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## TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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O/N 59105

### **THE ALLEN CONSULTING GROUP**

### **REVIEW OF THE DISABILITY STANDARDS FOR ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

**HEARING CONDUCTED AT: TRAM SHED  
4 INVERMAY ROAD  
LAUNCESTON**

**DATE: 17 JULY 2007**

MR BELL: I am John Bell and this is Sharon Kennard and we are from the Allen Consulting Group's Canberra office and we are doing this first five year review of the disability standards in the transport sector- the public transport sector. So these are standards set up under the DDA as you know, the Disability Discrimination Act and  
5 there is an implementation period that is extending out over about thirty years. So this is the first five year review and we are looking to see what sort of progress has been made, how happy people are with the progress, what are the issues that are still concerning people; those sorts of things.

10 And we are recording this because we are going to put it up on the internet and that is because there are lots of people who are interested in these consultations but are not able to attend and that will also be helpful, I imagine, for people who are working on submissions because, as you may also know, there is an invitation to provide written input to this review. The date for that is now 24 August and so some of these  
15 discussions we hope will help people who are preparing submissions.

Now, not everybody is going to make a submission so some people are just going to come and talk to us and that is fine, but obviously we are keen to get the submissions. I think that is probably all I need to say. So we are just interested in talking to you about  
20 what your perceptions are about the issues and what you think about the progress to date. Do you want to say something?

MS FROST: I am Karen Frost from the Independent Living Centre in Tasmania. We welcome the disability standards review process and the fact that the standards are being put in place and there is a chance to comment on them and we wanted to be part  
25 of the review due to the nature of our organisation, we weren't really sure how this format was going to be and we - yes, so we just wanted to say really how pleased we are that the standards were introduced, being reviewed and there has been some improvement in general in accessibility of public transport with disabilities which we  
30 are very pleased to see as well.

Particularly note the improvement in information from the airlines that is available on the internet. It used to be very difficult to find any information about chair - the air lifts, the chair lifts on the planes, the seating capacity and some of the other areas of how  
35 people could access - people with disabilities could access airlines. General accessing of information about accessible transport is required and we need to know where it is and who to contact, how to know where it is; so that sort of thing there still seems to be some obscurity around and making the information available and easy to find.

40 There are still some difficulties with the airlines that we perceive. Mainly in the way of seat width, which have improved but it really depends on the aircraft and - because not all the fleet has been updated so it depends on which aircraft you get and there is no consistency with aircraft being on certain flights or anything like that. And the seat belt lengths are still some problems in some flights as well for, you know, people - obese  
45 people and the air chairs, the availability for obese people is unclear. Historically it has not really been that available, it has been more for people in wheel chairs rather than people who have difficulty - obese people who we know about.

And it is difficult still to find information from airlines about the dimensions of chairs. Most airline chairs are 16 inches and that is really not enough for people who have had hip replacements, which tend to be a bigger person as well and they vary again, like I say, each flight type of aircraft and for people with hip replacements as well the seats are a bit too low, the cushions that they give them, the wedge cushions don't allow for the seat belts to be done up still around them - the person, because the seat belts are very short.

MS KENNARD: Okay.

MS FROST: And it is also bookings for the front rows cannot always be guaranteed, although they say the front two rows sometimes but even then that is not ordinarily accessible. So that is really all we had. It was mainly airlines. We do note that, you know, Metro seems to be working on a plan but we can't really comment too much about that, we haven't done a lot of research on that.

MR BELL: Yes. Well, look, just talking about the buses for a moment, we talked to the Metro people in Hobart yesterday and as they invest in new buses they are getting equipment that - ramps mainly, that allows people in wheelchairs to get on these buses, but they commented to us that one of their big challenges is the infrastructure; they say the footpaths and the kerbs and things like that.

MS FROST: It is.

MR BELL: What is the situation here in Launceston?

MS FROST: Much the same.

MR BELL: It is still a problem.

MS FROST: Very - yes, Launceston City Council is working on access but of course there is the difference between - well, there is a lot of infrastructure to be dealt with and it is not just in the town area; regional areas are having difficulties as well, you know, just in general, it is nice to see that there are more maxi taxis around, although still there are times when there are not enough accessible taxis and that sort of thing. Yes, it is very difficult to say with Metro because we haven't had a lot to do with that. I know Anglicare did a study recently about that sort of thing and that might be worth looking at.

MR BELL: Okay. So perhaps we could follow that up. So the infrastructure is an issue and I guess it is not just the uneven footpaths and lack of kerb or whatever, but sometimes the bus shelters and the footpath width and so on.

MS FROST: Yes, the difficulty with - there is a lot of difficulty with that sort of thing. I mean, I understand with Metro capital, it is a huge cost to getting a new bus so I would understand why they would need time to do that and the same with the Council with infrastructure, that is pretty big and bus shelters too. I mean, how can you make them visible and accessible - - -

MR BELL: Yes.

MS FROST: - - - and be weatherproof, because that is an issue as well.

5 MR BELL: There are a few challenges there, yes. Now, you are a little bit closer to the ferries than the folk in Hobart, do you get any reports about accessibility in getting on and off the boats?

MS FROST: I can't comment on that, I am afraid.

10

MR BELL: No.

MS FROST: Some of my staff may have some information but it is something that we haven't had a lot to do with. We certainly don't ask our clients this information, but - - -

15

MR BELL: No, I understand that, you would only pick it up if it was volunteered.

MS FROST: Yes. And so I am sorry. Or if some of our therapists had been trying to place somebody on the ferry for transport across with one particular condition, but no, I am sorry, I can't comment on that.

20

MR BELL: Yes. What is the situation where some of your clients need to go, for example, to Hobart for medical attention?

25 MS FROST: Again, our clients are general public off the street, we have very few actual face to face clients.

MR BELL: Yes.

30 MS FROST: We deal with all the time - I mean, not sort of caring clients; you would have to talk to people in the Community Transport Scheme or some of the other - yes, there are some issues with the Community Transport Scheme about there being a lack of availability of vehicles and things like that. I don't know how the Redline coaches or the other intrastate coach services operate and how accessible they are.

35

MR BELL: Yes. And there is no train any more between - - -

MS FROST: Hasn't been a train for many, many years.

40 MR BELL: There is none. But there is a goods service?

MS FROST: The different freight companies - - -

MR BELL: Yes, freight companies.

45

MS FROST: - - - that freight things, but not - it is usually particularly for like the sawmills.

MR BELL: Yes. Okay. So just let me ask you about the Independent Living Centre, which I have come across before because they are in a number of capitals. What is the main role of ILC?

5 MS FROST: Information and advice - - -

MR BELL: Information and advice.

10 MS FROST: - - - about assistive technology, which is any device or equipment that can assist people with daily living.

MR BELL: Yes. So do you provide advice for example, on wheelchairs?

