

# ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN VICTORIA

ACTION PLAN 2013–2017





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# MINISTER'S FOREWORD



Access to Victoria's public transport services provides an important travel choice for people in the community to get to their place of employment or education, make use of services and engage in social and community activities.

In collaboration with the community, the Coalition Government is committed to improving access to public transport services and facilities for all Victorians and addressing the travel needs of people with a disability or mobility restrictions and our growing population of older people.

The long term objective of the **Accessible Public Transport in Victoria Action Plan 2013-2017** is to provide universal access to our services and facilities by removing access barriers, therefore allowing all passengers independent travel. This objective will be achieved by compliance with the Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and the associated transport standards, combined with improved customer service, provision of information and education programs.

The Action Plan adopts a whole of journey approach that recognises the need for people with a disability or mobility restriction to be able to plan their journey and access information when travelling on public transport in addition to getting physical access to transport services.

In addition to detailing priorities and outcomes to be achieved over five years, the Action Plan highlights programs of work already undertaken to improve access to public transport services and comply with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and its associated disability standards.

The government recognises that it will take many years and it faces significant challenges to making Victoria's public transport network fully accessible to all people in the community. The Action Plan provides a sound basis to advance this goal over the next five years.

The Action Plan contributes to the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2013-2016* that outlines the Victorian Government's broader approach to reducing the barriers faced by people with a disability in the community.

The implementation of programs over the five years of the Action Plan will continue as resources are made available to purchase new rolling stock and upgrade train stations, tram stops and bus stops to improve access to public transport services and facilities. At the commencement of this Action Plan, the government has committed specific funding to improve access at train stations and bus stops and also improve access to tram facilities and services on a number of key routes.

The government has consulted with organisations that represent people with a disability and I have also asked for specific feedback from the Public Transport Access Committee.

My colleagues and I appreciate the input of these organisations in developing and finalising this Action Plan and I look forward to working together to implement the priorities and outcomes of the plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Terry Mulder', written in a cursive style.

**The Hon Terry Mulder MP**  
Minister for Public Transport

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Victorian Government is committed to providing public transport services that are accessible to all members of the community.

The government recently released the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2013-2016* which reflects the government's wider commitment to ensuring that people with a disability have a chance to participate fully in Victoria's economy and the community.

The **Accessible Public Transport in Victoria Action Plan 2013-2017** (the Action Plan) contributes to the State Disability Plan and recognises that it is critical for people with a disability to be able to access public transport services. Access is also essential for older Victorians and those with restricted mobility and this will become more important over time as the population in Victoria ages.

The government's broader focus on improving access to public transport will be underpinned by compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA) and the associated transport standards. All of the priorities and outcomes of the Action Plan must, as a minimum, achieve compliance with disability standards.

Over the last 10 years, public transport agencies have identified and addressed a number of barriers to accessing public transport services for all Victorians but in particular, people with a disability and those with mobility restrictions.

These initiatives include:

- > Level access tram stops constructed across Melbourne up to the current total of 367, including a number of them completed over the last 18 months such as: Domain Interchange; Elizabeth Street, Melbourne; Macarthur Street, East Melbourne; Swanston Street, Melbourne/Carlton; Royal Children's Hospital; High Street, Northcote, Bridge Road, Richmond, and two tram stops in Flemington/Haymarket;
- > A tram replacement program with 100 low-floor accessible trams in operation in Victoria and a further 50 new E-Class low-floor trams on order to arrive on the network between 2013-2018;

- > New accessible metropolitan and regional trains have been purchased since 2007 and many are now operating on the network (41 metropolitan trains and 40 regional train carriages);
- > Construction of new railway stations with accessible design features, such as Cardinia Road, Lynbrook, Williams Landing, Coolaroo, Roxburgh Park, Westall, South Morang, Epping, Wendouree and Wodonga;
- > Major upgrades to railway stations, including the North Melbourne, Laverton, Sunbury, Clunes, Creswick, Maryborough and Frankston Station redevelopments and grade separations at Nunawading and Laburnum Stations that made these railway stations more accessible;
- > Upgrades to more than 10,000 bus stops across Victoria including the installation of tactile ground surface indicators, access paths and surface upgrades; and
- > A bus replacement program with a total of 1,421 low-floor buses on the metropolitan network.

