

2022 Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002

Submission – June 2023

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Overview

Introduction

The Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts (DITRDCA) is currently undertaking the *2022 Review of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* (Transport Standards review).

On 22 December 2022, DITRDCA released its discussion paper on the Transport Standards review (discussion paper). Marking the fourth five-yearly review of the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* (Transport Standards), the discussion paper invited feedback on the Transport Standards' efficiency and effectiveness.

In response to DITRDCA's invitation for input, and in recognition of the value of the Transport Standards in driving accessibility reform, this submission provides an overview of the ongoing work of the Queensland Department of Transport and Main Roads (TMR) towards greater passenger transport accessibility across Queensland.

TMR has made significant advancements in its work towards accessibility outcomes since the last five-yearly review. This submission highlights work across our business towards achieving TMR's vision to create a single integrated transport network accessible to everyone. It provides an overview of TMR's approach to accessibility, as evidenced in: strategic framework and planning; accessibility engagement, through various mechanisms for advice, consultation and co-design; and key accessibility initiatives including across concessions, subsidies and service trials.

The discussion paper also requests feedback on ways the Transport Standards are supporting the challenges people with disability face when using public transport. In this regard TMR notes its contribution to the Commonwealth's modernisation process for the Transport Standards which has run parallel to this Transport Standards review. TMR provided feedback on both current and future states of the Transport Standards, through that process, including through two Consultation Regulation Impact Statement (RIS) submissions, and as co-chair of the National Accessible Transport Steering Committee (NATSC).

TMR welcomes the indication in the discussion paper that findings and feedback from the modernisation process will also be incorporated by DITRDCA into the Transport Standards review.

TMR has made significant inroads towards compliance with the Transport Standards since the last five-year review. Once the modernisation process for the Transport Standards is complete – and the new legislation is made, TMR will reconsider its compliance in the context of the updated Transport Standards.

This submission focuses on work TMR has undertaken towards accessibility goals, consistent with the object of the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) and purpose of the Transport Standards to eliminate discrimination against persons on the grounds of disability as far as possible, in public transport services. While addressing the work of TMR, it does not consider private operators that offer services outside of the government contracted framework in Queensland, nor the accessibility work of Queensland Rail.

Submission structure

Focusing on our progress towards removing discrimination for people with disability across public transport, this submission is structured as follows:

- overview
- Transport Standards modernisation process
- strategic context
- accessibility engagement
- accessibility initiatives.

Transport Standards modernisation process

TMR jointly led the modernisation of the Transport Standards with the Australian Government from 2019, through its role as co-chair of the National Accessible Transport Steering Committee. This process resulted from a 2015 recommendation to modernise the Transport Standards, arising from the second five-yearly review.

Since this time, considerable work has progressed on modernisation of the Transport Standards. At the time of compiling this submission, Ministers agreed (at the Infrastructure Transport Ministers Meeting on 9 June 2023) that jurisdictions would develop prioritised plans to implement the preferred reform options and consider how to publish the plans and report on progress as well as develop a flexible implementation approach for the reforms that apply to existing assets and infrastructure.

This submission reiterates comments made in TMR's 2018 submission to the third review of the Transport Standards, which observed the challenges in a review being undertaken while the separate modernisation work remains ongoing. While s34.1(1)(b) of the Transport Standards requires a review every five years, it has been challenging to prepare input to this review concurrent with TMR's contribution to the modernisation work – particularly when the precise application of any proposed reforms and their impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Transport Standards is not yet known. In that context, this submission focuses on an overview of TMR's work to provide an accessible public passenger transport network in Queensland and input and feedback to the Australian Government about the Transport Standards provided through the modernisation project – should be considered in parallel with this submission.

Meeting or exceeding the requirements of the current and proposed updated Transport Standards remains a priority for TMR.

Strategic context

Snapshot of Queensland's size

Queensland is Australia's second largest state in geographical terms, at approximately 1,730,000 square kilometres (km) in size. It enjoys 7,400 km of coastline, or 13,350 km including its islands.

As of 30 September 2022 it has approximately 5.35 million residents, and its population continues to grow at a rate higher than any other Australian state or territory. Its population is relatively more decentralised than other states and territories, with more than half of Queenslanders living outside the greater metropolitan area of Brisbane.

