



Accessible Public Transport in Victoria

ACTION PLAN 2006-2012



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Minister's foreword

Access to public transport is essential to ensure that all Victorians can contribute to our community and reach their potential. This is one of the cornerstones of the Bracks Government's policies and programs supporting people with disabilities and limited mobility, including *A Fairer Victoria* (2005) and *Meeting Our Transport Challenges* (2006).

Accessible Public Transport in Victoria builds on these commitments as well as the extensive work undertaken on the State's public transport network to comply with the federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and accompanying disability standards.

This new Action Plan highlights progress made over recent years including the:

- Introduction of tram platform stops and low floor trams;
- Introduction of new fully compliant trains on the metropolitan and regional rail networks;
- Major DDA compliant upgrades at Jolimont, Southern Cross, Flinders Street and North Melbourne Stations along with upgrades at other stations;
- Upgraded bus stops and services on new SmartBus routes along Blackburn Road and Springvale Road, with Warrigal Road and Wellington Road services to follow;
- Introduction of low floor buses on metropolitan and regional services at a rate of 90 per year through the Bus Replacement Program; and the
- Introduction of interchangeable hoists on regional coaches.

Accessible Public Transport in Victoria outlines the program of works required to meet milestones and goals for the next six years. This document puts in place the principles that will guide future initiatives and works needed to meet all the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the accompanying Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 by 2022.

The highest priorities for continued progress towards the 2012 milestones are:

- For Melbourne trains: access paths, ramps and tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs). Other important areas include waiting areas and stairs.
- For Melbourne trams: boarding and TGSIs at tram stops.
- For Melbourne and regional buses: TGSIs and paving at bus stops.
- For V/Line: access paths, ramps, TGSIs, lighting, furniture and hearing augmentation.
- For Taxis: improve response times for wheelchair accessible taxis.

I commend *Accessible Public Transport in Victoria – Action Plan 2006-2012* to everyone interested in reaching the goal of fully accessible public transport for all Victorians.

Peter Batchelor MP
Minister for Transport



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Abbreviations

APTAC	Accessible Public Transport National Advisory Committee
APTJNC	Accessible Public Transport National Jurisdictional Committee
ATC	Australian Transport Council
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act 1992
DHS	Department of Human Services (State)
DOI	Department of Infrastructure (State)
DOTARS	Department of Transport and Regional Services (Commonwealth)
DPC	Department of Premier and Cabinet (State)
DSAPT	Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002
DVC	Department of Victorian Communities (State)
HREOC	Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission (Commonwealth)
IDC	Inter Departmental Committee
PID	Passenger Information Display
PTAC	Public Transport Accessibility Committee (State)
PTD	Public Transport Division (State)
SCOT	Standing Committee on Transport
TGSI	Tactile Ground Surface Indicators
TTA	Transport Ticketing Authority
VGSO	Victorian Government Solicitor's Office
VTD	Victorian Taxi Directorate
WAT	Wheelchair Accessible Taxis
WCSTF	Wheelchair Safety Taskforce



Executive summary

Background

The Victorian Government believes that people with a disability should be able to live and participate in community life, with the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as all other citizens. The *State Disability Plan* provides a framework under the guiding principles of Equality, Dignity and Self-Determination (Choice), Diversity and Non-Discrimination. Providing people with disabilities access to opportunity equivalent to that available to the community, is an important step towards meeting these principles. Improving access to public transport services provides opportunity to travel to jobs, services or recreational activities that might otherwise not be available.

The Victorian Government's Accessible Public Transport in Victoria Action Plan 2006-2012 provides a framework for achieving accessible public transport in Victoria for people with disabilities. It covers mainstream public transport for which the Victorian Government has direct responsibility, including:

- Metropolitan rail, tram and bus services;
- Regional rail, coach and bus services; and
- Taxi services.

It does not cover school bus services, which are exempt from the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) and the accompanying *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* (DSAPT); nor does it cover passenger or vehicular ferries or aviation.

This Action Plan is designed to ensure that at minimum, access is provided in line with the requirements of the Federal *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) and the accompanying *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* (DSAPT).