Victoria faces a significant challenge in improving access to public transport and meeting the transport disability standards particularly in relation to tram services. Melbourne has one of the largest tram networks in the world and it will require extensive infrastructure and rolling stock upgrades or replacement to meet transport disability standards.

The government has committed \$20 million over four years commencing in 2011-12 to improve accessibility to public transport services. The first year of funding was entirely allocated to improving access to railway stations. Over the remaining three years of the program, funding is proposed to be allocated on the basis of 80 per cent for railway stations and 20 per cent for bus stops.

**Figure 1:** Funded accessibility initiatives

Description	Budget
DDA Program – 2011 to 2015	\$5 million per annum
Williams Landing Station – accessible ramps	\$7 million
Balaclava station – accessible ramps	\$3 million
Regional Rail Link (RRL) – Tarneit, Wyndham Vale, Footscray, West Footscray and Sunshine stations – accessible ramps and lifts	\$30 million

In addition to this specific accessibility funding, there is an additional \$70 million over four years for tram stop upgrades (2010-14), as part of an overall \$800 million tram upgrade program.

The program to be delivered by Public Transport Victoria (PTV) will include:

- > purchase of 50 new low-floor trams between 2013 and 2018 (the first five trams have now arrived at Preston Workshops and will join the tram fleet by early 2014);
- > upgrades to Route 96, the first route on which the new low-floor trams will operate;
- > redevelopment of the Preston Workshops and Southbank Depot where the new trams will be stored; and
- > power upgrades and accessibility improvements to other low-floor tram routes.

The upgrade to Route 96 includes level access stops and the rollout of new trams that will make it the first fully accessible tram route in Melbourne.

The Action Plan will embed a broader access approach to public transport services but also ensures the Victorian Government meets the requirements of Commonwealth disability discrimination legislation and standards. This approach recognises that technical compliance will not always deliver an optimal access outcome for public transport users, particularly if specific actions and projects meet compliance standards but are done in isolation of other factors. For example, the upgrade of bus stops without a connecting pathway would mean that technically more bus stops are compliant, but access outcomes have not been achieved and many people may remain unable to use the bus network.

This Action Plan takes a whole of journey approach to accessibility that recognises the need for people with a disability or mobility restriction to be able to access information to plan their journey. Pathways to various modes of public transport services are as important as physical access itself.

The focus and priorities of the government and the transport agencies have evolved considerably since the introduction of the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* (DSAPT) under the DDA. While initially a compliance approach was beneficial, in the longer term, it does not necessarily lead to greater access for people with a disability or mobility restriction. So, while compliance remains an important measure of performance, the focus has changed over the past couple of years to improving the overall accessibility of public transport, including connectivity between modes.

In the context of improving access more broadly, the emphasis is on an integrated approach to delivering public transport services rather than mode specific projects and outputs. The Government established PTV to be the new face of public transport with responsibility for planning, coordinating and integrating transport services throughout Victoria.

It is the access outcome that forms the basis of priorities in this Action Plan. An integrated approach to delivering services aims to better utilise existing resources on the public transport network and deliver more efficient access outcomes. The four key priorities will set a new direction for how PTV and public transport operators will conduct business over the five-year period of this Action Plan.



The key priorities of the Action Plan are:

### Priority One: Customer service

*People with a disability and those with mobility restrictions can expect to receive an equivalent level and quality of customer service, information and support from public transport service providers.*

### Priority Two: Consultation and community engagement

*Active engagement by transport agencies with a range of stakeholders, including people with a disability or mobility restriction and older people, to ensure they are adequately consulted about ways to improve access to the network and any changes to public transport infrastructure or services.*

### Priority Three: Access to public transport services

*Travelling on trains, trams, buses and coaches is to be made progressively more accessible to people with a disability or mobility restriction and older people, by identifying barriers to access and making improvements to public transport services.*

### Priority Four: Access to facilities

*Access to buildings and public transport infrastructure will be based on universal design principles, particularly where the network is expanded or upgraded.*

Section 3 of this Action Plan details specific outcomes and actions under each of these priorities.



# 1. IMPROVING ACCESS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT

## 1.1 Vision

A public transport system that is well connected and accessible to all Victorians and represents a viable travel alternative to private motor vehicles.

## 1.2 Introduction

Access to public transport services creates travel choice for Victorians and enables them to participate in social, cultural, education and employment activities.

