# Reform of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 – Summary of decision

On 20 March 2024, the Australian Government announced that it had decided to reform the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards). This document provides an overview of the reform process and a summary of the reforms.

## Context

One in six people aged 15 years and over with disability have difficulty using public transport. Access to public transport enables Australians to work or study, visit family and friends, and access critical services such as healthcare. Without equitable access to public transport, discrimination can arise.

In Australia, public transport operators and providers are required to make their services accessible for people with disability. This is managed through the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards). The Transport Standards are developed under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA).

In 2019, state, territory and the Commonwealth infrastructure and transport ministers agreed to reform the Transport Standards to make sure they are efficient, effective, fit-for-purpose and meet the needs of Australian society.

## Process

The reform process has been undertaken in two stages. Stage 1 identified 16 areas of reform, and public consultations were held in early-2021. Feedback from this consultation was used to inform the Stage 1 Decision Regulation Impact Statement (RIS), which was considered by ministers in February 2022. Stage 2 considered 60 reform areas and implementation arrangements for the full package of reforms (Stage 1 and 2). Public consultations were held in mid-2022. Feedback from this consultation was used to inform the Stage 2 Decision RIS, which was considered by ministers in June 2023. Further information is available on the department’s website: [www.infrastructure.gov.au/transport-standards-reform](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/transport-standards-reform).

## Reform options

For each reform area, three policy options were proposed:

* **Regulatory** – Legislative changes made to the Transport Standards to include new requirements.
* **Non-regulatory** – The provision of guidance material to support the Transport Standards.
* **Status quo** – No changes to the Transport Standards or guidance material.

Following analysis of all available evidence, including public submissions and cost-benefit analysis data, one policy option has been chosen for each reform area. The Stage 1 and Stage 2 Decision RISs provide the rationale for the selected options, balancing the regulatory impacts of new or updated requirements against the overarching goal of the DDA and the Transport Standards.

In total, there are 76 reforms, which include regulatory reforms that apply to new and substantially upgraded assets (30 reforms), regulatory reforms that apply to existing assets (19 reforms), regulatory reforms that apply on commencement (4 reforms), and changes to guidance that supports the Transport Standards (16 reforms). In some cases, further work is required to determine the scale and scope of the problem or if there are more appropriate solutions to address the problem (7 reforms). Additional research and targeted consultation with relevant stakeholders will be undertaken by the Australian Government to resolve these issues.

## Implementation

Three options were considered for the implementation of regulatory reforms:

* **New or substantially upgraded assets**– new requirements would apply to all new assets and will only apply to assets that are currently in service, if the asset is substantially upgraded. Based on the outcomes of consultation, this approach has been selected where implementation of the new requirements would be complex, costly or would see an asset out of action for an extended period.
* **Existing assets with a compliance schedule**– new requirements would apply to all new assets and all assets that are currently in service, in accordance with with determined timeframes. Based on the outcomes of consultation, this approach has been selected where implementation of the new requirements will incur a low to modest cost and can occur without significant disruption to services.
* **On commencement** *–* new requirements would apply from the date the amendments to the Transport Standards come into force. Based on the outcomes of consultation, this implementation approach has been selected where a regulatory option relates to definitional or deregulatory changes, which would benefit the community and industry immediately**.**

Non-regulatory reforms will be implemented through updates to the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport Guidelines and the Whole Journey Guide.

The Australian, state and territory governments are working together to explore the feasibility of developing implementation plans for the 19 reforms that apply to existing assets. If agreed, these plans would be available as an alternative implementation option to set timeframes.

## Next steps

The Transport Standards will be updated to reflect the reforms where a legislative change has been agreed. These will become the new requirements that public transport operators and providers must meet. Once drafted, the updated legislation will be tabled in the Australian Parliament. The updated Transport Standards will come into force following tabling in Parliament. In addition to the changes to the Transport Standards, there have been agreed changes to the guidance material that support the Transport Standards. Updates to this supporting material will occur alongside legislative changes. Further information will be provided prior to the updated Transport Standards coming into effect, including updates on the progress of further work agreed through the reform process.