Queensland's Passenger Transport System

Queensland has a complex, multi-modal passenger transport network with over 124 million passenger trips in 2021–22 across bus, rail, ferry, light rail and air.

Queensland's passenger transport network is managed by TMR through its Translink Division (Translink). Translink is responsible for the integrated rail, bus, ferry and tram network in South East Queensland and long-distance rail, bus and aviation services in regional, rural and remote Queensland, in addition to school transport, personalised transport, on demand services and other passenger transport services.

Translink's role is to lead and shape Queensland's passenger transport system, by providing an integrated transport network that is safe and accessible to all. This also applies to the facilitation of services provided by private bus, coach, ferry, tram and regional air service operators, local governments, Queensland Rail and operators within the personalised transport industry (taxi, limousine and ride booking services).

Key figures are as follows as at June 2023:

- 1,251 accredited transport operators
- 54,364 authorised drivers of public transport
- 521 holders of a booking entity authorisation

- 3,253 licensed taxis (647 of which are wheelchair accessible taxis)
- 17,546 booked hire service licences
- More than 1,000 school bus contracts
- 35 urban bus contracts (18 regional including 2 Demand Responsive Transport, 17 South East Queensland (SEQ))
- 7 air service contracts
- 20 long distance bus and coach contracts
- 9 ferry service contracts, agreements, other contracts

A public-private partnership with the GoldLinQ Consortium is also in place to deliver light rail passenger services on the Gold Coast.

TMR also has a contractual agreement with Queensland Rail, which is responsible for the operation of passenger rail services across the state, as well as for ensuring that supporting rail infrastructure remains safe, reliable and to a fit for purpose standard. Queensland Rail is a statutory authority separate from TMR, and operates in accordance with the *Queensland Rail Transit Authority Act 2013 (Qld)*.

TMR's approach to accessibility and inclusion

TMR adopts a multi-layered approach to improving and supporting customers' accessibility needs and broader community accessibility outcomes, in accordance with whole of government objectives. This means embedding accessibility and inclusion in all its activities. This approach reflects human rights obligations, legislative requirements as well as the expectations of stakeholders.

Accessible and inclusive transport is critical to removing barriers so that everyone can access fundamental facets of life including employment, healthcare, education, recreation, community and culture.

This means not only a focus on compliance with the Transport Standards, but also consideration of outcomes. TMR achieves this by mainstreaming accessibility considerations and ensuring involvement of people with disability, and active promotion of their rights, across all its work. This approach enables TMR to work towards its vision of creating a single integrated transport network accessible to everyone. The approach has also enabled TMR to make significant progress since the last five year review of the Transport Standards towards removing discrimination for people with disability with respect to public transport in Queensland.

Accessibility and Inclusion Strategy

TMR's approach to accessibility is articulated in its *Accessibility and Inclusion Strategy* (AIS). This includes TMR's commitment to becoming a world leader in the provision of accessible and inclusive:

- transport services, products, information, and infrastructure
- workplaces and work practices.

TMR co-designed the AIS with its customers, people and partners. It is designed to guide TMR in building an accessible and inclusive transport system. It will support TMR in achieving its vision, and ensure its approach to accessibility and inclusion aligns with Queensland Government priorities.

The AIS defines TMR's understanding of accessibility and inclusion as:

- **Accessibility** means being able to use the full range of services and products. It means having services that are functional and designed to allow access for all. It results in a connected and easy experience.
- **Inclusion** is about everyone feeling confident and safe when accessing services and facilities. It means being included and having equality of opportunity.

The AIS also explains TMR's principles of accessibility and inclusion:

- Design with me
- Make me feel welcome and independent

- Listen and improve
- Inclusion is our culture.

TMR has already undertaken significant work to deliver an accessible and inclusive transportation experience for all, but recognises that more work is needed. The AIS provides a roadmap and opportunity to consolidate and focus on the future.

The document is available [here](#).

Accessibility and Inclusion Plan 2023–2024

The *Accessibility and Inclusion Plan 2023–2024*, also known as 'Moving together', sits underneath the AIS and outlines the practical actions TMR is taking to deliver on the AIS. The plan provides for 27 actions across the three pillars of strategy, culture and process – each for delivery within the plan's lifespan.