Accessible public transport is critical for people with a disability. Providing greater access to public transport services for all people by removing barriers to access will deliver wider access to the network for all public transport users, including older people and those travelling with children.

There will be a greater need for public transport to be accessible over time as the Victorian population ages. Australia's population has an ageing demographic profile. Between 2011 and 2050 the number of people aged 65 to 84 is projected to more than double, and the number of people in the community aged 85 and over is projected to more than quadruple<sup>1</sup>.

An accessible public transport network supports older people to attend essential appointments and maintain their participation in the community, particularly as they relinquish their drivers licence.

Accordingly, the Government recognises that there are individual and community benefits to be gained from offering all members of the community independent mobility and easy access to public transport.

## 1.3 Objective

*To improve transport choices and travel options for people with disabilities, mobility restrictions and older people in the community by making public transport services and facilities optimally accessible whilst achieving compliance with the DDA and the associated disability standards.*

There is a wider community benefit in improving access for everyone and encouraging independent mobility and travel choice. This shift in focus is aimed at delivering optimal access outcomes across the public transport network.

The focus on accessible public transport outcomes will be combined with the government's commitment to compliance with *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (DSAPT)* and adherence to the associated 2017 milestones. All of the priorities and outcomes of the Action Plan must as a minimum achieve compliance with DSAPT.

This key focus of the Action Plan is on a whole of journey approach to accessibility and takes account of the fact that people with a disability or mobility restriction need to access information to plan their journey and that pathways to various modes of public transport services are as important as physical access itself.

The broader approach to access to the public transport network will be achieved by consulting with a range of stakeholders including people with a disability or mobility restriction. This approach will be combined with a greater focus on integrated public transport planning that will deliver coordinated access outcomes across the network.

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1 Australian Government, 2010, *Australia to 2050: future challenges*, Pg. 4



## 2. BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Legislation

#### Commonwealth disability discrimination law

The Commonwealth 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 transport services, facilities and infrastructure. Direct disability discrimination arises if an operator or infrastructure provider treats a person less favourably than another person in the same or similar situation because of their disability. Indirect discrimination occurs when the impact of an operator's or provider's service is less favourable for a person with a disability than for someone without a disability.

The DDA covers a range of disabilities, including:

- > partial or total loss of sight, hearing or speech;
- > disfigurement or deformities;
- > difficulties in walking (including partial or total loss of use of legs);
- > difficulties in fully using arms (including gripping);
- > learning and orientation difficulties;
- > sensitivity to chemicals causing malfunction of a person's body;
- > chronic diseases, illnesses or other medical conditions; or
- > emotional or behavioural conditions.

The DSAPT were made under the DDA to remove discrimination on the basis of disability from public transport services over a 30-year period.

The DSAPT guiding principles are to:

- > eliminate discrimination against people with disabilities as far as possible;
- > ensure that people with disabilities have the same rights as everyone else in the community; and
- > promote recognition and acceptance within the community of people with disabilities and their rights.

DSAPT prescribes national requirements that public transport providers and facility operators must meet in order to comply with the DDA when providing public transport services.

Under DSAPT, public transport services and facilities are required to become more accessible by:

- > replacing or upgrading conveyances, premises and infrastructure in accordance with the timetable outlined in Appendix 1; and
- > requiring all new public transport services and facilities introduced onto the transport network after 2002 to comply with the DSAPT from the date of commencement.

The focus and priorities of the Government and transport agencies<sup>2</sup> have evolved considerably since the introduction of DSAPT. Historically a compliance approach was adopted. While it is consistent with the legislation it does not necessarily lead to greater access for people with a disability or mobility restriction, particularly in the short term. Technical compliance will not always deliver an optimal access outcome for public transport users, and in some cases does not change access at all.

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2 Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure (DTPLI) and its predecessors the Department of Transport and Department of Infrastructure.

For example, hearing loops may be installed at train stations in compliance with DSAPT but people who are deaf or have a hearing aid without a T-switch will not be able to access audible information provided by the transport operator. Hearing loops alone do not provide optimal access for people who are deaf or have a hearing impairment. While compliance remains an important goal and indicator of performance, the focus has changed over the past couple of years to improving the accessibility of public transport as a whole.

