



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

Australian Government response to the 2022 Review of the Transport Standards



More than 1,000 people participated in the fourth statutory review (2022 Review) of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards). Public consultation for the 2022 Review was open from 22 December 2022 to 30 June 2023. The experiences shared through consultations, including from people with disability, disability advocacy groups, public transport operators and providers, and state, territory and local governments, provide invaluable insights into the efficiency and effectiveness of the Transport Standards in supporting accessible public transport networks across Australia, including areas requiring future attention. The Australian Government thanks everyone who engaged in the consultation process and contributed to the 2022 Review.

The 2022 Review Final Report identified six opportunities for action:

1. The Transport Standards, Guidelines and Whole Journey Guide are not widely known or understood.
2. A lack of mechanisms for measuring and enforcing compliance is a significant barrier to removing discrimination from public transport.
3. The Transport Standards, Guidelines and Whole Journey Guide have not kept pace with change.
4. The Transport Standards alone do not enable a fully accessible 'whole of journey'.
5. There are some specific aspects of public transport that pose particular accessibility challenges – including complaints processes, journey disruptions, and travelling in rural, regional and remote areas and air travel.
6. Engagement of people with disability in the design and implementation of public transport leads to better accessibility outcomes.

The Australian Government (the Government) acknowledges these opportunities for action and will continue to work closely with people with disability and public transport operators and providers to ensure the Transport Standards remain update-to-date, efficient, effective and achieve their objective to eliminate discrimination as far as possible against people with disability.

Some of these opportunities are being addressed in whole or in part through the implementation of the Transport Standards reform package, announced on 20 March 2024. The reforms aim to modernise the Transport Standards and their supporting material to ensure they remain efficient and effective in removing discrimination against people with disability. The reforms included 53 regulatory reforms and a further 23 non-regulatory reforms that will see the legislation and guidance

documents updated. As part of this reform process, a working group will also be established to develop a nationally consistent reporting framework that operators and providers will be encouraged to report against.

The *Whole Journey: A guide for thinking beyond compliance to create accessible public transport journeys* is also being updated as part of the reform process to encourage policy makers, planners, designers, builders, certifiers and operators to think beyond compliance and the physical and governance boundaries of services and infrastructure and focus instead on people's accessibility needs across their whole journey. The Government will, where relevant, supplement these updates with additional findings shared through the 2022 Review to encourage operators and providers to deliver a fully accessible 'whole of journey'. The Government will also continue to monitor updates to relevant Australian Standards and the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010, and undertake work to update the Transport Standards to ensure alignment is maintained as appropriate.

The Government acknowledges the 2022 Review's findings on measuring and enforcing compliance with the Transport Standards. The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (Disability Royal Commission) made several relevant recommendations, including for the introduction of enforcement powers for the Australian Human Rights Commission in relation to a positive duty to eliminate discrimination in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA). In the Government's response to the Disability Royal Commission final report, the Government committed to reform of the DDA.

Many of the issues relating to air travel that were highlighted through the 2022 Review are being addressed through the Aviation White Paper, which sets out the Government's vision for Australia's aviation sector to 2050. This includes initiatives to deliver an accessible aviation sector that protects the rights of people with disability.

It is important that all levels of government collaborate where possible to progress accessibility upgrades across Australia's public transport networks. The Australian Government will keep the community up to date about progress on work to address the opportunities for action identified in the 2022 Review. For more information, visit www.infrastructure.gov.au/transportaccessibility.