15 MS FROST: Yes.

MR BELL: Okay. One of the issues that has been raised are the new generation of scooters which are quite large and heavy.

20 MS FROST: Yes.

MR BELL: And there has been a suggestion that there should be some standards developed for these so that some of the taxis and buses, for example, have difficulty with the heavier, larger models.

25 MS FROST: Well, there are Australian standards - I don't know if there are Australian standards around scooters themselves. I am not the person at our centre that deals with scooters. We can certainly get some information and provide that to you but I believe that technology should be updated as new things come up and people - you know, the innovators shouldn't be restricted, but I also believe that there needs to be some ability for certain types of scooters to be able to be transported easily because some of our clients do require them to be transported and some of them are easier to transport than others.

35 And we advise our clients, depending on whether they are likely to be transporting them, as to which sorts of scooters are most appropriate for them. So I believe that as long as people are - and it is not always the case I know, because, you know, the retailers of these products don't advise their clients because they are not qualified to in that respect because they don't have occupational therapists on the staff, but our occupational therapist look at the whole circumstances of the clients and they say to them, "Are you going to be transporting this scooter or wheelchair" and if they answer in the affirmative then they say, "Okay, you will need to look at this type or this model or whatever and look at a different type." So I think as long as people are informed properly then they should have choice.

45 MR BELL: Yes.

MS FROST: But that is the most important thing is the information. Of course the gee whiz you want great big ones, which are huge, you would never lift them up, you

know, you would have to have a ramp or something huge to put them into and if you were going to be transporting them yourself well, it is probably impracticable. But if you are not going to be taking them anywhere or you have got a suitable vehicle that will take them and you know about it then it is your choice to buy that particular variety.

MR BELL: Yes. I have seen some that you can - with a little winch attached to your car, wind it and put it up on the roof.

10 MS FROST: Yes.

MR BELL: Yes, I don't know that you would do that here in Launceston.

15 MS FROST: No. I have seen that sort of thing where you can lift them up and put them in the back of a station wagon or something like that - - -

MR BELL: Yes.

20 MS FROST: - - - but some of those - or a bigger boot, but no, you would have to look at the type of equipment you were buying for yourself and consider all of those options.

MR BELL: And how you are going to use it.

25 MS FROST: Yes, because you don't want anything to be too lightweight. If you have something too lightweight and say every person needs to buy it, then, you know, I would need a different - it probably wouldn't suit everybody, because I would have a different one than somebody like you or, you know, we are all different and we all have different sizes and requirements and something that is very lightweight might not do over certain terrains, you know, there are some that are suitable for indoor use, some  
30 that are suitable for outdoor use and you need to be able to have that choice.

MR BELL: Yes. Yes, I believe we understand that, it is quite - some of the issues have been to do with the weight of the - the combined weight of the scooter plus the person and with public transport operators trying to lift things that are heavier than their  
35 equipment is designed to deal with.

MS FROST: There may be room for some design changes there but I really can't comment on that.

40 MR BELL: No. I think that probably covers the key issues for us. Obviously if there is anything that comes to mind or that your colleagues want to raise with use, feel free to send us something.

45 MS FROST: Certainly. I will ask my colleagues about the scooter business and about the ferry and if they have any - - -

MR BELL: If they have had any feedback, that would be helpful.

MS FROST: - - - knowledge about that and if they have any ideas about the scooters, because some of them have a lot of knowledge about scooters and if they have any ideas about how they might be able to be modified or have standards, then we will certainly send them to you.

5

MR BELL: Okay.

MS KENNARD: You mentioned at the start of your introduction when you talked to us about - you said that you thought there had been some improvement and you mentioned particularly information from airlines.

10

MS FROST: It used to be extremely difficult to find anything on the internet about accessibility, about what to do for people with wheelchairs, about the process to follow, who to contact, how to get somebody on. We actually looked at it again yesterday and found that both airlines that operate currently out of Launceston - not the new that has just started, but Virgin and Jetstar - - -

15

MS KENNARD: Yes.

MS FROST: - - - have improved their websites considerably and it is there, it is right there on the front pages now rather than having to trawl through pages and pages of information and click on links and all sorts of things, so we are quite pleased that those improvements have been made.

20

MS KENNARD: Okay. Have you - we spoke to someone yesterday who had had some problem with airlines. He was in a wheelchair but he didn't require a carer himself, but he had had problems with airlines accepting him without a carer?

25

MS FROST: I haven't had any experience of that but I certainly believe that it has happened.

30

MS KENNARD: Okay.

MS FROST: But we don't have any direct experience with clients with that feedback, but I certainly can understand and will happily believe that that has happened.

35

MS KENNARD: Yes. But you don't whether that is actually a policy?

MS FROST: I can believe it. I mean, yes, in the past it has. I don't know whether that is still a practice at the moment.

40

MS KENNARD: Okay, okay. And one of the other issues that was raised yesterday was that the availability for support for - I can't remember the exact terminology, but say for people when they first arrive at an airport and getting through security and getting to the gate, that for some airlines that service wasn't as available as others.

45

MS FROST: Again, I don't know now but yes, that used to be a problem.

MS KENNARD: Okay.

MS FROST: Yes.

5 MS KENNARD: So most of - when you are referring to improvements, you are mostly thinking about in terms of - - -

10 MS FROST: The internet and the information that is available on the internet. The first point, where do we call, who do we - how do we get some information about accessibility? It used to be that it was very difficult, you would have to trawl through pages and pages and links and get put from, you know, one person to another sort of thing - - -

15 MS KENNARD: Yes.

MS FROST: - - - to find out the information; if they then knew it. You would have to find out what type of aircraft was being flown on that flight and then look up the manufacturers - go to the Boeing website and look up the dimensions for the seats and things like that.

20

MS KENNARD: Right.

25 MS FROST: So very - extremely difficult just to find out, you know, if your client could even get on the plane, fit on the plane; difficult to get any information about access at all. Now, it is there, it is actually - it might not be finished, you know, it might not be a hundred per cent but just the fact that they have improved how to access their wheelchair and disabled - people with difficulties, yes, how to access their services is an improvement and it is a step in the right direction. As you say it is a 30 year process.

30 MR BELL: 25.

MS FROST: 25 left.

35 MS KENNARD: Yes.

35

MR BELL: Well, there is - - -

MS FROST: So we have got - - -

40 MR BELL: Yes.

MS FROST: Yes, so we - it is a good step in the right direction and the fact that it used to be - I am a bigger person, I had some airlines that I couldn't do the seat belt up at all. Some times I travel to Melbourne and I just couldn't do the seat belt up.

45

MR BELL: And did they offer you an extension belt?

MS FROST: I was too embarrassed to ask.