In addition to obligations in the DSAPT, the *Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010* (Premises Standards) detail obligations to further the objectives and intent of the DDA. The Premises Standards set out detailed requirements that ensure access to premises is available for people with a disability, and came into effect in May 2011. A broad range of people, including owners, developers, tenants and property managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with the Premises Standards. The requirements of the Premises Standards are being phased in, so that 100 per cent compliance is not required until 31 December 2022. However, at least 25 per cent compliance is currently required.

## Victorian anti-discrimination laws

Under the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* providers of goods and services (including public transport providers) are required to make reasonable adjustments for people with disability. Making reasonable adjustments in essence requires a service provider to balance the need for change with the expense or effort involved in making this change.

The Act was recently amended to impose a positive duty on organisations covered by it to take reasonable and proportionate measures to eliminate discrimination as far as possible.

The Act provides the Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission (VEOHRC) with the power to investigate and respond to systemic discrimination, broadening its activities from being largely a complaint handling body.

## Transport legislation

The *Transport Integration Act 2010* (TIA) establishes a framework that requires all transport agencies to work collaboratively toward an integrated, sustainable transport system. By embedding accessibility for all throughout the decision making process, barriers to access are progressively reduced as part of good practice.

An objective under the TIA is for the transport system in Victoria to provide a means by which people can access social and economic opportunities to support individual and community wellbeing by:

- > minimising barriers to access so public transport is widely available; and
- > providing tailored infrastructure, services and support for persons who find it difficult to use the transport system.

## 2.2 Victorian context

The **Accessible Public Transport in Victoria Action Plan 2013-2017** contributes to the whole of government *Victorian State Disability Plan 2013-16*. The vision of the State Disability Plan is an inclusive Victorian society that enables people with a disability, their families and carers to fulfil their potential as equal citizens.

Copies of the State Disability Plan are available at [www.dhs.vic.gov.au/statedisabilityplan](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/statedisabilityplan). The ongoing work of the Action Plan will also be included in the *Victorian State Disability Plan: Implementation plan 2013 and 2014*.

The Victorian Government established PTV to be the new face of public transport with responsibility for planning, coordinating and integrating transport services throughout Victoria.

PTV has been established to improve public transport services in Victoria by:

- > ensuring better coordination between modes;
- > facilitating expansions to the network;
- > auditing public transport assets;
- > promoting public transport as an alternative to motor vehicles; and
- > acting as a system authority for all public transport and an advocate for public transport users.

PTV's role includes improving access to the public transport network for people with disabilities and those with mobility restrictions.

While the government recognises the role and importance of compliance under the DDA, DSAPT and the Premises Standards, the emphasis needs to be on improving accessibility and delivering outcomes that make the public transport network usable for as many people as possible.

In various reports relating to public transport, the Victorian Auditor-General's office (VAGO) commented on the importance of accessibility outcomes compared to baseline compliance. In its 2009 report *Making public transport more accessible for people who face mobility challenges*, VAGO noted in conclusions that:

*'the Department of Transport (DOT) needs to improve its understanding of how people with a disability use and want to use public transport, their level of satisfaction with the changes made to the system and their priorities for future change.'*

VAGO also found that DOT<sup>3</sup> had:

*'not measured how much easier it was for people with a disability to use public transport and how the standards had affected their levels of use and satisfaction.'*

In the latest 2012 report titled *Public Transport Performance*, VAGO found:

*'...DOT has changed its approach. While recognising the role and importance of compliance, it now emphasises improvements to accessibility and achieving the outcome of making public transport useable for as many people as possible.'*

*This reorientation to focus on outcomes aligns with VAGO's 2009 audit conclusions. DOT has more actively engaged with a broad range of stakeholders, including people with a disability, to better understand the barriers to accessibility and to incorporate their views in infrastructure and service designs.'*

These reports underscore the need for DTPLI and PTV to establish appropriate accessibility outcomes and take account of likely barriers to access in any new or redeveloped public transport infrastructure or services. The priorities under this Action Plan take account of the VAGO findings and recommendations and the government's public position on access to the public transport network.

The provision of the Multi-Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) and Wheelchair Accessible Taxis program (WATs) by the government will be affected by the independent inquiry into the Victorian taxi and hire car industry. The Taxi Industry Inquiry chaired by Professor Allan Fels AO was given broad terms of reference and handed down its draft recommendations in mid-2012. In its terms of reference, the Inquiry was tasked with reviewing the performance of the MPTP and WATs in providing a service to people with a disability or mobility restriction.