The DSAPT sets out standards by which public transport infrastructure and vehicles can comply with the DDA. It also prescribes timing of progress towards full compliance over twenty years through a series of milestones at five-year intervals (from 2002 to 2022). This Action Plan concentrates on achieving the 2007 and 2012 milestones, but also lays out principles for ongoing progress beyond 2012. It has been developed in consultation with people with disabilities and public transport operators through the Minister for Transport's advisory Public Transport Access Committee (PTAC).

"The proposed actions will provide significant improvements to access to public transport for all Victorians."

The need for accessible transport is pressing; about 20% of Victorians have a disability of some form and this proportion is growing as the population ages. (About a third of these people up to 300,000 people state-wide find using public transport difficult.) The range of disabilities includes vision and hearing impairment, intellectual disability, mobility disability some requiring the use of mobility aids, wheelchairs or scooters, and those acquired by older people. Improving public transport in line with DSAPT requirements will make public transport accessible for the first time for some people with a disability and will improve accessibility and provide new opportunities for many others.

It is also important to note that actions to improve services to people with disabilities usually provide significant improvements in amenity, safety, travel time or convenience to many other people with mobility issues (e.g. people with prams or young children, the elderly, people with minor injuries).

Victoria has made considerable achievements towards compliance and there are a range of projects and programs currently underway which will further improve this position. However, there are some accessibility issues that require more concerted effort; this Action Plan addresses these issues to ensure progress towards fully accessible public transport meets or exceeds the requirements of the DSAPT.

The highest priorities for continued progress towards the 2012 milestones are:

- For Melbourne trains: access paths, ramps, tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs), and hearing augmentation. Other important areas include waiting areas and stairs.
- For Melbourne trams: boarding and TGSIs at tram stops.
- For Melbourne and regional buses: TGSIs and paving at bus stops.
- For V/Line: access paths, ramps, TGSIs, lighting, furniture and hearing augmentation.
- For Taxis: improve response times for wheelchair accessible taxis.

Boarding trams presents the biggest single issue; providing wheelchair access between a low-floor tram and its surroundings requires significant changes to tram infrastructure and operations. Given that manually deployed wheelchair ramps (as used on trains) cannot be used safely on trams, the proposed solution is a combination of raised-access tram stops (eg platforms, kerb extensions or raised traffic lanes) wherever practicable.

In addition, a detailed study will be undertaken prior to the purchase of further low floor trams into the feasibility of incorporating wheelchair lifts into the trams and how to deploy them safely in Melbourne's mixed traffic environment.

Construction of platforms and the purchase of low floor trams will take considerable resources to implement across the entire tram network. While continued investment and progress will be made to meet the DSAPT standards, the progress milestones will be met a few years later than required. However it is intended that full compliance will be met by 2032 in accordance with DSAPT.

Actions to meet DSAPT for other transport modes present far less difficulty, and this Action Plan is intended to ensure Victoria meets or exceeds all of the progress milestones. Significant resources are needed in some areas, primarily because of the vast extent of the infrastructure that has to be upgraded. For example, there are over 28,000 bus stops in Victoria; the work to be undertaken at each stop is relatively simple, but the program is large because of the number of locations involved.



The Action Plan

The Action Plan for Accessible Public Transport 2006-2012 lists the actions required to maintain progress on the relevant issues, under the following headings:

- Policy and planning
- Information
- Ticketing
- Melbourne trains
- Melbourne trams
- Melbourne and regional buses
- Regional trains and coaches (V/Line)
- Taxis

In summary, the following Actions are proposed (more detail is given in the body of the report and in Chapter 10):

Policy and planning:

- Continue to resource accessible public transport.
- Consult with people with disabilities through PTAC.
- Contribute to the Five Year Review of the DSAPT.

Information:

- Complete the Metlink signage roll out for train stations, tram and bus stops.
- Consolidate the Metlink whole of state information about accessible public transport and continue consultation on improvements.
- Coordinate access improvements in other programs and projects.
- Complete the Wheelchair Safety at Pedestrian Rail Level Crossings Action Plan.

Ticketing:

- Deliver a fully accessible new ticketing system.

Monitoring and reporting:

- Develop effective monitoring and reporting processes.