Some key examples of future actions are to review and develop accessibility and inclusion criteria for inclusion in finance and procurement documentation; to develop and deliver accessible communications training across TMR; and to conduct an *Accessibility and Inclusion Survey* for employees, customers and partners every 18 months.

Importantly, TMR will report progress on the actions and in 2024 will develop an updated plan based on key lessons learnt, co-design activities and emerging trends.

The document is available [here](#).

Disability Services Plan 2022–2025

TMR's *Disability Services Plan 2022–2025* (DSP) is a three-year road map on how TMR will build inclusive and accessible workplaces, and transport products and services. The DSP is made under the *Disability Services Act 2006* (*Qld*), in line with the legislative requirement for all Queensland Government departments to prepare disability plans.

The DSP complements the AIS and supports TMR's active commitment to eliminating disability discrimination, and promoting the recognition of the rights of people with disability.

The DSP has also been designed to align with the outcomes framework of the whole of government Queensland's Disability Plan (QDP). The QDP outlines how the Queensland Government is building an inclusive Queensland and is meeting its commitment to ensure:

- the voices of Queenslanders with disability are heard
- people with disability have access to employment opportunities and
- people with disability are supported to participate fully in their communities.

Collectively, these documents drive the implementation of Queensland's contribution to *Australia's Disability Strategy 2021–31* (ADS).

The DSP sets out key actions based on both the QDP and ADS which align with various ADS policy priorities, including that:

- transport systems be accessible for the whole community (policy priority 5) and
- information and communication systems be accessible, reliable and responsive (policy priority 6).

More information is available [here](#).

Creating Better Connections for Queenslanders

Released in August 2022 by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, *Creating Better Connections for Queenslanders* is TMR's 10-year plan for passenger transport in Queensland.

Extensive customer research and insights have informed the plan. It is focused on ensuring that all customers continue to have access to reliable, safe, and accessible passenger transport, while harnessing the opportunities of emerging technologies and service delivery models.

The plan is centred on five key priorities:

- Reliable and safe services
- Responsive to changing community needs
- Seamless end to end journeys
- Easy and accessible
- Environmentally sustainable.

The plan recognises the critical role of passenger transport in connecting people to jobs, education, health, essential services, and to each other. It also identifies how passenger transport can reduce social isolation and help ensure people can access services and opportunities, regardless of whether they own a vehicle or can drive.

Signature initiatives identified in the "Easy and Accessible" priority that focus on the passenger transport offering for customers are:

- More accessible passenger transport
- Harnessing technology to improve accessibility
- Smart Ticketing introducing new ways to plan and pay for journeys
- Simplified regional fares and zones
- School transport ticketing and
- A simpler, more legible network, signage, and branding.

Creating Better Connections for Queenslanders also recognises the need to respond to changing community needs. This means ensuring TMR invests in the right services, at the right time and at the right location, to increase our customers' access to health, jobs and education. The plan details TMR's commitment to ensuring passenger transport options are reliable, safe, more personalised, and better integrated so our customers can travel with confidence.

Creating Better Connections for Queenslanders also recognises passenger transport services need to be tailored to the needs of local communities because what works in one location may not be relevant in others, and what works today may not meet the needs of the community in 10 years.

The document is available [here](#).

Interim Disability Action Plan 2023–2024

TMR's *Interim Disability Action Plan 2023–2024* (IDAP) is its latest disability action plan, which TMR has prepared since 2007. As with its predecessors, the IDAP outlines TMR's continued commitment to improving accessibility for people with disability using the passenger transport system in Queensland.

The IDAP picks up from TMR's previous *Disability Action Plan 2018–2022*. Achievements under the previous plan include:

- engagement of stakeholders through various accessibility reference groups
- rollout of trials of the Smart Ticketing solution, offering new ways to plan and pay for travel across Queensland, incorporating trials of hands-free technology to facilitate independent travel
- providing over \$17 million in grant funding to local government through the Passenger Transport Accessible Infrastructure Program (PTAIP), to assist with accessibility upgrades
- providing over \$55 million to assist eligible customers with their travel through the Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS)
- improving the Translink website to accessibility level AA
- involving customers with disability in user-testing phases of the 'MyTranslink' app to ensure accessibility
- implementing bus stop blade sign Braille numbers at various stops across the network

- providing information to industry organisations and operators to enhance their knowledge and understanding of safe transportation of people with disability and people with reduced mobility.

