Accessible Public Transport in Victoria

ACTION PLAN 2006-2012 ▪ SUMMARY

Victoria
The Place To Be

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

1 Introduction

> The Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (the DDA) prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the grounds of disability and makes it unlawful to discriminate on the grounds of disability in a wide range of areas including: sport, access to premises, accommodation, education, employment and the provision of goods, services and facilities. The DDA also protects the associates of people with a disability (their partners, relatives, friends, carers and co-workers) against discrimination because of that association.
>
> *Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission website*

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.

This Action Plan 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.

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.)

Improving public transport in line with the Federal Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (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, and people with minor injuries).

Victoria has made considerable achievements towards complying with requirements of the Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and the accompanying Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (DSAPT) 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; Accessible Public Transport in Victoria – Action Plan 2006 - 2012 (the 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 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.

The full Action Plan including the background to providing accessible public transport in Victoria, the requirements of the Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and the accompanying Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002, the Victorian Government's achievements so far and future initiatives, can be accessed through the Department of Infrastructure website www.doi.vic.gov.au.

This document provides a summary and highlights from the Victorian Government's Action Plan that would be of most interest to people with disabilities and limited mobility who wish to follow the Victorian Government's progress towards providing accessible public transport for all Victorians.

2 Action Plan 2006-2012

Background

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

The Commonwealth Government has legislated to remove discrimination against people with disabilities as far as possible through the DDA.

Public transport services are addressed directly in the DDA, which refers to the formulation of disability standards for provision of public transport services and facilities. This set of standards, the DSAPT, outlines detailed requirements for the provision of accessible public transport. It stipulates the mandatory minimum technical requirements for the provision of accessible transport services and facilities, while providing a timeframe in which progress towards full compliance must be achieved. They apply to all conveyances, premises and infrastructure. Many of the standards rely on Australian Standards in setting out the requirements.

Compliance is to be achieved over a 20-year period from 2002, with interim progress requirements for most areas of the DSAPT of 25%, 55%, 90% and 100% by the end of 2007, 2012, 2017 and 2022 respectively. There are some significant exceptions to this, such as waiting areas, signs and symbols, lighting, alarms, ticketing and information systems, most of which are required to be fully compliant by the end of 2007. Trains and trams have until 2032 to achieve the last 10% of full compliance. The DSAPT will be reviewed within five years of taking effect.

All new services coming into operation after 2002 must comply in full. Existing services must be retrofitted or replaced. The DDA and DSAPT apply to all providers and operators of public transport services and supporting infrastructure.

The first Victoria Government Action Plan developed to meet the milestones and goals for accessible public transport in Victoria was released in 1998. The current Victoria Government Action Plan 2006-2012 is intended to describe the process over the next six years whereby public transport in Victoria, will be made accessible for people with disabilities, in line with the DDA and the DSAPT milestones and goals.

It covers public transport for which the Victorian Government has direct responsibility, but does not cover school bus services, which are exempt from the DSAPT, or passenger or vehicular ferries or aviation.

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).

This Action Plan is intended to provide a policy and activity framework within which parties responsible for the provision of services can develop their own more detailed Action Plans. Where actions required under this Action Plan are the responsibility of the State Government, the funding has been secured and announced as part of a ten year infrastructure program, (*Meeting our Transport Challenges*).

Progress

This table summarises progress against the DSAPT, expressed as a percentage of the infrastructure or vehicles that meet each of the thirty requirements.

Progress towards accessible public transport in 2004/05

| Standard area | Percentage of items compliant with DSAPT | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Melbourne Trains | | Melbourne Trams | | Melbourne Buses | | V/Lines Trains | | Regional Buses | | Taxis* | |
	Infrastructure	Vehicles	Infrastructure	Vehicles	Infrastructure	Vehicles	Infrastructure	Vehicles	Infrastructure	Vehicles	Infrastructure	Vehicles
2. Access paths	10		74		46		35		32			
3. Manoeuvring areas	66	100	79	23	50	40	99	100	80	20	80	100
4. Passing areas	73		78		50		89		60		80	
5. Resting points	86						69					
6. Ramps	22	100	100	23	50	40	35	100	50	20		
7. Waiting areas	39		11		50		84		100			
8. Boarding	95	100	3	0	50		94	100	100	100	80	
9. Allocated space		100	89	23	50	40		100	100	20	80	100
10. Surfaces	60	100	93	100	38	40	64	100	26	20	80	
11. Handrails and grabrails	86	100	100	59		40	25	53		20		
12. Doorways and doors	87	100		100		40	81	66		20		100
13. Lifts	100						100					
14. Stairs	29			23			64					
15. Toilets	81						63	53				
16. Symbols	50	50	100	23		100	98	100		100		
17. Signs	100	50	100	100	100	100	100	100	25	100		0
18. Tactile ground surface indicators	13		3		4		12		3		0	
19. Alarms	0						100					
20. Lighting	28	100		33		40	3	100		20		
21. Controls	57	100		100			38	68				
22. Furniture and fitments	100						14					
23. Street furniture (seats)	55		82		75		93		80		?	
24. Gateways	100						100					
25. Payment of fares	100		100	100		100	100	100		100		100
26. Hearing augmentation - listening systems	2	100	19	23		100	14	100		100		
27. Information	100	100	100	100	100	100	37	100	50	100	100	100
28. Booked services							100					
29. Food and drink services	?								100			
30. Belongings		100							100			
31. Priority seating		100		100		100			100			

