille as a means of determining the next train service platform departure location and departure time.

Audible automated announcements are available on all rolling stock except the 2000 class diesel railcars. Specific announcements are made from tram vehicles to differentiate between the full service and the City loop service.

A long line public address system has been installed across the Adelaide Metro rail network which allows service disruption information to be announced at stations. The design included integration with the Passenger Information system using existing induction loops to provide this information in an accessible format.

- *How has accessibility of infrastructure (eg, any structure or facility that is used by passengers in conjunction with travelling on a public transport service) changed? Can you provide examples?*

The South Australian Government through DPTI is currently assisting local governments on a program to replace and build new bus shelters across the public transport network. Shelters and bus stop areas (excluding the bus stop pole) are, in the main, the responsibility of local councils, which includes to requirement to ensure these areas are accessible. The Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure (DPTI) is, however currently assisting local Governments, as part of a program to replace and build new shelters across our public transport network. Over the life of the Program, hundreds of shelters are being installed across the State to provide a more comfortable and accessible public transport experience, while ensuring compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992. Councils are matching the State Government funding and also will be responsible for the ongoing day-to-day maintenance of these bus shelters. Since 2010, over 500 grants have been issued for shelters, with the majority of these installed.

All Tram Intermediate pedestrian crossings have compliant lighting and are accessible. The emergency gates at all rail at-grade active crossings are yellow to provide greater visibility.

Infrastructure and facilities are continuously upgraded, with access reviews a requirement at each stage of a major infrastructure design project. Since 2007, upgrades to rail stations have included installation of tactile indicators, DDA compliant signage, a lighting upgrade to the Adelaide Railway Station and full upgrades to two stations. The full upgrades have included raising the platform, new shelters and seating and upgrades to lighting, ramps and pedestrian mazes.

- *Have you been able to improve the collection and reporting of reliable, current data on public transport accessibility within your jurisdiction?*

DPTI has improved its data collection through implementation of a customer relationship management tool. This tool is used by service providers as well as information centre staff. Additionally, monthly Cognoss reports provide information of patronage for people with disabilities via station, service, date and time.

Are there any other initiatives and actions in relation to removing discrimination from public transport services, which do not come under the above, for which you can provide details?

The Public Transport Services Division of DPTI hosts the Transport Accessibility Advisory Group (TAAG). The TAAG is convened and focussed on public transport and is the key body for consultation with people with disabilities. TAAG provides input into the design, delivery and continuous improvement of our services and infrastructure. TAAG consists of representatives drawn from the representative peak bodies and/or consumer representatives from the recognised areas of disability; physical; sensory; intellectual; psychiatric; neurological; mental health, developmental and learning disabilities.

TAAG comprises representatives from:

- Disability Advocacy and Complaints Service Inc;
- Physical Disability Council of SA;
- Deaf Australia;
- Guide Dogs Association SA/NT;
- Royal Society for the Blind of SA;
- Local Government Association of SA;
- Intellectual Disability Council;
- Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association SA Inc ;
- Paraplegic and Quadraplegic Association SA Inc;
- COATA SA;
- Cara SA;

- SA Department for Communities and Social Inclusion; and
- SA Multicultural and Ethnic Affairs Commission.

Additionally, the Plus One Free Companion Card is designed to support people with disabilities who are unable to travel independently to use public transport. The Plus One Free Companion card provides for free travel for a companion/carer accompanying a card holder on Adelaide Metro bus, train and tram services within metropolitan Adelaide. Currently there are over 19,000 Plus One Free Companion card holders.

Disability awareness training is well established within the division. New employees undertake online training during induction and resources are also available on the department's intranet. In many cases, frontline staff training includes presentations by peak disability organisations.

Finally, DPTI is currently implementing access to real time information for bus, train and tram services. Real time information identifies the location of Adelaide Metro services updated every 15 seconds and will enable Public Transport Services to provide real time information (every 60 seconds to customers) so that customers can more accurately plan their journeys. The information shows not only how far away a specific bus is to their stop, but also if that bus is wheelchair accessible.