The IDAP is an interim plan, acknowledging the Transport Standards modernisation process currently underway. Once outcomes from the modernisation process are known, TMR will develop a new disability action plan with stakeholders. Until this time, the IDAP identifies 12 actions, either ongoing or for implementation in the life of the IDAP.

The IDAP was developed following consultation with members of the Transport and Main Roads Accessibility Reference Group (TMR ARG), which includes representatives from government, industry and disability advocacy groups.

The document is available [here](#).

Accessibility engagement

TMR's ongoing approach to accessibility is both cross-cutting and project-specific, with complementary approaches to accessibility engagement through different bodies at strategic and operational levels.

This enables both genuine consultation, and continuous improvement. It is also consistent with TMR's business objectives to build inclusive business practices into project lifecycles, and its cultural objectives to foster accessibility and inclusion by building confidence to engage customers in co-design.

The means of engagement have matured significantly in the past five years, and continue to evolve into standard business processes. Importantly, TMR considers this a critical means of working to eliminate discrimination against people with disability, and so complementary to the purpose and functions of the Transport Standards.

TMR's Accessible Taxi Services Working Group

TMR has received increasing numbers of complaints about taxi service levels for passengers with disability, particularly those travelling in wheelchairs and requiring a wheelchair accessible taxi. In response to these complaints, TMR has established an Accessible Taxi Services Working Group, comprising disability advocates and taxi industry stakeholders, to develop and deliver a joint action plan that addresses customer concerns. This follows a roundtable hosted by the Minister for Transport and Main Roads with customers with disability, disability advocates and the taxi industry to discuss the causes of current service level issues, customer needs, and to identify opportunities for the taxi industry to ensure they are prioritising accessible services.

TMR's Accessibility Reference Group

In 2014, TMR established the TMR ARG. Its purpose is to provide a consultative forum for government, industry and disability stakeholders to discuss issues relating to improving the accessibility of the Queensland passenger transport network for customers with disability. The TMR ARG also provides an additional mechanism for consultation on specific policies and initiatives relating to passenger transport. At various stages of project lifecycles, this can include input at design, testing and review phases.

The TMR ARG currently meets five times each year, and its membership is comprised of representatives from the disability sector, industry groups, transport operators and local government. Members are also encouraged to share information on initiatives from their own organisations.

Accessible Transport Network

Accessible Transport Network (ATN) was established within TMR in 2018. Its mission is "to create a welcoming transport network that will enable everyone to move easily and provide the opportunity to participate in our community and access employment, health, education, recreation, and culture". One of the ATN's key functions is to implement TMR's AIS and embed accessibility and inclusion into all facets of TMR's business.

The ATN provides both strategic and practical support to TMR. Importantly, the ATN has a focus on achieving functional outcomes and best practice in accessibility and inclusion. This acknowledges that standards typically define lawful minimums for compliance which do not always equate to good outcomes.

New Generation Rollingstock accessibility upgrades program

In August 2018 a Commission of Inquiry into Queensland's fleet of New Generation Rollingstock (NGR) trains identified that the fleet did not fully comply with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 requirements. In its response to the Commission of Inquiry in late 2018 the Queensland Government accepted all recommendations and acknowledged this non-compliance fell short of its aim to provide an accessible transport network.

In response to the inquiry, the NGR accessibility upgrades program was announced in December 2018, and the first NGR train commenced upgrades in October 2019. The first upgraded train commenced passenger service in April 2021, and all 75 NGR trains are scheduled to be modified and back in passenger service in 2024.

The upgrades program has involved extensive and innovative co-design with disability stakeholders through a Project Working Group (PWG) to address non-compliance and explore design changes. Key lessons learned from this project have been incorporated into future rollingstock-related work of TMR.

The PWG is now working closely on the rollingstock design for the Queensland Train Manufacturing Program (QTMP), which will deliver 65 new trains to support Queensland's population and economic growth. Following contract award (expected mid 2023), the PWG will work with both TMR's QTMP team and the contractor as part of detailed design to ensure the trains are the most accessible and functional trains in Australia.