MR BELL: Because most - - -

MS FROST: And you sort of - you wedge in and then you think, okay, am I going to get out of this again. I am happy to say that, you know, I have flown over a number of  
5 times this year and only had one occasion where I just had to breathe in a bit and the other times it sit quite well; it was still a little bit tight in the seat and I know that there are people bigger than me that fly and I know you can put the arm up between you, but it is a bit uncomfortable for the person next to you if you don't know them.

10 MS KENNARD: Yes, I thought they generally didn't let you do that.

MR BELL: But they usually do carry the extension belts.

MS FROST: I didn't even know they existed, see, it is accessibility, who knows that  
15 they are there?

MR BELL: Yes. It is just a little piece of seat belt, but pokes in at each end and usually - well, certainly on a lot of the flights I have been on the hostesses notice that somebody might need that and offer it, but they would look at it and perhaps think you  
20 didn't need it, so - - -

MS FROST: And it is deceptive, unless you are, you know, like a lot bigger than I am and obviously not ever going to fit into it.

25 MR BELL: Yes, then they might not offer you one.

MS FROST: And there is no way I am going to put my hand up in front of everybody and say, "I am too big for this seat belt." But apart from that, I didn't know that there was even an option there, that you could get an extension.

30 MR BELL: Yes.

MS FROST: I have flown for years - 30 years and I have been flying and they have never ever once said up the front, "If you need any assistance with a larger seat belt or  
35 having difficulty doing it - you know, come and see us, we can help."

MR BELL: Yes. No, I think that it is usually at the hostesses' discretion as to who to offer it to. I don't think they sort of make public announcements for just the reason that you are alluding to, but - - -

40 MS FROST: My husband used to be very big when, you know, many many years ago he was and we flew and he - they didn't offer anything and he was - he was very big back then. Mind you, it was a long time ago. But that is the thing, it is not just having the stuff there, it is the other point that I made it is where to know - how to know how to  
45 find it, how easy it is to find out what is available and where it is because there are some people - like I said, I can't comment on some of them because we just don't know what they have done and it is not publicised.

MR BELL: Yes. This information flow issue extends to things like bus timetables  
- - -

MS FROST: Yes, bus timetables.

5

MR BELL: - - - a range of other issues.

MS FROST: You don't have to have any difficulties to have trouble with the bus  
timetable, you know, any impairments to have trouble with the bus timetables.

10

MR BELL: Yes. So there are a few challenges around and some of those have been  
drawn to our attention.

MS KENNARD: Do you and your - in your role, do you advise your clients about the  
best ways to travel around and where they can actually access - - -

15

MS FROST: Very rarely. We get an occasional - we have only ever had a few queries  
about - people who wanted to travel. Often people look up on the internet themselves,  
but we have had one or two interstate inquiries about accessibility of accommodation  
and places like that and we have had to actually refer them back to the operators or the -  
like I just said, the ferries, because we haven't had that information. If we had - we  
would love to have that information and we could make it available on our website and  
our database, but we just don't have - into that yet. That is something that we would  
like to expand on in the next couple of years, is have a lot more information about  
accessibility, accommodation, transport, all that sort of thing, buildings.

20

25

MS KENNARD: Yes, yes, because it is part of your lifestyle really, it is not just about  
around the home you will see that.

30

MS FROST: Yes, that is right.

MS KENNARD: It is about how you can actually get to the supermarket and - - -

MS FROST: Well, that is right, it is, it is a lifestyle, it is getting out and living and  
being part of a community.

35

MR BELL: Okay, well, thank you very much for coming this morning, we appreciate  
you taking the time to do that and it is interesting to hear what the Independent Living  
Centres are doing in this area. We hope that if you do think of some things you would  
like to send them, you will send them.

40

MS FROST: Well, I will go back straight away and ask the questions and get  
something to you. Do you have contact details?

45

MR BELL: I will just give you one of my cards, but - - -

MS FROST: Great.

MR BELL: - - - we have a website, as you probably know.

MS FROST: Yes, I have been on that, yes.

5 MR BELL: All right, well, thank you very much, that is great.

MS FROST: Thank you.

10

MS BOWDEN ARRIVED AT APPROXIMATELY 9.18

15 MR BELL: I am John Bell. I am from the Allen Consulting Group in Canberra. This is my colleague, Sharon Kennard.

MS BOWDEN: Hello.

20

MR BELL: And - so just to recap, we are undertaking this review of the standards under the Disability Discrimination Act as they relate to public transport. These standards were brought in in 2002. There is a 30 year implementation period but this is the first five year review - - -

25

MS BOWDEN: Okay.

30 MR BELL: - - - to look at progress to date. And the standards cover quite a wide range of issues, everything from a width veneer bridge to provision of taxis and things like that.

MS BOWDEN: Okay.

35 MR BELL: This is very much a stocktake to get people's views on what progress has been made and to look at what the remaining issues are; look particularly at issues that are perhaps not being addressed to the extent that they need to be. So we are doing consultations in all the state capitals, territory capitals and in some regional centres, including Launceston.

40 MS BOWDEN: Right.

45 MR BELL: We have been to Dubbo and we have been to Bendigo, so - and these are fairly informal processes but we are recording them and we are going to put it up on the internet and the reason for that is that the people who are not able to be here, who are interested in the proceedings and they can see what has been said and as you may know, there is a process for putting in written submissions - - -

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

MR BELL: - - - which runs through and closes on 24 August. So some people will, we think use these discussions that are taking place to inform themselves on issues that are being addressed there.

5 MS BOWDEN: Yes.

MR BELL: So look, if you would like to introduce yourself and if there is something you would like to tell us that would be - we would be interested to know.

10 MS BOWDEN: Great. So I am Mandy Bowden from Tasmanian Acquired Brain Injury Services. So we provide rehabilitation services to people with acquired brain injuries and often along with those injuries there is - they have physical disabilities as well from motor vehicle accidents, failed suicides, near drownings or there is sort of a whole gamut. Predominantly we are - we don't really charge fee for service, so an  
15 NGO, so we are sort of the - I guess when somebody has a motor vehicle accident they get some compensation through MAIB or TAC or OPC but our clients often don't have any dollars attached to their rehab, so we are sort of the door of last hope, in a way. We have a lot of clients - we have 147 clients.

20 MR BELL: That is just here in Launceston> ?

MS BOWDEN: Yes. And we have to deliver service to the whole of the 63 region, which is the east coast, east Tamar, west Tamar, the Golden Valley, which is Deloraine, it is quite a wide area on three workers so it is quite low funding for what we do. So  
25 most - a lot of our clients, I would say 95 per cent of them are on disability pension and they have access to the Transport Access Scheme which is a booklet for the maxi taxis, etcetera, which gives them half price taxis, but if you live somewhere say, like Hadspen or Beauty Point or - that is a very - that is, you know, that is a good percentage of your pension even on a half price ticket.