The Inquiry presented the government with a strong package of specific reforms aimed at improving the accessibility of taxi services for people with a disability. The government will facilitate a feasibility study, in consultation with the sector, to consider potential models for design and operation of a Central Booking Service for Wheelchair Accessible Taxis (WATs) in Melbourne and the review of the MPTP.

The government is confident the implementation of the reforms will result in substantially improved services for people with a disability through:

- > the encouraged up take of purpose built vehicles;
- > the development of new standards for 'talking taximeters';
- > new service responsibilities relating to complaints handling and performance;
- > boosting training for drivers through the new Knowledge exam; and
- > the continuation of the WAT vehicle subsidy in country and regional zones.

Industry changes will be progressively rolled out in a measured and consistent approach, in consultation with stakeholders.

3 VAGO conducted the audit and made these recommendations when DOT had sole responsibility for public transport. DOT is now part of the Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure.

## 2.3 Progress to date

The first action plan for accessible public transport in Victoria was released in 1998 but there have been many changes to anti-discrimination laws since that time including the release of DSAPT in 2002. The recently expired 2006–2012 Action Plan addressed and identified barriers to accessing public transport for people with disabilities. Key initiatives to improve accessibility of the public transport network under the Action Plan's priority areas were:

### Customer service

- > ensuring the new ticketing system is accessible and compliant with the DDA;
- > more customer service officers at major city tram stops and train station interchanges providing information and advice during peak hours; and
- > progressive installation of display screens at tram stops with timetable information.

### Consultation and community engagement

- > consultation and engagement with people with a disability or mobility restriction through regular meetings of the Public Transport Access Committee (PTAC);
- > building a relationship with the Public Transport Ombudsman and promoting complaints management processes to people with disabilities;
- > establishing the Public Transport Operators Committee (PTOC) that brings representatives of Victoria's public transport operators together to address common issues and challenges on the network;
- > consulting regularly with users and seeking feedback from people with disabilities around key issues including tram and bus boarding, accessible toilets at railway stations, bus access and the new E Class tram design;
- > developing an trialling Trafficable Easy Access Stops (TEAS) with input from stakeholders at select locations including Macarthur Street, Melbourne;

- > promoting awareness of disability considerations to PTV and DTPLI staff and the staff of other transport agencies (Metro, Yarra Trams, V/Line, VicTrack) through a training workshop that allows staff to travel and experience public transport with either a vision or mobility restriction; and
- > working with transport operators and representatives of people with a disability to ensure that accessible toilets are unlocked at metropolitan train stations, in response to user complaints.

### Access to public transport services

- > a tram replacement program with 100 low-floor accessible trams in operation in Victoria and a further 50 new E-Class low-floor trams on order;
- > since 2007, 45 new X'trapolis trains were ordered for the metropolitan train network (41 are currently in service) and meet DSAPT standards for rolling stock;
- > since 2007, 80 new VLocity train carriages were ordered for the regional train network (40 of these are currently in service) and meet DSAPT standards;
- > bus replacement program with a total of 1,421 low-floor buses on the metropolitan network;
- > the MPTP has continued to support and assist members of the community who are severely and permanently disabled and who cannot access public transport independently;
- > changes were made to the MPTP in 2008 that included the doubling of the annual subsidy cap to \$2,180 and the individual trip cap to \$60 respectively;
- > a total of 63 subsidy applications have been approved for new or replacement WATs across regional Victoria; and
- > the Victorian Taxi Directorate introduced the Performance Based Booking System (PBBS) which is a voluntary incentive scheme for Network Services Providers (NSPs) designed to ensure that people with a disability using a WAT receive the same level of service as all other taxi-cab users.

## Access to public transport facilities

- > continuing to develop level access tram stops up to the current total of 367 including:
  - Domain Interchange;
  - Elizabeth Street, Melbourne;
  - Macarthur Street, East Melbourne;
  - Swanston Street, Melbourne/Carlton;
  - High Street, Northcote;
  - Royal Children’s Hospital, Parkville;
  - Bridge Road, Richmond; and
  - two tram stops in Flemington/Haymarket.
- > development of performance standards for installation of level access tram stops;
- > construction of new railway stations with accessible design features, such as Cardinia Road, Lynbrook, Williams Landing, Coolaroo, Roxburgh Park, Westall, South Morang, Epping, Wendouree and Wodonga;
- > major upgrades to railway stations, including the North Melbourne, Laverton, Sunbury, Clunes, Creswick, Maryborough and Frankston Station redevelopments and grade separations at Nunawading and Laburnum Stations that made these railway stations more accessible;
- > improvements to access at metropolitan train stations by modifying pathways and ramps and installing Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSIs) at various stations across the network;
- > improvements to access at a number of regional train stations by resurfacing platforms, renovating toilets and installing TGSIs;
- > an audit of all railway stations for compliance with DSAPT which enabled upgrades and funding to be prioritised; and
- > upgrades to more than 10,000 bus stops across Victoria including TGSIs installation, access paths and surface upgrades.