Queensland Accessible Transport Advisory Council

Following the 2018 NGR Commission of Inquiry, the Queensland Government established the Queensland Accessible Transport Advisory Council (QATAC) to provide formal, independent and strategic advice to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads, TMR's Director-General, and the Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Rail. QATAC commenced operation in 2021.

QATAC provides frank, independent and strategic advice on major initiatives as well as systemic issues impacting people with disability, their families and carers, with an emphasis on the experiences of people as they use public transport. QATAC's strategic focus distinguishes it from the TMR ARG's operational and broad technical focus.

QATAC is also available for consultation with other Queensland Government agencies, delivery partners and local authorities on request.

Further consultation and co-design

TMR also facilitates project- and business area-specific consultative bodies to enable co-design and collaboration on accessibility matters from projects' initial stages through to completion. The objective is to build in accessibility and co-design from the outset of projects through dedicated consultation.

This has resulted in more specific consultative bodies within TMR such as:

- Cross River Rail Accessibility Reference Group
- NGR/QTMP PWG
- Smart Ticketing Project Accessibility Stakeholder Working Group
- Logan to Gold Coast Faster Rail Accessibility Reference Group.

Each group is separate from the TMR ARG, which remains in place to provide input on accessibility matters across the business as needs and opportunities arise. Within their scope, each group is a further example of how TMR is recognising and fostering the role of community stakeholders in achieving improved accessibility outcomes across the sector, particularly at the critical stages of planning and design.

Accessibility initiatives

TMR also supports passenger transport accessibility through implementation of various policies, projects and other initiatives. Below is a selection of key initiatives which intersect with and enhance accessibility across Queensland's passenger transport network.

Public transport concessions

Concessions provide a level of access and mobility for the transport disadvantaged, which delivers on TMR's vision of creating a single integrated transport network accessible to everyone. In 2021–22, \$283.10 million was provided in concessions and assistance to customers across Queensland.

In most cases, the level of concession is a 50 per cent fare, however some customers qualify for free travel. Concessional arrangements are as follows:

- 50 per cent concession: Children (aged 5 to 14), students, tertiary, seniors, pensioners, asylum seekers, job seekers, veterans (holders of Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) or Veteran white card or gold card (all conditions))
- Free travel: Children (aged 0 to 4), holders of vision impairment travel pass, holders of national companion card scheme, veterans (holders of DVA or Veteran gold card (totally and permanently incapacitated (TPI), extreme disablement adjustment (EDA) conditions).

School Transport Assistance Scheme

The School Transport Assistance Scheme (STAS) helps students with travel to and from school when access to education is impeded by distance. The scheme contributes significantly to improving accessibility limitations resulting from remoteness and financial disadvantage.

STAS provides assistance to 130,000 school students, which equates to about 20 per cent of the overall school student cohort in Queensland. In 2021–22, approximately \$183 million of funding assisted recipients, making it one of the largest state government schemes in Queensland.

Eligibility for the scheme is based on the distance students live from their nearest school:

- 3.2 or more kilometres away from a primary school
- 4.8 or more kilometres away from a secondary school.

Assistance is also available for students who do not meet the distance criteria but come from families that receive certain government benefits, as well as students from areas that are drought declared.

Assistance is provided for travel on rail, bus and ferry services, and to assist families driving their children to and from school or a transport point. Through bus services, TMR works with 479 delivery partners, providing more than 1472 school routes using approximately 1838 buses.

Taxi Subsidy Scheme

TMR's TSS provides affordable taxi travel for people with severe disability who have been medically assessed as unable to use other forms of subsidised passenger transport. Under the scheme, TMR funds half of the taxi fare up to a maximum of \$30 per trip.

A member of the TSS may travel for any purpose, including social, medical or employment reasons, and there is no cap on the number of trips a member may take.

In 2021–22, the scheme assisted 52,179 Queenslanders to access more affordable taxi travel. Approximately 1.4 million subsidised taxi trips were taken, with subsidies of more than \$12.9 million paid. As of 30 June 2022, TMR paid an average subsidy of \$8.64 per trip.

TSS subsidies for NDIS participants were planned to transition to the NDIS. However, as a result of concerns about the adequacy of transport support for people with disability under the NDIS, the Queensland Government has moved to make

sure that NDIS participants continue to have access to the scheme while transport support under the NDIS is being finalised. The Australian Government reimburses the Queensland Government for TSS travel by NDIS participants.

Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Grant Scheme

In 2019–20, TMR launched a four-year, \$21 million funding scheme to help the taxi industry replace aging wheelchair accessible taxis, which has subsequently been extended to June 2024. This supports the industry in continuing to provide vital accessible transport options in a sustainable and modern taxi fleet for people with reduced mobility.

The scheme helps taxi operators to provide accessible transport options by supporting the replacement of wheelchair accessible taxis that are aging or written off. It also offers funding to replace conventional taxis with new wheelchair accessible taxis in certain taxi service areas, to support an increase in the supply of wheelchair accessible taxis.

Successful applicants for the scheme are eligible for 50 per cent funding for the cost of a new wheelchair accessible taxi, up to a maximum grant of \$45,000. A total of 118 applications were received from across Queensland in 2021–22, of which 105 were approved. Between commencement in December 2019 and the end June 2022, 275 applications have been received, 234 approved, and 187 fulfilled with vehicles operating.

Wheelchair Accessible Taxi lift fee

In addition to the TSS payment, TMR also provides a \$20 lift payment to taxi providers for each wheelchair accessible taxi trip involving transport of a TSS member who is required to travel in a wheelchair. This aims to improve service provision for these passengers and ensure they have access to reliable personalised transport services by providing an incentive for drivers of wheelchair accessible taxis to prioritise their bookings.

In 2021–22, lift payments totalled \$7.3 million, with 386,729 trips attracting the lift payment incentive to wheelchair accessible taxi drivers.

Customer feedback processes/methodologies

TMR has an extensive insights program to understand customer needs and issues. A key focus of this program is to capture feedback from customers with accessibility needs. Customers provide feedback through a range of options including by phone, website, or social media. Complaints and commendations are regularly analysed to help understand and respond to issues impacting the customer experience.

Research is also conducted with customers (including those with accessibility needs) to understand behaviour, needs and experiences. Key initiatives to support accessibility include:

- a re-design of the main survey methodology to improve accessibility and maximise the number of customers able to participate
- a dedicated research project to understand the needs and experiences of customers with hidden disabilities
- TMR's Customer Experience Survey, allowing customers to choose to share their age and whether they identify as someone with a disability or accessibility need.
- Since 2019, TMR has conducted surveys to gather feedback with more than 15,000 customers with a disability and/or accessibility need, and more than 17,000 customers aged 60 and over.

Passenger Transport Infrastructure Investment Program

The Passenger Transport Infrastructure Investment Program (PTIIP) is a program of works for design and construction of passenger transport infrastructure projects, enabling a more accessible, efficient, and integrated network offering better value to customers, and making passenger transport a more attractive option for everyone.

In 2021–22, \$191.5 million was allocated to PTIIP for upgrading existing and new accessible public transport infrastructure. Key achievements under PTIIP during this time include:

- construction commencement on Southern Moreton Bay Islands passenger ferry terminal upgrades in partnership with Redlands City Council

- completion and opening of a major upgrade to the Morayfield bus station
- design work for new bus facilities including at Cannon Hill, Chermside, Indooroopilly, Robina, South Bank and Strathpine
- contract award for construction of a new bus station for Mangrove Road, Mackay
- planning commencement to support accessibility upgrades at the Upper Mount Gravatt bus station.

Passenger Transport Accessible Infrastructure Program

PTAIP is a grants program providing funding assistance to local governments in Queensland upgrading their existing passenger transport facilities to comply with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (Cth) and the Transport Standards. The success of PTAIP is built on the partnership approach with both local governments and other state government agencies.

Funding contributions under PTAIP allow local governments to:

- enhance safety and accessibility of the transport network for everyone
- modernise passenger transport facilities to comply with legislative requirements
- apply consistent design standards across the passenger transport network.

In 2021–22, funding assistance was provided to 16 local governments across Queensland to support more than 250 bus stop upgrades to meet accessibility standards. Funding assistance was also provided towards upgrading long-distance coach stops in regional and remote areas.

Smart Ticketing project

Smart Ticketing is a new ticketing solution offering new ways to plan and pay for travel across Queensland. Over time, more and more Queenslanders will be able to pay for travel with contactless payment methods using a debit card, credit card, smartphone or smart device.