30 And what I find, transport is a huge issue for our clients. I think there is - I mean, I am not quite sure, but I had a bit - I think there is one accessible Metro bus for wheelchairs - I think that is the case, but I am not - - -

35 MR BELL: In Launceston?

MS BOWDEN: Yes, I think.

MR BELL: Yes, it is not very many because - - -

40

MS BOWDEN: No.

MR BELL: I think there might be more than one but it is quite a small number.

45 MS BOWDEN: It is quite a small amount and I don't know, there are two of my clients that I know that use transport; they have got quite low mobility so they are not in a wheelchair but they can't step up very high or whatever, and some of the buses that, you know, they lower, they are quite good for them. Most of our clients don't use the

public transport because it is - the timetables for where they live, they might leave at 7 in the morning and come back at 6 o'clock at night, so it is not convenient for them to use.

5 And often what happens here in Launceston is they - Metro will give the outer lying areas - they will trade out that work, so private people will take on that work in really old buses. I am not saying they are unsafe, I am just saying they are really old so they don't have any of the modern amenities that you know, someone with low mobility may be able to use, but most of our clients don't use the public transport system because it -  
10 they can't get on it, they literally just can't get on it, they are not a - I mean, by law, you know, they don't really get a lot of - I guess the driver is not allowed to leave his seat, etcetera, like that so they don't get a lot of assistance.

15 So a lot of our clients who are in motorised wheelchairs, etcetera, save up all their appointments for one day so they can hit the town, pay for their taxi and it is not really expensive. Now, if you have got an acquired brain injury you are fatiguing by 12 o'clock, so what you and I will do when we get out of bed and we take for granted, their brain is running a marathon and by 12 o'clock they have had it.

20 Now, if they are in town all day they are becoming disorientated, very unwell and after that day in town they are sort of cactus for the next sort of two days and it doesn't sound like very much but that is a huge impact on their life. The cost involved on maxi taxis, the cost involved on taxiing yourself, you know, to the dentist, to the doctor, and they have a lot of doctor's appointments because they are usually on quite a lot of medication  
25 so they have to have that reviewed all the time.

It is not working for - it is a huge issue here, it is not working for our clients and it is not working for clients that I know that aren't my clients, so generally people with a disability - every time we have an inter-agency meeting it is flagged as "there is no  
30 transport" that is adequate for our client base and it is transport and housing are the biggest issues that we face here, but - so if I guess you are looking at the standards perspective, I don't know what you are expecting the ration to be in - you know, in regional towns like ours for, you know, for those kind of standards in - for Metro buses to be accessible for clients in wheelchairs, etcetera, but it is not obviously happening  
35 here and the availability of it as well.

So when you go to the outer lying areas, there is the - I don't know if you guys are allowed to sort of comment on this but the level of accessible transport for our clients in outer lying areas is extremely poor, really, really bad. And I don't think much is going  
40 to change about that stuff because it doesn't earn the dollars, you know, so it doesn't happen, but I don't feel that our transport system should have to make a profit, it should be there for the people, but when the hiring off the outer lying areas to privateers, they want to make a profit so they are offering a really limited service and you get really old buses that no one can get on.

45

MR BELL: We had quite a discussion about this in Hobart yesterday - - -

MS BOWDEN: Right. Yes.

MR BELL: - - - and you should be able to see some detail of that on our website in about a week - - -

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

5

MR BELL: - - - because some of the bus operators pointed out the short term nature of their contracts and how that made it difficult for them to - - -

MS BOWDEN: Invest.

10

MR BELL: - - - make investments. So I think you would find that quite interesting. I mean I don't think that - the problem remains, it is - however, I wanted to ask you about the taxis, you have mentioned the issue of cost. Is there also an issue of availability?

15

MS BOWDEN: Well, we have had the extra ones given and that - you can tell that that actually did make a bit of a difference but if my client wants to be picked up at 2.30, you can forget it because all - the children that are in wheelchairs are all picked up at around 3 o'clock or 3.15 so no one can get a maxi taxi around that time in town. I mean, you won't be getting one until about 4.30. So what happens is clients have to turn down appointments, clients have to - for that particular time, but there are long waiting periods.

20

I had - just for - I have a friend of mine, she has got MS, I met her in town on Sunday, she booked her taxi, her maxi taxi. Now, she waited for an hour for that taxi, after the time that she booked it to be - so she always books return and so she said, "I will meet you there at 1." We waited an hour for that taxi; that was on a Sunday, you know that is just not good enough. Like, her time - I mean, she works and it is as if her time doesn't matter, you know, that is just outrageous, I wouldn't tolerate that, but yes, there are not enough - there is absolutely not enough.

25

30

And there are gridlocks at certain times, but on a Sunday I was really shocked and I thought, wow, it is worse than I thought and she waited an hour and you know, with two reminder calls. No, it isn't good enough, and the quality of the drivers that is another matter, but the quality of the drivers, you know, we have - I have a client who is quite vulnerable, he has quite a lot of money attached to his care, and you know, you have taxi drivers selling him things and going in and selling him modems and you know, really vulnerable people and they are coming into his house. And I don't know what the standards are like on who they employ but it is obviously not the best.

35

40

MR BELL: Yes.

MS BOWDEN: And that is just the taxi industry. May be that is the taxi industry, but I think if you are working with a vulnerable group, as for our employment, there has to be a high standard of, you know, checks, etcetera. Yes, but that is not happening, but there isn't enough maxi taxis. You know, having to wait an hour over your booking time is just not good enough, and she has no choice, she can't ring another service and say, "Some one has let me down," she just have to wait and I don't know, I mean she is an adult, it is just a humiliating process.

45

MS KENNARD: So there is just the one taxi provider in this region, in Launceston?

MS BOWDEN: The maxi taxis - well, it is, isn't it, just the one taxi.

5 MR BELL: Just the one group, yes.

MS BOWDEN: So there is no choice.

10 MR BELL: Is there a separate arrangement for people who need to get to hospital or medical appointments in this - - -

MS BOWDEN: No. No, there is something called the community car where municipalities will buy a vehicle and they will have it manned by volunteers.

15 MR BELL: Yes.

20 MS BOWDEN: And they can - but you know, they can't do transfers, so they can't help someone from a vehicle into a wheelchair. So they are not allowed to do transfers - that is what transfers are called, so someone who is in wheelchair, they can't use them because some little old lady who is 94 and driving and doing the volunteer service can't get this big hulking six foot guy from the chair; it just doesn't work. So there is no priority system.

25 But I have a client who is a TAC compensable client, that is Transport Accident Commission of Victoria; when he has to go down to Hobart for a neurological appointment, he gets a taxi within 15 minutes. It is an \$800 gig up and back, it is there. So you know, it is accessible for him, that takes up one taxi all day, they are happy to pay it, they are happy to do it.