KEY

☐	Not applicable
☐ (blue)	Fully accessible
☐ (red)	Does not meet 2007 milestone
☐ (yellow)	Does not meet 2012 milestone
☐ (olive)	Meets 2012 milestone

Cross-hatching denotes where funding is already committed, to provide progress at least to the next milestone.

*Taxis also require action in relation to response times (Schedule 1 of the DSAPT)

These results are calculated from audits carried out in 2004 and 2005.

As Depicted in the summary table, significant achievements have been made towards accessible public transport, in many areas exceeding the time requirements of the DSAPT.

Notable recent achievements for public transport are:

- Introduction of low floor trams and tram platform stops (since 2001), including four new platform stop designs providing full accessibility.

- Introduction of new fully compliant trains on the metropolitan rail system (X'Trapolis and Siemens trains) and on the regional rail network (V/Locity railcars). With exception to the remaining 6 Hitachi trains, the metropolitan rail fleet is fully compliant.

- All new works and services coming into operation since 2002 comply in full with the DSAPT.

- Major upgrades completed or under development at Jolimont, Southern Cross , Flinders Street and North Melbourne Stations providing DDA compliant infrastructure.

- Upgrading of bus stops and services on SmartBus routes along Blackburn Road and Springvale Road AND Warrigal Road with the Wellington Road service to follow.

- Introduction of numerous low floor buses on metropolitan and regional services at a rate of 90 a year through the Bus Replacement Program.

- Introduction of interchangeable hoists on regional coaches.

- Upgrade of metropolitan and regional bus/train interchanges.

- Rollout of a major DDA compliant signage program throughout the Melbourne metropolitan area.

- Rollout of many minor DDA compliance projects e.g. improved handrails and non-slip surfaces on station ramps, installation of TGSIs at railway stations, marking of priority seats and so on.

The Way Forward

The Action Plan for Accessible Public Transport 2006-2012 lists the actions required to maintain progress on the relevant issues and meet DSAPT milestones.

Summary of proposed Actions:

(A complete list of Actions in context is available in the main document at www.doi.vic.gov.au)

Policy and Planning:

The Department of Infrastructure's Public Transport Division (PTD), the lead planning agency for public transport in Victoria, ensures that DDA requirements are incorporated into every public transport project as it is developed. PTD has its own Accessibility Unit with expertise in DDA compliance and the DSAPT. It also supports the Minister for Transport's advisory committee PTAC chaired by the Director of Public Transport and represents PTD on national jurisdictional and consultative committees.

Action	Timing
Continue to resource accessible public transport.	ongoing
Consult with people with disabilities through PTAC.	ongoing
Contribute to the Five Year Review of the DSAPT.	2006/07

Information:

Information provision for public transport in Victoria is primarily the responsibility of Metlink. It coordinates the provision of maps, timetables, web-based services, information, phone lines, advertising, marketing, signage, shops and ticket sellers.

Action	Timing
Complete the Metlink signage roll out for train stations, tram and bus stops.	ongoing
Consolidate the Metlink whole-of-state information about accessible public transport and continuously improve services through consultation.	End 2007
Complete the Wheelchair Safety at Pedestrian Rail Level Crossings Action Plan.	2006

Ticketing:

From 2007, a new Smartcard-based ticketing system will be progressively introduced across all forms of public transport in Melbourne and regional Victoria. Provision for compliance with DSAPT is included in the ticketing contract specification. The Transport Ticketing Authority is responsible for delivering the new system and is already addressing access and DDA compliance issues.

Action	Timing
Deliver a fully accessible new ticketing system.	Commencing 2007

Monitoring and reporting:

Monitoring and reporting on progress is an important component of ensuring progress continues.

Action	Timing
Continue monitoring and annual reporting processes.	ongoing

Metropolitan trains:

Melbourne's suburban train network has 15 routes and 209 stations, on railway lines extending radially from the city centre through the suburbs. Approximately 12,000 passenger train services provide for more than 2.8 million passenger journeys each week. Connex provides suburban rail services under a partnership agreement with the Victorian Government.