You can keep up to date by visiting our website, emailing us at [DisabilityTransport@infrastructure.gov.au](mailto:DisabilityTransport@infrastructure.gov.au) or calling [**1800 621 372**](tel:1800621372)**.**

## Summary of reforms

A summary of reform areas, agreed options and implementation arrangements is provided below. For further information, see the Stage 1 and Stage 2 Decision RISs: [www.infrastructure.gov.au/transport-standards-reform](http://www.infrastructure.gov.au/transport-standards-reform).

### Stage 1 reform areas

| **#** | **Reform Area** | **Description** | **Agreed option** | **Implementation approach** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Staff training and communication | Requirements to conduct disability awareness training to meet the specific roles and responsibilities of staff. | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe |
| 2 | Mobility aid safety | Guidance for mobility aid designers to improve the safety of mobility aids on conveyances. | Non-regulatory | The Whole Journey Guide |
| 3 | Priority seating | Requirements regarding the quantity, location and identification of priority seats. | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe |
| 4 | Allocated spaces | Requirements regarding the dimensions, location and usage of allocated spaces, including related access paths and manoeuvring areas in public transport vehicles. | Regulatory, sub-option 3 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 5 | Digital information screens | Requirements regarding the location, luminance contrast and polarization requirements for digital screens. | Regulatory | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 6 | Lifts | Stage 1, reform area 6 Lifts is superseded by Stage 2, reform areas 34 and 18. | N/A – covered in Stage 2 | N/A |
| 7 | Website accessibility | Setting accessibility (WCAG) requirements for websites | Regulatory, sub-option 3 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 8 | Communication during service disruption | Requirements to communicate the details of the disruption and alternate travel options in a variety of formats. | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe |
| 9 | Gangways | Requiring regarding maximum gradients to suit tidal environments. | Regulatory | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 10 | Assistance animal toileting facilities | Guidance on the location, design and information provision for assistance animal toileting facilities. | Non-regulatory | The Whole Journey Guide |
| 11 | Emergency egress | Guidance on emergency egress related to public transport infrastructure. | Non-regulatory | The Whole Journey Guide |
| 12 | Fit for purpose accessways | Guidance on ensuring accessways are fit for purpose including (but not limited to) universal design principles, continuous accessibility and anticipating future demand. | Non-regulatory | The Whole Journey Guide |
| 13 | Wayfinding | Requirements regarding luminance contrast of objects, tactical ground surface indicator usage and braille and tactile sign installation. | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 10 year set timeframe |
| 14 | Tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs) | Design requirements for directional tactile ground surface indicators. | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 10 year set timeframe |
| 15 | Passenger loading zones | Requirements for the first and last vehicle space to be accessible in a passenger loading zone in a public transport site. | Regulatory, sub-option 2 | Existing and new assets – 10 year set timeframe |
| 16 | Provision of information in multiple formats | Require that online information is not the sole means of providing information. | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe |
| 17 | Australian Standards and definitional amendments | The Transport Standards will be updated to reference all 32 relevant Australian Standards. | Regulatory | Other (refer to implementation chapter in Decision RIS). |