Some of these actions were directly related to government funded initiatives under the plan and others, particularly those involving community consultations, were done as a broader commitment by transport agencies to stakeholder engagement and community consultation.

The government has committed funding to a number of key projects that will improve accessibility to the public transport network including \$20 million over four years in the 2011–12 Budget to upgrade rail and bus infrastructure. The funding allocation over four years is \$1 million for buses per annum and \$4 million for metro and regional railway station infrastructure.

In addition to the DDA program funding, there is an additional \$70 million over four years for tram stop upgrades (2010-14), as part of an \$800 million Tram Upgrade Program. Tram stops will be upgraded to align with the purchase and rollout of 50 new low-floor trams. The new trams will be progressively rolled out onto the network, starting with Route 96.

Route 96 is a tram route that runs from the corner of Blyth and Nicholson Streets, East Brunswick, in Melbourne’s north through the city and down to Acland Street, St. Kilda, in Melbourne’s south. The upgrade of Route 96 will include new level access tram stops and real time information for passengers at these stops making it the first fully accessible tram route in Melbourne.

Further, planned railway station upgrades that are part of the Regional Rail Link Project will be accessible and compliant with the DDA and DSAPT. These stations include upgraded stations at Footscray, West Footscray, Sunshine and Tottenham on the Sunbury line and new stations at Tarneit and Wyndham Vale on the Werribee line.





## 2.4 Progress against disability standards

Many of the initiatives and projects over the last 10 years that improved access to the public transport network are reflected in measurement of compliance against the disability standards outlined in Figure 2.

While compliance under DSAPT is a measure of improvement across the network, it does not necessarily mean that access outcomes are always achieved for all public transport users. For example, DSAPT provides the tools to ensure that access is provided at train stations but does not specify whether ramps, lifts or stairs should be provided in combination. For passenger flow and universal access to and from the train station and its platforms, a combination of lifts, ramp, escalators or stairs would be required to ensure independent access that is not subject to mechanical failure and allows emergency exit. DSAPT prescribes how each of these access means must comply in isolation.

A DSAPT compliance approach can often segment access into components (eg. handrails, access paths or tactile markers) rather than looking at whether a public transport service as a whole can be accessed by those with a disability or mobility restriction. A segmented compliance approach does not encourage a policy of universal access to deliver public transport services to a wide cross section of the community.

However, DSAPT requirements must be met by law and assessing the compliance against DSAPT should form part of the checks and balances of every public transport project. The government is committed to meeting DSAPT standards and using them as the baseline for improving access to the public transport network.

Despite the fact that measurement of compliance against disability standards does not necessarily equal an accessibility outcome, it provides some indication of progress towards improving access across the public transport network. The table below details current compliance levels and target dates for compliance.



**Figure 2:** DSAPT milestones and progress

Operational service	Number of facilities	% compliant at Dec 2012	Number of rolling stock	% compliant at Dec 2012	DSAPT target 2012	DSAPT target 2017
<b>Metropolitan buses</b>	17,961 bus stops	52%	1,768 buses	75%	55%	90%
<b>Regional buses/ coaches</b>	6,136 bus stops	52%	554 buses 103 coaches	49% 56%	55%	90%
<b>Trams</b>	1,770 tram stops	65%	487 trams	23%	55%	90%
<b>Metropolitan trains</b>	215 stations	55%	204 trains	98%	55%	90%
<b>Regional trains</b>	87 stations	55%	62 trains	92%	55%	90%

Figure 2 summarises progress against DSAPT, expressed as a percentage of infrastructure and rolling stock that meet each of the 30 DSAPT requirements. This table needs to be interpreted cautiously for the reasons outlined above. In many cases, it is an indication of partial accessibility to services and facilities across the network. Progress towards accessibility and compliance under DSAPT will be better informed by planned audit processes across the network that will fully assess the extent to which train, tram, bus and coach services are accessible.