Metropolitan trains:

- Finalise new standards for pedestrian rail level crossings.
- Implement a program of pedestrian rail level crossing upgrades.
- Continue current works programs for access paths, ramp works and all other parts of the DSAPT to meet the 2007 and 2012 milestones.

Melbourne trams:

- Adopt level access stops with low floor trams as the preferred solution for tram boarding.
- Develop platform stop standards and implement a program of priority platform tram stops.
- Develop options for bridging plates between platforms and low floor trams.
- Implement all other requirements of the DSAPT as required to the fullest extent possible.
- Continue to replace trams with new low floor trams.
- Investigate options for lifts on trams.
- Continue to operate only a limited number of W Class trams.

Melbourne and regional buses:

- Develop an operational guide to clarify responsibilities for infrastructure.
- Implement a program to upgrade bus stops with TGSIs and paving to meet the 2007 and 2012 milestones, in partnership with local councils.
- Continue the Bus Replacement Program beyond 2007.

Regional trains and coaches:

- Implement a program of station upgrades to meet the 2007 and 2012 milestones.
- Implement a program of pedestrian rail level crossings upgrades.
- Upgrade locomotive-hauled N Set carriages to provide access for people using wheelchairs and mobility aids.

Taxis:

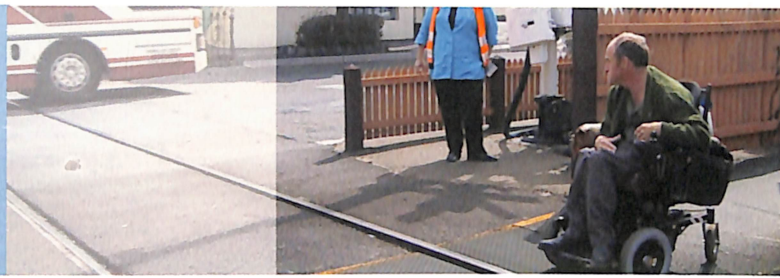
- Monitor and improve response times for wheelchair accessible taxis.
- Continue the Multi Purpose Taxi Program.

Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting on progress is important, for a number of reasons:

- Ensuring that progress is continuing and sufficient funding is available to meet or exceed the DSAPT progress milestones;
- Refining delivery mechanisms and design solutions from experiences gained along the way;
- Reporting to HREOC on progress at a State level; and
- Providing information to publicise the facilities and promote their use by people with disabilities.

Annual audits or report-backs will be sought from those implementing the programs (eg franchisees, local government authorities or other agencies). Regular reports will be provided through PTAC (the Public Transport Accessibility Committee – an advisory committee appointed by the Minister for Transport) to the community to inform on progress and highlight any issues.



1 Introduction

In this document, the words “accessible” and “accessibility” refer to accessibility for people with disabilities (in line with the DSAPT).

1.1 Background

The first Action Plan for accessible public transport in Victoria (DOI, 1998) was released in 1998. Since then:

The national *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport* (DSAPT) were passed in 2002. They are mandatory under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA, 1992).

- New partnership agreements were entered into for Connex and Yarra Trams to operate the metropolitan train and tram services following the withdrawal of National Express from Melbourne in late 2003.
- V/Line Passenger (also a former National Express Subsidiary) was established as a wholly owned State Corporation.
- The Government released *Melbourne 2030* in 2001, the *Metropolitan Transport Plan in 2004* and *Meeting our Transport Challenges* in 2006.
- Metlink was established as the umbrella body for metropolitan public transport in 2004. It provides network-wide services across the metropolitan public transport system. Metlink is responsible for achieving DDA compliance of public transport signs, symbols and information in Victoria.

- Significant achievements have been made with general improvements to public transport, including access for people with disabilities (eg low floor trams and buses, new or refurbished suburban trains, new country trains, information systems and facilities, tram ‘superstops’, tactile surface indicators and general signage).

1.2 Development of this Action Plan

This Action Plan is intended to describe the process whereby public transport in Victoria will be made accessible for people with disabilities, in line with the DDA and the DSAPT. It covers public transport for which the Victorian Government has direct responsibility, including:

- Metropolitan rail, tram and bus services;
- Regional rail, coach and bus services; and
- Taxi services.

It does not cover school bus services, which are exempt from the DSAPT, or passenger or vehicular ferries or aviation.