30 MS KENNARD: But he gets that paid through his - - -

MS BOWDEN: Yes, yes, yes. So you know, I mean, there is a - yes, there is a - - -

35 MR BELL: So there is a - - -

MS BOWDEN: Yes, they can make themselves available when there is money involved.

40 MR BELL: So there are some equity issues here as well.

MS BOWDEN: Yes, yes, big time.

MR BELL: Yes.

45 MS BOWDEN: And runs an account, you know, and you know, they do quite nicely out of him, but - and they generally they are always there for him, they pick him up on time - - -

MR BELL: Well - - -

MS BOWDEN: - - - but if you - yes, if they are getting a lot of money but you know,  
5 the average person who is using three, four, five times a week, they can wait up to an  
hour or more for their taxi over time.

MS KENNARD: Is there an issue of - we spoke to people in Hobart yesterday who  
said that there was an instance down there where a maxi taxi driver was actually found  
10 to never actually be picking up wheelchair passengers, they were just using their taxi for  
- - -

MS BOWDEN: Yes, I have heard that too.

MR BELL: As a shuttle bus.  
15

MS BOWDEN: Yes, like multiple party - - -

MS KENNARD: Yes.

20 MS BOWDEN: Yes, multiple - yes, that happens too, yes.

MR BELL: So it sounds as though there are some arrangements in relation to the  
regulation of these taxis - - -

25 MS BOWDEN: Yes.

MR BELL: - - - that perhaps needs to be looked at. I was going to ask you about the  
paper work for the maxi taxis. Do you - I am not sure how it works in this state, but in  
30 one other state there were questions raised about whether the paper work was really  
quite difficult for some of these people who are using the service to actually manage.

MS BOWDEN: Yes. I know from my clients who have cognitive deficits, they find it  
difficult - so it is an impediment for them. So they have got their taxi voucher but for  
35 them that is - they get the taxi driver to just - he does everything.

MR BELL: He fills it in.

MS BOWDEN: Yes. So it could be correct or it might not be correct. And there is  
40 one instance I know where a family member just happened to ask, "How much was  
that" and they knew what money they were left with and he had overcharged them quite  
a large amount of money, so they are - you know, if you are in a vulnerable - if you  
have a cognitive deficit or an intellectual disability you are very vulnerable.

MR BELL: Mm.  
45

MS BOWDEN: So - I mean - can you - I mean I guess I have got a couple of  
questions too. So this has a 25 years implementation period, is that right?

MS KENNARD: It goes through to 2032 - - -

MR BELL: Yes, so - - -

5 MS KENNARD: - - - which covers off - I mean the last compliance date is actually for trains and trams so - - -

MS BOWDEN: Okay, yes.

10 MS KENNARD: - - - it is not necessarily - but in terms of the most - the first compliance period that we are talking about targets 25 per cent of accessible buses, which is probably - - -

MR BELL: 25 per cent by 2007 accessible buses.

15

MS BOWDEN: Okay.

MS KENNARD: By the end of this year.

20 MR BELL: Okay, so you - - -

MS BOWDEN: It hasn't happened.

25 MR BELL: Well, it is not likely to happen in Tasmania and perhaps not in some other jurisdictions as well, but there are some quite specific targets and there have been some exemptions granted, some of them short term exemptions. The buses, for example, have quite a long life, as you have noticed and a new bus, completely equipped with accessible ramps and hydraulics is quite a lot of money, so most operators only replace their fleet slowly over time.

30

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

35 MR BELL: It is not uncommon for a bus to last 25 years and some times even longer. I mean, they may replace the engine and the seats but it is still the same bus structure, which is what the problem is with accessibility, but around that there are some other interesting issues; one of which is of course the infrastructure. In other words, the bus stops and it wants to put its ramp down but there is no kerb and the ground may be uneven or in Hobart of course it is quite hilly.

40 MS BOWDEN: Mm.

MR BELL: So this comes down to investment by municipal authorities. With all the best will in the world the bus company can't deal with that side of it.

45 MS BOWDEN: Another issue I wanted to ask you about was, I have clients in nursing homes and they have been refused to - by the nursing home proprietor, they are refusing to take them to A, B, C and D because of the new bus standards now. They have bought a nice new bus that everyone helped raise money for or whatever. There is a

classic case down at St Helens; they have bought this brand new bus and because they are using the new bus - the new standards - by against - they are saying, "We have got this nice new bus, but because of the new standards we have to have a person with this qualification - with this licence to drive it." Right.

5

So they might have to have a heavy vehicle licence or whatever it is because it can take 17 people or whatever, and they are using that - or well, they are saying - and because we used to have volunteers that used to do the transporting on their buses but now you have to have a heavy vehicle licence. Most people don't have - I don't have one, so they are saying, "Well, we just can't take you anywhere," so they don't.

10

MR BELL: So they can't use the bus.

MS BOWDEN: No.

15

MS FROST: At least a public vehicle licence.

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

20 MS FROST: And they are saying that for all - even community cars now as well.

MS KENNARD: A public vehicle licence.

MR BELL: A public vehicle licence.

25

MS BOWDEN: Yes. Is this nothing to do with you guys?

MR BELL: Well, it is a related concern. I mean, it is hard to draw a neat boundary around our terms of reference.

30

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

MR BELL: It has always been the case that when a bus got over a certain size you needed a special licence.

35

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

MS FROST: That is right, yes.

40 MR BELL: And - - -

MS FROST: And that is over 17 feet.

MR BELL: I am aware that even for a smaller bus you still need some special licence.

45

MS FROST: A public vehicle licence.

MR BELL: My wife has a licence to drive a bus but she doesn't obviously drive one of the larger ones.

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

5

MR BELL: She drives one that would hold maybe a dozen people, a little bit more.

MS FROST: That is a common size. I can comment on that. A number of - there are - your public vehicle licences are now - there was a recent ruling that public vehicle  
10 licences were required for even community cars.

MR BELL: I see.

MS FROST: And any vehicles that carried passengers. There was some issue in the  
15 community - in the non-government sector, like we are, where they were talking about the volunteers and where they didn't charge fees for passengers.

MR BELL: But they still needed the licence.

20 MS FROST: And I believe there have been some exemptions granted - - -

MR BELL: I see.

MS FROST: - - - but I don't know which - or it might be some particular organisations  
25 or some particular clients that have been exempted, so yes, I think it is - - -

MS KENNARD: So this is mostly to pick up people like taxi drivers and hire cars?

MS FROST: It is - no, it was for community cars that charge a fee.  
30

MR BELL: No, it is a - - -

MS FROST: A lot of community cars - - -

35 MS KENNARD: That charge a fee, okay.

MS FROST: Some community cars charge a small fee.

MS KENNARD: Okay.

40

MR BELL: Yes.

MS FROST: It might only be \$1 per passenger.