Regarding tram infrastructure, 367 of these stops (21 per cent) are platform or easy access stops. The majority of tram stops on the network are kerbside access. There would be many of these stops that meet part of the DSAPT requirements but not boarding access for people who are physically unable to climb steps from the roadside.

While the number of level access stops has increased over the last five years, a tram cannot necessarily be accessed by people with a disability or mobility restriction. As noted above, there are 100 low-floor trams that are concentrated on six of the 29 tram routes in Melbourne. The level access stops are spread out over a greater number of tram routes in Melbourne. As a result, people who require a level access tram stop to board the tram will only be able to do so at certain stops on a limited number of routes. The fleet of 100 low-floor trams pass level access stops on 6 tram routes in Melbourne for example:

- > Route 96 – East Brunswick – St Kilda (low-floor trams only) – 44 per cent level access stops; and
- > Route 109 – Box Hill – Port Melbourne (low-floor trams only) – 34 per cent level access stops.

The other four tram routes have a mix of low-floor and high floor trams.

A table of DSAPT compliance milestones is detailed in Appendix 1. These are the targets that PTV and transport operators are expected to meet at the end of 2017.

## 3. STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND OUTCOMES

The key focus for the Action Plan is to embed access outcomes into the systems and processes of transport agencies, rather than rely solely on compliance initiatives, that are network-wide and integrated rather than concentrating on mode specific initiatives. This integrated approach to delivering services aims to better utilise existing resources on the public transport network and deliver optimal access outcomes. The four key priorities will set a new direction for how business will be conducted over the five-year period of the Action Plan.

### 3.1 Priority One: Customer service

*People with a disability and those with mobility restrictions can expect to receive an equivalent level and quality of customer service, information and support from public transport service providers.*

Key desired outcomes under this priority are:

1. Information is accessible for all passengers to assist them with planning and using public transport services
  - > individual travel planning information including mobility maps detailing the location of accessible entry points, allocated spaces and seating on public transport services and at facilities
  - > timetables, ticketing and route information is be available in accessible printed and electronic formats
  - > printed and electronic information from PTV or public transport operators will be available in large print, audio, easy English, community languages and Braille (upon request)
  - > service and timetable information is provided through a range of mediums including telephone, TTY, internet, mobile phone applications and SMS
  - > The PTV website is Level AA compliant with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.
2. Accessible next service information at public transport facilities
  - > railway stations to progressively have an electronic screen display of next service information and provide timely arrival and departure information via audio service
  - > where hearing loops are provided at train stations, ensure they are routinely tested to ensure they are operating adequately
  - > new tram stops or major upgrades to existing tram stops to have visual display information of next service or printed timetable display and, audio bollards
  - > new bus stops and interchanges or major upgrades to existing bus interchanges and bus stops to have visual display information of next service or printed timetables and audio bollards
  - > smart bus stops to progressively have visual display information and audio bollards providing next service information.

3. Adequate and accessible live information and announcements in case of service disruptions, cancellations and major events
  - > where there is visual service information displayed at railway stations, tram stops and bus stops, PTV and transport operators to develop technical solutions so that information about service disruptions and cancellations can also be displayed
  - > PTV and public transport operators develop solutions at railway stations, and tram and bus stops/interchanges that have real time audio announcements to ensure information about cancellations, disruptions and major events is accurate and timely
  - > where audio announcements are provided at railway stations, tram stops and bus stops that regular scheduled auditing occur to ensure the information is accurate, timely and consistent at all times.
4. Staff services are provided to assist people with a disability or mobility restriction
  - > where staff are present at train stations and tram stops, staff will provide personal assistance to passengers with a disability or mobility restriction if requested
  - > PTV and public transport operators will provide ongoing training of all frontline customer service staff including ticket inspectors to ensure they are aware of varying access needs of passengers with a particular focus on people with a disability and people with mobility restrictions including older people. PTV or transport operator staff training will be developed in consultation with people with a disability and their representative community organisations.