Action	Timing
Finalise new standards for pedestrian rail level crossings and implement a program of pedestrian rail level crossing upgrades.	2006 and ongoing
Continue current works programs for access paths, ramp works and all other parts of the DSAPT to meet the 2007 and 2012 milestones.	2007-2012

Melbourne trams:

Melbourne has the third largest tram and light rail network in the world. It comprises about 250km of track, on which 28 main routes carry about 2.5 million passenger trips a week. It serves mainly the inner and middle suburbs; most of the network is within 15km of the city centre. Tram services are provided under a partnership agreement with the operator, Yarra Trams.

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

Melbourne and regional buses:

- Metropolitan buses - 39 operators run over 285 routes using 1,477 buses.
- NightRider buses - 9 routes operate to and from the city serving suburban destinations, after midnight through the early hours of Saturday and Sunday mornings.
- Country buses - 80 operators cover more than 600 routes using 470 buses.
- Airport buses – Low floor Skybus Airport buses run between the city and Melbourne Airport 24 hours a day, with connections to city hotels at peak times. Three other routes run daily to and from the east and south east suburbs. Geelong, Ballarat and Bendigo also have daily connections with Melbourne Airport.
- School bus services - 574 operators use 1,583 buses to run 3,300 services throughout country and metropolitan Victoria.

Larger bus operators account for a substantial proportion of services. Over half the metropolitan peak fleet is run by Ventura, Grenda's and Kefford bus groups.

Action	Timing
Develop guidelines to clarify responsibilities for infrastructure.	mid-2006
Implement a program to upgrade bus stops with TGSIs and paving to meet the 2007 and 2012 milestones, in partnership with local councils.	mid-2006- 2012 ongoing
Continue the Bus Replacement Program beyond 2007.	ongoing

Regional trains and coaches:

Victoria's country passenger rail network is made up of eight lines and 81 railway stations. Country rail services throughout Victoria are provided by V/Line Passenger Corporation, which is now managed by the Victorian Government. V/Line Passenger operates some road coach services directly and manages other contracted services that use the same infrastructure and livery, ticketing, stops and booking systems.

Action	Timing
Implement a program of station upgrades to meet the 2007 and 2012 milestones.	ongoing
Implement a program of pedestrian rail level crossings upgrades.	ongoing
Upgrade locomotive-hauled N Set carriages to remove the need for people using wheelchairs and mobility aids to travel in the conductor's compartment.	ongoing
Continue upgrading access to coaches	ongoing

Taxis:

Taxis conduct over 32 million passenger-trips a year in Melbourne. They are particularly important for business and tourism and for providing transport for people with mobility difficulties or special needs. This latter role is growing and will become increasingly significant as the population ages. Taxis also play a significant transport role in regional Victoria. Currently, there are 4,425 licensed taxis in the Victoria, 367 of which are Wheelchair Accessible Taxis (WATs).

Action	Responsibility	Timing
Monitor and improve response times for wheelchair accessible taxis.	DOI, VTD, operators	2006 and ongoing
Continue the Multi Purpose Taxi Program.	DOI, VTD, operators	2007-2012

Monitoring and reporting

Monitoring and reporting on progress is important to:

- Ensure that progress is continuing and sufficient funding is available to meet or exceed the DSAPT progress milestones;

- Refine delivery mechanisms and design solutions from experiences gained along the way;

- Report on progress at a State level; and

- Provide information to publicise accessible 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 and to the community to inform on progress and highlight any issues.

3 Useful Contacts

State Government

Organisation	Website	Telephone
Department of Infrastructure (Public Transport Division)	www.doi.vic.gov.au	03 9655 3333 1800 264 644 (Victorian regional callers)
Department of Premier & Cabinet	www.dpc.vic.gov.au	03 9651 5111
Department of Victorian Communities	www.dvc.vic.gov.au	03 9208 3333 1300 366 356 (Information Victoria)
Public Transport Ombudsman	www.ptovic.com.au	03 8623 2111 1800 466 865 TTY: 1800 809 623

Commonwealth Government

Organisation	Website	Telephone
Department of Transport and Regional Services	www.dotars.gov.au	02 6274 7111
Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission	www.hreoc.gov.au	02 9284 9600 1300 656 419 (Complaints)

Public Transport

Organisation	Website	Telephone
Metlink	www.metlinkmelbourne.com.au	131 638
Travellers Aid Society	www.travellersaid.org.au	Southern Cross Station: 03 9670 2873 Swanston Street: 03 9654 2600
Connex	www.connexmelbourne.com.au	1800 800 705
V/Line Passenger	www.vline.com.au	1800 800 120
Yarra Trams	www.yarratrams.com.au	1800 800 166
Victorian Taxi Directorate		03 9320 4360 1800 638 802 (Country callers)