45 MS KENNARD: Okay.

MS BOWDEN: No, it is usually \$5, yes.

MS FROST: Well, yes. And if you charge a fee then you are a public vehicle so you need a public vehicle licence.

5 MR BELL: Yes, so in my wife's case it was one of the universities that owned these vehicles - - -

MS BOWDEN: Right, yes.

10 MR BELL: - - - and they are not easy vehicles to drive.

MS KENNARD: But you are saying that that applies to any particular - - -

MS FROST: Any vehicle, even - - -

15 MS KENNARD: It is not vehicle specific.

MS FROST: - - - even cars.

20 MS KENNARD: It is service specific.

MR BELL: Even a car, yes.

25 MS FROST: It has recently been brought in for cars that they charge a fee, they are a public vehicle, they need a public vehicle licence.

MR BELL: Yes.

30 MS FROST: And with the buses, I was at a nursing home that had public - buses that had 17 seats and that was the limit you could have before you needed a heavy rigid.

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

35 MS FROST: They might have changed the heavy rigid rules recently, but over 17 seats you needed a heavy rigid, but you always needed a public vehicle licence, always - - -

MS BOWDEN: Yes, yes.

40 MS FROST: So I am not sure whether they have changed the number of seats for the heavy rigid part.

MS BOWDEN: Well, I think they bought a bigger bus and in there lies the question, I think.

45 MS FROST: That would be it, I would say.

MR BELL: That is what the problem might be.

MS BOWDEN: But they have been told now, well, they just can't go anywhere.

MS BOWDEN: But there are of course, like you said before about some of the public vehicles, including some of these smaller buses or maxi taxis, instead of having wheelchair lifts that are strong enough to carry some of the wheelchairs and scooters that are out there, so - - -

5

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

MR BELL: Yes, well, this is the weight problem because some of the hydraulics are not able to cope with more than 300 kilos and some of the big scooters, by the time you put a fairly heavy person on them can easily exceed that and - but it comes back to your earlier point about how we don't want to sort of restrict the availability of the technology. Unfortunately the taxi operator that has invested in a 300 kilo lift isn't too pleased if his lift gets broken by somebody who exceeds that, so there are some interesting difficulties there. But I am just thinking about some of these other problems because often people in nursing homes have disabilities as well, but I guess a bus that is owned by a nursing home probably doesn't fall into the category of public transport.

10

15

MS BOWDEN: No.

20

MR BELL: We will have to have a look at that.

25

MS FROST: Nursing homes also have a requirement that if the person is in low care they find their own transport to and from doctors and other outside health care, but if they are in a nursing home - nursing at high level care then the nursing home has to provide the transport for them and very often they do, they have the carer that can transfer the patient or the client and they often have the appropriate swivel chairs or the aids in the vehicles that can help them to - or they should have, to help them to transfer them safely.

30

MS BOWDEN: Yes. That is for medical appointments. You know, this is an instance of my client who sees her husband in a town about 20 kilometres away - - -

MS FROST: Yes, unfortunately - - -

35

MS BOWDEN: - - - and that is the only time that she gets to see him when they take her to this day centre and now, because he can't drive, they don't see each other and they have no - all their - no family that live there, so it is - you know, and they are just of saying, "Well, we don't - and my - I mean, I tried to negotiate with the nursing home, with the care provider saying, "Well, okay, why don't you provide this person who can do the transfers or who can drive it, he has got the licence for this period of time." "No, we can't be with - you know, that is just too expensive, we can't do that."

40

MS FROST: Well, they are not funded for that and unfortunately if they do that for one they have got to do it for all and they aren't funded for that.

45

MS BOWDEN: Yes, but you know - - -

MS FROST: And there is the difficulty too is that they are Commonwealth funded and they have fairly strict guidelines - - -

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

5

MS FROST: - - - and then the State funding for the other community transports and other things like that say, "Nursing home, we don't have to do anything for you."

MS BOWDEN: But you know, there were half a dozen people going to that that could have - would have been happy - that wanted to go, you know, it wasn't like one person.

10

MS FROST: Well, in that case you would think that is up to the operator - - -

MS BOWDEN: Yes, yes. So you know, I mean, that is probably completely off the track, but yes, we need more transport and it doesn't look like we are going to get it, does it?

15

MS FROST: But it is the case that with the State funded and the Commonwealth funded, if the State funded organisations go - they just don't anywhere near Commonwealth funded ones because there is just no overlap at all, you know, they are Commonwealth funded, we can't do anything for them, so the community car won't go out there.

20

MS KENNARD: Because community cars are through the State Government.

25

MS FROST: Yes.

MS KENNARD: Yes.

MS FROST: And they say, "No, they are funded by Commonwealth, they should be providing that." And so there is a bit of lack of clarity between the funders or there is a bit of a gap there sometimes - - -

30

MR BELL: Yes.

35

MS FROST: - - - as to who will do what and there are people who are like your clients, dropped off in the middle.

MS BOWDEN: And you know, I did talk to one of the providers down there about - one of the independent providers down there and he said, "You know, I would love to do it, but it is just financially we just can't afford it, you know, it is just too expensive, you know." So yes, it is - I mean, I think Launceston is quite unique - well, probably not, but we have a lot of outer lying areas with really poor services and a lot of our clients like to live in isolated locations because they - - -

40

45

MS KENNARD: That is where they retire.

MS BOWDEN: Well, and also they don't like a lot of noise.

MS KENNARD: Right.

MS BOWDEN: If you have got an acquired brain injury you can't cope with multi-directional noise, so you want to live somewhere quiet, which is fine, except getting  
5 from A to B is extremely difficult here, you know, really difficult, poor roads, all that stuff.

MR BELL: And perhaps some of these outlying areas are less expensive in terms of  
10 accommodation.

MS BOWDEN: Yes, the rent is less expensive.

MR BELL: Yes.

15 MS BOWDEN: Yes.

MS BOWDEN: So some of this is probably a general transport issue as much as an  
accessibility issue.

20 MS BOWDEN: Yes, certainly all people in outlying areas have the same transport  
problems, but at least the able and the cognitive ones can come in and spend other time  
- you know, spend their day in doing other things in town and not getting so worn out.

MS BOWDEN: Or drive themselves in their own vehicle or whatever, so that is okay,  
25 but - - -

MR BELL: Yes.

MS KENNARD: Yes, so it is focused on most people who can actually drive?  
30

MS BOWDEN: Yes, yes, but I think as far as getting around town, no, we have got  
really - I guess we don't have 25 per cent of our buses are not - - -

MS FROST: No.  
35

MS BOWDEN: No way.

MS FROST: No way.

40 MS KENNARD: Yes. Well, we spoke to Metro Tasmania yesterday and they did say  
that they definitely have a smaller portion of accessible buses here in Launceston versus  
in Hobart but they did tell us that they were aware of the problems and were looking to  
increase the numbers over the next period of time.