Accessibility and inclusion are a key focus of the project. TMR has undertaken extensive research, customer engagement and testing with a broad range of accessibility and advocacy groups to ensure the new Smart Ticketing equipment is functional, accessible and user-friendly for everyone.

For example, Smart Ticketing equipment's signature pink colour is the result of careful colour testing with customers of varying abilities, which found it to be the most accessible and visible from a station platform. Further, Braille plates installed on the Smart Ticketing equipment to help customers tap on and tap off have been designed in consultation with accessibility advocates and individuals, and in accordance with both the Transport Standards and relevant Australian Standards.

TMR is progressively testing, trialling and rolling out Smart Ticketing across South East Queensland and 18 regional urban bus centres. Smart Ticketing is now available for travel between all G:link, Queensland Rail (SEQ) and Airtrain stations.

Other initiatives

Co-designing a TMR Easy Read style

- Working with customers who live with diverse abilities, TMR ran a pilot in 2021–22 to co-design a more inclusive way to present information and create easier-to-read documents.
- The pilot investigated the use of Easy Read as an option, to provide an accessible and alternative style of communication using images, simple language, and white space to convey information.
- Throughout the pilot, 48 prototype pages were created, more than 1500 findings emerged, and a specific TMR Easy Read style was co-designed. The new style significantly increased customer comprehension of information and provided them with a greater sense of independence and trust in TMR.

- TMR has now published Easy Read versions of a range of communications including the TMR Complaints Management Policy and other factsheets. They are especially helpful for customers with low literacy, customers with intellectual disabilities, customers who use English as a second language, and customers who are time poor.

NaviLens

- TMR's *Digital Futures Program* recently completed an Australian-first proof of concept of a publicly available communication solution called NaviLens.
- Via an app, NaviLens allows customers to scan colourful machine-readable codes on their phone to access real-time information, wayfinding and audible experiences aimed for people with visual impairment.
- Under the trial NaviLens codes were installed in King George Square bus station in March 2022. They can be scanned from up to 20 metres away, and can provide extremely accurate positioning and distance information.
- Key customer stakeholder groups such as Vision Australia and Guide Dogs Queensland participated in testing the solution, with positive feedback. Lessons from the trial will help to inform any potential future applications for the solution.

Near-field communication bus stop solution

- TMR has undertaken important work on the use of near-field communication (NFC) technology to support greater access to timetable and stop information. NFC technology has been explored as one means to assist with providing more efficient and intuitive access to real-time information at bus stops, including to ensure up to date stop information is available and accessible for people with disability.
- In 2020 TMR trialled installing NFC cases at select bus stops, allowing customers to tap an NFC-enabled smartphone on the NFC case, to open a webpage containing the stop timetable, real-time bus information where available, service notifications, and other general stop information – without needing to download any apps or search the web.
- After the technology's successful trial across greater Brisbane, which had a positive community response, it is now being rolled out across all urban bus stops in Queensland.

Conclusion

Developments in improving accessibility across Queensland since the previous review of the Transport Standards have been significant. TMR has made wide-ranging progress in this time towards removing discrimination and enhancing public transport accessibility for people with disability, maturing towards enduring and embedded approaches to supporting accessibility across the full scope of our functions. This is reflected in its strategic approach, engagement and advice mechanisms, and projects, programs and initiatives.

Accessibility is an ongoing responsibility, and must always be focused on outcomes and improving the end-to-end transport experience, rather than achieving compliance with minimum standards. As emphasised by DITRDCA through the Transport Standards modernisation process, accessibility is a service, rather than an exercise in compliance.

Nonetheless, the Transport Standards have transformative value in improving accessibility outcomes. TMR remains committed to promoting awareness of the Transport Standards, moving further towards compliance with their requirements, and committed to advocating to public transport operators and providers for compliance and improved accessibility overall.

TMR continues to support the objectives and intent of their modernisation and reform, given the Transport Standards must remain relevant, practically useful to users and operators/providers, and a compliance benchmark to drive better outcomes. TMR will work further to progress the modernisation in a manner which results in practical improvements to accessibility for public transport users in Queensland, and consistent with the vision of a single integrated transport network accessible to everyone.