### Stage 2 reform areas

| **#** | **Reform Area** | **Description** | **Agreed option** | **Implementation approach** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Reporting | Guidance to encourage operators and providers to develop and publish plans on how they are meeting, and progressing towards compliance with the Transport Standards. A working group will be established to develop the reporting framework. | Non-regulatory | Standalone guidance |
| 2 | Equivalent Access | A web-based centralised repository of equivalent access solutions (i.e. examples). | Non-regulatory | Standalone guidance |
| 3 | Rideshare | A working group will be established to undertake a holistic review of the point-to-point transport, including rideshare, industry to determine the scope of the problem. | Status quo | N/A |
| 4 | Dedicated school buses | Further work to be undertaken to understand the scale of the problem. | Status quo | N/A |
| 5 | Better communication of accessibility features | Requirements to define accessibility terminology used by the operator and communicate accessibility features of public transport premises and vehicles. | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe |
| 6 | Timely provision of information | Requirements that information in infrequently requested formats (e.g. large print) must be provided in a timely manner if not immediately available. | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe |
| 7 | Real time communication | Guidance to encourage operators and providers of public transport to improve real time communication with passengers. | Non-regulatory | The Whole Journey Guide |
| 8 | Passenger location during journey | Requirement that passengers are informed of where they are during a journey. | Regulatory, sub-option 1 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 9 | Hearing augmentation on conveyances | A working group will be established to consider the feasibility of installing hearing augmentation systems in public transport operating environments and the viability of emerging digital solutions. | Status quo | N/A |
| 10 | Hearing augmentation: Infrastructure on premises | A working group will be established to consider the feasibility of installing hearing augmentation systems in public transport operating environments and the viability of emerging digital solutions. | Status quo | N/A |
| 11 | Print size and format | Requirements regarding print size, format and contrast for documents. | Regulatory | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 12 | International Symbol for Access and Deafness | Size requirements for the international symbol for accessibility and deafness on signs. | Regulatory sub-option 2 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 13 | Letter heights and luminance contrast of signs | Size requirements for the international symbol for accessibility and deafness on signs. | Regulatory option 2, sub-option 2 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 14 | Location of signs | Requirements for sign location. | Regulatory, sub-option 2 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 15 | Braille embossed (printed) specifications | Requirements for the standard of braille to be used on printed formats. A working group will be established to determine final technical specifications. | Regulatory in-principle | Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe |
| 16 | Braille and tactile lettering for signage | Requirements for braille and tactile sign design. A working group will be established to determine final technical specifications. | Regulatory in-principle | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 17 | Lifts - Braille and tactile lettering for signage | Requirements for lift landings to have braille and tactile signs identifying the platform landing. | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe |
| 18 | Lifts- Audible wayfinding | Requirements that lift cars must deliver audible wayfinding announcements. | Regulatory, option 2 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 19 | Lifts- Emergency communication systems in lift cars | Requirements for hearing and speech impaired passengers to be able to communicate from a lift in an emergency. | Regulatory | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 20 | Lifts - Reference for lift car communication and information system | Guidance on best practice accessible lift car communication and information systems. | Non-regulatory | The Whole Journey Guide |
| 21 | Information and communication technologies (ICT) procurement | Accessibility requirements for ICT procurement. | Regulatory, option 1 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 22 | Mobile web systems | Require that all information provided by an operator or provider must meet minimum technical (WCAG) specifications. | Regulatory, option 1 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 23 | Accessible fare system elements | Accessibility requirements for the use of fare system elements (e.g. ticketing machines). | Regulatory option 2, sub‑option 2 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 24 | Doors on access paths | Requirements that unisex accessible toilet doors on trains must be power assisted. | Regulatory, option 2 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 25 | Continuous access on access paths | Requirements that access paths must allow for continuous access. | Regulatory | On commencement |
| 26 | Flange gaps within access paths | Guidance to minimise the flange gap and encourage good design and safe traversing of flange gaps. | Non-regulatory | The Whole Journey Guide |
| 27 | Resting points | Requirements for resting points on long access paths. | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe |
| 28 | Requirements for handrails in overbridges and subways | Requirements that bridges and subways must have continuous handrails except in specified situations. | Regulatory | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 29 | Location of fare system elements | Accessibility requirements for the location of fare system elements (eg ticket machines). | Regulatory | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 30 | Allocated spaces and priority seating in waiting areas | Requirements for the number of allocated spaces and priority seats in waiting areas | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe |
| 31 | Accessible toilets with equal proportion of left- and right-hand configurations | Requirements that new trains must have accessible toilets with equal proportion of right and left-hand configurations (this includes support rail layout, door handles) | Regulatory | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 32 | Emergency call buttons in accessible toilets | Guidance on the provision of emergency call buttons in accessible toilets. | Non-regulatory | The Whole Journey Guide |
| 33 | Ambulant toilets | Guidance on the installation of ambulant toilets, including design considerations. | Non-regulatory | The Whole Journey Guide |
| 34 | Lift specifications and enhancements | Updating the Australian Standards reference to the current version. | Regulatory | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 35 | Specifications for escalators and inclined travellators | Requirements regarding minimum width specifications for escalators and moving walk ways and requirements that they are not the sole means of access for passengers. | Regulatory | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 36 | Poles, objects and luminance contrast | Requirements that poles and other objects must not project onto access paths and must meet minimum luminance contrast specifications. | Regulatory  option 1, sub‑option 1 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 37 | Lighting | Requirements that lighting at public transport facilities must be provided at a level that ensures safety and accessibility. | Regulatory,  option 1 | On commencement |
| 38 | Signals and processes for requesting boarding devices | Requirements for signals and processes for requesting boarding assistance on public transport vehicles. | Regulatory, option 2 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 39 | Notification by passenger of need for boarding device | Guidance to advise operators and providers on how to accommodate for passengers who notify the need for boarding device, noting passengers may communicate the need for boarding assistance in 'real time' for unbooked services. | Non-regulatory sub-option 1 | Transport Standards Guidelines |
| 40 | Portable boarding ramp edge barriers | Design requirements for portable boarding ramps. | Regulatory  option 2 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 41 | Boarding ramp and removable gangway definitions | Inclusion of new definitions for boarding ramps and removable gangways (linked to the reform below). | Regulatory | On commencement |
| 42 | Removeable gangway design – ferries | Requirements for the design and construction of removable gangways. A working group will be established to determine a revised regulatory option, noting proposed amendments to the National Standard for Commercial Vessels Part C1 (Design and construction – Arrangement, accommodation and personal safety). | Regulatory in-principle | Other (working group) |
| 43 | Nominated assistance boarding points | Direct and independent boarding must be available at nominated boarding points. | Regulatory option 1,  sub-option 5 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 44 | Identification of lead stops | Requirements for identifying lead stops at bus stations, bus interchanges and bus zones. | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe |
| 45 | Pontoon boarding points on infrastructure | Guidance on ensuring pontoon boarding points have maximum stability and the lowest possible gradients in their operating environment. | Non-regulatory | The Whole Journey Guide |
| 46 | Bus, tram and light rail boarding points on infrastructure | Clarifies the requirement for ‘flat and stable’ surfaces at bus, tram and light rail boarding points. | Regulatory  option 2 | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 47 | Hail-and-ride boarding points on infrastructure | Requirements for the boarding points used by operators of hail-and-ride services. | Regulatory | On commencement |
| 48 | Accessible taxi ranks | Requirements for the first and last vehicle spaces to be accessible and connected to access paths. | Regulatory  sub-option 1 | Existing and new assets – 10 year set timeframe |
| 49 | Accessible passenger loading zones on-street | Requirements for the first and last vehicle spaces to be accessible and for tactile ground surface indicators and kerb ramps. | Regulatory  sub-option 1 | Existing and new assets – 10 year set timeframe |
| 50 | Accessible parking spaces in infrastructure off-street carparks | Requirements that off-street public parking areas must provide one accessible parking space for every 50 parking spaces where there are more than five parking spaces. | Regulatory  sub-option 1 | Existing and new assets – 10 year set timeframe |
| 51 | Grabrails on access paths | Requirements for the luminance contrast, height and size of grabrails on access paths. | Regulatory | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 52 | Grabrails in allocated spaces | Requirements for the luminance contrast, height and size of grabrails in allocated spaces. | Regulatory | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 53 | Mobility aid movement in allocated spaces – passive restraints | Guidance on the containment of mobility aids in allocated spaces for buses, ferries, trams and light rail. | Non-regulatory | The Whole Journey Guide |
| 54 | Mobility aid movement in allocated spaces – active restraints | Guidance on the safe use of active restraints and ensuring mobility aids meet safety requirements. | Non-regulatory | The Whole Journey Guide |
| 55 | Appropriate seats on booked services | Passengers with disabilities must be able to book seats that are located in parts of a public transport vehicle that are appropriate for their travelling needs. | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe |
| 56 | Conveyance dwell times at stops | Guidance that conveyances should not depart from stops until passengers are safely seated, securely located or securely positioned in allocated spaces or have safely alighted. | Non-regulatory | The Whole Journey Guide |
| 57 | Stairs on trains | Requirements for the size, luminance contrast, handrails and access paths of stairs on trains. | Regulatory  sub-option 2 | On-commencement |
| 58 | Stairs on ferries | Requirements for the size, luminance contrast, handrails and access paths of stairs on ferries. | Regulatory | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 59 | Stairs on buses | Requirements for the size, luminance contrast, handrails and access paths of stairs on buses. | Regulatory | New and substantially refurbished/upgraded assets |
| 60 | Doorway contrast and height | Luminance contrast requirements for doors on access paths for public transport vehicles excluding coaches. | Regulatory | Existing and new assets – 5 year set timeframe |