45 MS BOWDEN: So what period of time was that, before I retire?

MR BELL: I don't exactly recall but you will be able to see it on the website.

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

MR BELL: And they are looking to identify some particular services as being served by a bus with this capability.

5

MS BOWDEN: Okay.

MR BELL: Because otherwise you can go up to the bus stop and something turns up that you are not able to get on - - -

10

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

MR BELL: - - - so the idea that you could identify particularly services and say, "This one will have a bus with the ramp" - - -

15

MS BOWDEN: Okay.

MR BELL: - - - might - I mean, obviously as the number of buses increases with these sorts of capabilities things will get easier, but it is, you know - - -

20

MS KENNARD: So your experience at the moment is that most of your clients don't use the buses at all?

MS BOWDEN: No, they can't.

25

MS KENNARD: No.

MR BELL: Yes.

30 MS BOWDEN: They want to, they can't.

MS FROST: And see there in lies the catch 22 in that the service operators say, "We don't have any demand for it."

35 MS KENNARD: Yes, there is probably a threshold.

MS FROST: Of course you don't because people have gone somewhere else.

MR BELL: Yes.

40

MS KENNARD: Yes, there is probably a threshold under which, even if you have a few buses, if people don't know that they are there or when they are coming.

45 MS BOWDEN: Metro are really good at advertising things on their buses, you know, fantastic at it. You will have MAIB with big advertising campaigns on the back of their buses and all they would need to do would do that, you know, advertise what they have got.

MS FROST: They did it with the Busy Bee one, didn't they, the quick one, they had an old bus dedicated to advertising for Metro to one particular bus.

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

5

MR BELL: Yes.

MS FROST: So they could quite easily advertise that and say, "This is the accessible bus, flag us down on this number," or something.

10

MR BELL: But this whole question of information provision - I mean, you have both raised it, and we have heard it at the other hearings as well, because the one in Dubbo, for example, there is a whole raft of different bus and taxi companies and there is no one place where you can get your hands on this and work things out. This information provision is quite difficult and when you have people who have visual impairment then it gets even more difficult because of the difficulty of actually finding it.

15

MS BOWDEN: And the issue you raised about the buses - the municipalities not putting I guess enough infrastructure for the buses to be actually well utilised, Launceston is actually crap at that too. We have a - what is it, an Access Committee on the Launceston Council, which is just a tokenistic committee and basically they - the Council will take things to them, they will make recommendations, they will ignore the recommendations and they will go off and build something that nobody with a disability or low mobility can access. A classic case of that is there was some redevelopment in the city on the corner of York and George Street - - -

20

25

MS FROST: Yes.

MS BOWDEN: - - - recently, within the last 12 months with, you know, they developed this nice little area, rest area. You know, even if you had a cane or a walker you have no hope of accessing that. I couldn't believe - I was gobsmacked, I could not believe it, yet they have an Access Committee on their Council that is just a tokenistic offering. We have, you know, our kerbs and it is just appalling for people in a wheelchair, they are always falling out of their wheelchairs, especially in a motorised wheelchair, they are always falling out of them, having accidents; it is just awful. We have awful access in this town.

30

35

And a friend of mine who recently come back from WA could not believe - she is in a motorised wheelchair, she couldn't believe it, she could not believe the lack of access just so she could get into town, it is awful. That is not your brief, but I want that on record.

40

MR BELL: Well, it is of course partly our brief - - -

45

MS KENNARD: Yes.

MR BELL: - - - because, you know, when you come to think about accessibility of public transport, being able to get around the footpath to actually get to the bus stop or

to get on the taxi, you have still got to get through these public places, so as I said there is no neat boundary around our terms of reference, but these sorts of things are clearly issues that will get a mention, no doubt.

5 MS BOWDEN: Yes. I mean, when I go to Victoria, some of the main streets of  
Victoria, they are lovely, you know, this is just beautiful and there are so many people  
out and about in their wheelchairs and you see them. In Launceston you are lucky to  
see one person a day because it is just too dangerous, so they don't or they are with a  
carer or - and they don't particularly need a carer to shop, but they need a carer to  
10 actually help them get on and off, you know, the ramps or the lack of the kerbing, it is  
just - you know, quality of life here with a disability is really poor, access is really poor.

MR BELL: Okay. Well, I - - -

15 MS KENNARD: Actually, we sort of focused on taxi - like, sort of I guess the day to  
day travel. Have you - do you work with your clients very much in terms of other kinds  
of travel, say ferries or airplanes or things like that?

MS BOWDEN: Yes, airlines is interesting, always a stunner. You have to set it all up,  
20 so you have got to let the airport know - the provider know that, you know, this  
individual is in a wheelchair and they go, "Yes, yes, no problem, no problem." You get  
there and it is like, "Who? No, we didn't know that." and then it is another, you know,  
and they make the individual feel like they are an enormous imposition and - because  
they go in that - the lift thing, but you know, they eventually get on there, but you have  
25 set up as best you can but you know, nine times out of ten it always falls over at the end  
when there is nothing on the screen saying this client has to be boarded first or whatever  
because they have got - they are in a wheelchair, but at least they get access to it, they  
can - you know, they can get on the plane.

30 MS KENNARD: Yes. And the Launceston Airport here is, in terms of the actual  
structure of the building and getting into the terminal and things - - -

MS BOWDEN: I think - are the toilets quite - - -

35 MS FROST: I don't know of the toilets, I haven't seen them.

MS BOWDEN: No.

MS FROST: The ramps are there out to the airline.

40

MS BOWDEN: Yes, yes, I think - I mean, it is reasonably accessible and I think the  
toilets are quite reasonable.

MS KENNARD: Yes.

45

MS BOWDEN: Because that is an issue; toilets. Toilets is always a big issue. In  
town, there are two places with - that, you know, that have really done some work with  
their disabled toilets, because the rule here is, if it is an existing building you are fine,

you don't have to add anything. So a new building has to and I don't know who is doing the standards on the new buildings, but they are not very good either.

5 MS FROST: And then there is an issue between - we are right off the track here, but there is an issue between the heritage and the standards, the disability standards - - -

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

10 MS FROST: - - - so never the two shall meet some times.

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

15 MR BELL: Well, there are conflicts of course between some other regulations and the objectives of the Disability Discrimination Act and it will take time for some of those to be sorted out. I mean, the building codes board, the regulations governing the operation of airlines, even some of the train regulations have some issues, so it will take some time to sort of get some of those things sorted out but the building code got a mention yesterday - - -

20 MS BOWDEN: Yes.

MR BELL: - - - and it is obvious that there is some little way to go in that regard.

25 MS KENNARD: And there aren't - as far as I know the accessible premises standards haven't been enacted versus what we have in transport, so that is sort of further down the track.

