



National Coach Connections Summit

MOVING PEOPLE * Long Distance * Charter * Express

The challenges of accessibility for people with disabilities and coach travel

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The Future for Long Distance, Charter and Express



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development



Modernisation of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002

Findings of the second Transport Standards review released July 2015

- Progress has been made since the 2007 Review
- The majority of the 2012 compliance targets have been met
- The Transport Standards appear to be effective in bringing forward investment in accessible infrastructure and conveyances
- However, progress occurs at an uneven rate depending on the location, population and demand for accessible public transport
- Most submissions from the disability community, local governments and other bodies advise of continuing deficiencies

Findings of the second review (cont.)

- Governments have made a concerted effort to ensure the accessibility of their public transport systems
- However, submissions flag that although 2012 compliance targets have been met, 2017 targets may be difficult to achieve unless significant resources are found
- This review also received submissions from local governments that they bear a large part of the burden of providing infrastructure with little or no financial assistance
- There are difficulties in meaningfully interpreting data provided by governments, providers and operators
- Perceived inadequacies in the complaints process continue to draw widespread concern

Seven Recommendations

1. Modernise the Transport Standards
2. Develop a national reporting on compliance framework
3. Improve the disability complaints process
4. Develop whole-of-journey accessibility guidelines
5. Continue development of a national motorised mobility aid labelling scheme
6. Revise national wheelchair accessible taxi compliance milestones
7. Review Disability Access Facilitation Plans (aviation)

Recommendation 1 – Modernise the Transport Standards

- The Australian Government recognised that 14 years after inception, some parts of the Transport Standards may not be meeting the needs of people with disability or provide sufficient flexibility or guidance to providers and operators in their efforts to fulfil their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- The prescriptive nature of the Transport Standards largely drafted in the mid-1990s, while providing some certainty to operators, does not allow for the flexibility to adopt other alternative options which would be far better suited in situations where compliance is extremely challenging or impossible to achieve.

Recommendation 1 – Modernise the Transport Standards

- As part of this process, requirements as prescribed in older out-of-date Australian Standards could be replaced with those contained within current versions. The modernisation process provides an opportunity for the Transport Standards to be harmonised with the Disability (Access to Premises-Buildings) Standards 2010 as called for by stakeholder groups.
- The modernisation process also provides the opportunity for new innovative technological practices to be incorporated into the Transport Standards.



Australian Government

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Implementation of recommendations

National Accessible Public Transport Advisory Committee (NAPTAC)

- First convened in July 2015. NAPTAC's role is to provide a mechanism for governments, the public transport industry, the disability sector, and other relevant organisations, to discuss accessible public transport issues affecting people with disability.
- NAPTAC is the main national body providing advice on Recommendation 1 – the modernisation of the Transport Standards.

NAPTAC

Chair

- Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development

Members

- All state and territory government transport agencies
- Australasian Railway Association
- Bus Industry Confederation
- Australian Taxi Industry Association
- Aviation Access Forum

- Disabled People's Organisations Australia
- Australian Local Government Association
- Attorney-General's Department

Modernisation Process

- September 2015 – NAPTAC modal working groups (rail, bus, marine, information provision) began identifying issues for consideration. This work was also assisted by the Accessible Taxi Reference Group and Aviation Access Forum already in operation.
- February 2016 – Infrastructure contracted Arup to develop a project management plan to explore how the modernisation process might occur. Plan delivered in June 2016.

Modernisation Process (cont.)

In July 2016, NAPTAC in the absence of major funding required to modernise Transport Standards in one process, agreed to:

- convene a specific purpose sub-committee
- contract a Project Manager to lead the modernisation process
- develop a shared internet workspace whereby input can be provided by all participants online; and
- Undertake a tranche process involving two phases:
 - Tranche 1 – those issues which might be resolved in 2017-18.
 - Tranche 2 – more complex, time consuming issues with work commencing second-half 2017 and proceeding into 2018-19. Unresolved Tranche 1 issues to be incorporated into Tranche 2.

Tranche 1

Objectives

2017

- Research on Tranche 1 issues finalised
- Development and finalisation of COAG Consultation Regulation Impact Statement (RIS)

2018

- State and Territory Government agreement on RIS
- Nationwide consultation period (8 weeks)
- Finalisation of COAG Decision RIS
- Legislative amendment processes
- Adoption and information campaign

Objectives

Tranche 2

2017/19

- Research to commence second half 2017
- 2018/19 – continued research and development of RIS

2019

- Undertaking of COAG RIS processes (Consultation and Decision)
- Legislatives amendment, adoption and information campaign.

Coach issues

Coach issues are spread across both tranches.

Tranche 1

- Issue 29 – definition for coaches required in the DSAPT. Buses and coaches are designed differently and have different access options. More clarity required concerning coaches (height, baggage/cargo compartment, toilets, etc.). Coaches are high floor due to luggage storage areas underneath and as such provide steps up to the seating areas. Coaches also have narrow access path which wheelchairs cannot access.
- Issues 99 / 164 / 16 – design of bus stops. Consideration of terrain / environment / allocated spaces / design of accessible bus stops.

Tranche 1 issues (continued)

- Issue 108 - consideration of Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) concerns with regard to carrying boarding devices as against manoeuvring devices into place. There is also a view that devices should only be deployed where 'safe to do so'.
- Issue 172 – consideration around the current requirement that accessible seats on coaches must be kept for passengers in wheelchairs. Some providers do not agree with this requirement unless an advance notice period (eg: 48hrs) is met due to the time required for technicians to remove the seats.

Tranche 2 examples

- Issue 42 - Bus and coach industry sees urgent need for clarity surrounding restraining of motorised mobility devices on buses and coaches. It is recognised that seats on coaches provide a greater degree of safety than wheelchairs that are restrained with straps (*ADR 68 – occupant protection in buses*). NAPTAC recommended that the issue is formally referred to national and/or jurisdictional transport safety committee/s as a safety issue in the first instance.
- Issue 30 - Clarity required with regard to charter coach services as against public transport services. The second review raised the issue of whether coach services should / should not be included under the DSAPT. Current wording in the DSAPT is unclear and provides no definitive ruling.

Tranche 2 examples (continued)

- Issue 163 – Equivalent access.

The Transport Standards allow for operators to use equivalent access provisions including the use of direct assistance if they are not able to comply with specific standards. However, this provision is not widely utilised as operators are unsure whether a complaint may still be made against them.

NAPTAC and the modernisation committee is looking at whether equivalent access provisions can be strengthened to provide increased assurance and certainty to operators who may wish to use alternative solutions.

Motorised Mobility Device Labelling Scheme for public transport

Some motorised mobility devices (MMDs) are:

- too heavy to use ramps/lifts
- too wide to access doorways
- too long, or lacking manoeuvrability to be used on buses/trains
- lack stability to safely use ramps

Output from current work between Austroads and Standards Australia in the form of an Australian Technical Specification may be incorporated into the Transport Standards.

(Characteristics above do not necessarily apply to example on right)



How can you contribute?

- Michael Apps, as a member of NAPTAC and the DSAPT Modernisation Committee will keep BIC members informed on relevant issues. Members can provide responses back to Michael.
- BIC members may also wish to discuss issues/responses with their respective state and territory government transport agencies who also have representation on NAPTAC and the modernisation committee.

- Questions

Thank you