30 MS BOWDEN: Right. I mean, I guess the great thing would be, you know, I don't - here in Launceston, would be to have a choice of provider in the maxi taxi - - -

MS KENNARD: Yes.

35 MS BOWDEN: - - - because that would create competition, you know, not to mention a few more taxis would be nice, but you know, this sort of - it is not that healthy at the moment.

MS FROST: Do you know anything much about the ferries, the ferry?

40 MS BOWDEN: No, no.

MS FROST: I couldn't either.

45 MR BELL: No. Obviously, use of sea transport is limited to sort of a few locations; not likely to run across it in Dubbo, but we will obviously have chances to explore those issues elsewhere, because we will be holding hearings in Melbourne and Sydney, for example and both those cities have - you would expect would have people who had some experience in getting on and off ferries of different sorts.

MS FROST: I imagine a lot of people who travel by ferry would take a vehicle of some sort, you would think.

5 MS BOWDEN: Yes, well, that is generally the gig, I mean, I just know that Bruny Island ferry, unless you had a vehicle you just - and you were in a wheelchair, you wouldn't have a hope.

10 MS FROST: Well, the ones from Devonport to Melbourne you would think - I don't know too many passengers that would just go without a car.

MS BOWDEN: Yes, but the Bruny Island ferry - - -

15 MS FROST: But from the car up to the rooms - I don't remember, it has been years since I have been on one of those.

MS KENNARD: Well, they are all new boats now as well, so - - -

MR BELL: So they may well have lifts if they are new boats - - -

20 MS KENNARD: Yes.

MR BELL: - - - but some of the Sydney Harbour ferries wouldn't have a chance.

25 MS KENNARD: Yes, well, we don't know, we haven't been to Sydney yet.

MR BELL: I don't - I just can't imagine how it would work but we will ask and perhaps somebody from Sydney will explain that to us. It seems it might be - especially with the older ferries on Sydney Harbour, perhaps it is possible with the newer ones.

30 MS KENNARD: You mentioned the issue of getting taxis at certain times and that most - a lot of the maxi taxis are used for children in schools - - -

MS BOWDEN: Yes, that is - - -

35 MS KENNARD: - - - is that because there is no actual school bus transport for - - -

MS BOWDEN: No, no, so the children, say from St Giles and St Michaels who are in wheelchairs - - -

40 MS KENNARD: Yes.

MS BOWDEN: - - - and are being picked up and taken home - - -

45 MS KENNARD: They use the taxis.

MS BOWDEN: - - - they have got a sort of standard sort of fixed booking, I guess, so around those times you don't get - you know, I have a client who has to make his appointments before 12 because getting one, you know, closer to sort of 2 o'clock they

can't - to pick him up they can't guarantee that they will come and get him before 5, you know, what is he supposed to do for sort of two hours. So yes, there are big issues because there are not enough taxis.

5 MS FROST: And those schools are special schools so they don't have a normal regular bus service.

MS KENNARD: Right. But there is no actual requirement for accessibility for school buses any way, so - - -

10

MS BOWDEN: That I know of, no.

MS KENNARD: No, there is not.

15 MR BELL: No, there isn't, so - but of course if you had a school that was specially catering for those children I guess it would be a bit harder to have a school bus that would service their needs.

MS KENNARD: But I guess I was just thinking that is an issue where not providing a service - well, that is sort of a trade off of different needs.

20

MR BELL: Exactly.

MS BOWDEN: Yes, yes, and just not enough of available transport in that point of the day. If it is becoming - if that is an issue every day we are lacking in transport for people with a - for wheelchair access.

25

MS FROST: And as far as kids in main stream schools that go in high schools, I know one boy whose parents just have to pick him up - take him to school and pick him up, they have to, you know, make their schedules work that way, because he lives at Legana and he would have no way of getting to school and home again.

30

MR BELL: Because, yes, there is no other way of doing it.

35 MS FROST: No.

MR BELL: Yes, we have heard other examples of that too.

MS KENNARD: Yes, yes.

40

MS BOWDEN: So do you have any sway over municipalises and things like that or not really?

MR BELL: Well, we hope that the municipalities will read some of the things that go on the website and feel some obligation to respond. As part of the review process, at the end of the day the DDA applies to everybody, including municipal councils and so they are just bound by the law like everybody else.

45

MS FROST: Will you be advising the councils that it is available on your website, because that would be a good - otherwise you can have it there and they won't know?

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MR BELL: Yes, I think they will find out that it is there quite quickly so I don't think we need to be too worried about that.

5 MS KENNARD: Yes. I mean, one of the issues that we will have to grapple with is the fact that there is not a lot of data, so where John is also talking about where we might highlight particular areas that is going to be quite difficult necessarily because of availability of information on services.

10 MS BOWDEN: Yes, okay.

MR BELL: Yes. And let me give you an example, at one hearing the taxi operator told us that the maximum time in the month of June waiting for a maxi taxi was 18 minutes, which doesn't sound like too bad a number to me, but that sort of data is quite  
15 difficult to come by and then if you start to look at the infrastructure and you wonder about how many intersections in the CBD might have ramps, I doubt even the local council would know.

MS BOWDEN: Right.  
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MR BELL: So getting measures of some of these things - - -

MS BOWDEN: Yes.

25 MS FROST: Yes.

MR BELL: - - - is quite difficult.

MS FROST: And it is not just the ramps, it is the appropriateness of the ramps and  
30 how wide they are and how steep they are. Some of the ramps are just not really accessible.

MS BOWDEN: No.

35 MR BELL: No.

MS BOWDEN: So and some kind of access audit would be nice, but I am sure they won't do that, because if you audit something then there is the expectation you have to do something about it but I just think Launceston - if they are still building new works  
40 and pretending there is nobody out there with a frame or a walker or a wheelchair or a scooter, there is something dreadfully wrong. You know, we have got our Access Committee that is not - you know, they are not taking the recommendations from that Access Committee.

MS FROST: And the council had that big consultation back in March but they even then said that they weren't even looking at implementing if they implement any of it until the next approvals round, which will be at least 2008/2009 before they even look at implementing any of the recommendations out of that.

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MR BELL: Yes, well, it is surprising because, you know, there is - this Act has been around for a little while and although the standards have been there since there 2002 the general obligations under the Act have been known for longer than that and so I find it a little surprising that there is not more action, but it may come down to what councils feel they can afford to do. Look, I think that covers it off pretty well, so look, thank you

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- - -

MS KENNARD: Is there anything else that you wanted to talk about?

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MS BOWDEN: No, no.

MS FROST: No.

MR BELL: Well, thank you both very much for your time, I really appreciate it.

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MS BOWDEN: Thank you for the opportunity.

MS BOWDEN: Thank you, yes.

25

MR BELL: It is really very helpful, thanks a lot.

**HEARING CONCLUDED**

**[10.00am]**