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5. PTV and public transport operators to publish a Customer Service Charter and monitor staff performance against the Charter
    - > Customer Service Charters to include a section on access to public transport for customers with a disability or mobility restrictions and customer service support
    - > an audit of customer service performance is conducted on an annual basis.
  6. Ticketing is accessible and easy to use for all public transport users
    - > myki ticketing rollout takes adequate account of access needs for people with a disability including access to special purpose passes
    - > ticket machines are designed to be accessible to a wide range of people in the community using public transport
    - > information about ticketing at machines, outlets and at public transport facilities is accessible, widely available and easy to understand.
  7. Provide assistance to passengers in the event of an emergency particularly where they have a disability or mobility restriction
    - > provide accessible emergency assistance (red button intercom) at railway stations during hours that services are operating for use in emergencies
    - > provide accessible emergency communication on board trains and low-floor trams
    - > ensure public transport operators have emergency evacuation procedures for people with a disability or mobility restriction at railway stations and on board trains, trams and buses
    - > emergency procedures are developed in consultation with people with a disability or a mobility restriction.
  8. PTV and public transport operators to have a complaints handling policy that is accessible for all passengers
    - > the complaints handling policies of PTV and transport operators must comply with the Australian Standard for Complaints Handling<sup>4</sup>
    - > complaints handling policies of PTV and public transport operators are accessible to people with a disability.

### 3.2 Priority Two: Consultation and community engagement

*Active engagement by transport agencies with a range of stakeholders, including people with a disability or mobility restriction and older people, to ensure they are adequately consulted about ways to improve access to the network and any changes to public transport infrastructure or services.*

Key desired outcomes of consultation and community engagement are:

1. People with a disability and older people have adequate opportunity to participate in regular PTV consultation processes
  - > Public Transport Access Committee – continue regular meetings of people with a disability or their representatives
  - > Public Transport Operators’ Committee – continue commitment to ongoing collaboration with public transport operators via monthly meetings to discuss and resolve access issues including information access and staff support services.
2. People with a disability and older people have an opportunity to provide feedback on delivery of services
  - > conduct consultations and user trials for passengers with a disability when new trains, trams and buses are purchased (eg. E-Class tram trials)
  - > conduct consultations and user trials for new and upgraded tram, train and bus facilities and other specific access issues that arise (eg. tram boarding trials)
  - > report outcomes of user trials to the public.

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<sup>4</sup> AS ISO 10002-2006 – Customer satisfaction – Guidelines for complaints handling in organisations

3. Ensure that people with a disability or mobility restriction and older people are given equivalent opportunity to provide feedback to PTV on broader public transport access issues involving facilities and infrastructure
  - > outside of formal and regular consultation, engage with people with a disability or mobility restriction and older people on specific public transport access issues for example, the PTV Accessible Toilets at Metropolitan Railway Stations Forum and an audit of accessibility at Southern Cross railway station for blind and vision impaired people
  - > consult with other organisations that have established consultative mechanisms to ensure wider feedback on accessibility issues for example, the VEOHRC's Disability Reference Group
  - > where PTV or transport operators are circulating written material for comment, it should be translated into Auslan where possible to ensure deaf people have adequate opportunity to provide feedback
  - > PTV to establish working groups or panels like the Station User Panel to assist with the development of policies and process for example, the Railway Station Useability Principles. These principles have been developed to inform government policy on the operation and development of train stations.
4. Ensure full community engagement on improvements and augmentation to the public transport network including consideration of access issues
  - > PTV business planning for any new or existing facilities on the public transport network to include mandatory consultation with people with a disability or mobility restriction and older people to determine an optimal access outcome
  - > information and data used to inform planning new or upgraded infrastructure must include data and information gained from consultation with people with a disability or mobility restriction and older people.

### 3.3 Priority Three: Access to public transport services

*Travelling on trains, trams, buses and coaches is to be made progressively more accessible to people with a disability or mobility restriction and older people, by identifying barriers to access and making improvements to public transport services.*

For public transport services to be accessible, people with a disability or mobility restriction must be able to:

- > get to and from stations, stops and terminals including adequate way-finding;
- > move on and off trains, trams, buses and coaches and manage any boarding gap between the conveyance and the platform (including direct assistance where required);
- > be able to access allocated space inside the train, tram, bus or coach including the use of mobility aids or assistance animals;
- > access information and announcements on board in an acceptable format including screen based as well as audio; and
- > obtain information or assistance from staff or drivers where boarding or other assistance is required.

Key desired outcomes that will provide greater access to public transport services are:

1. New trams, trains, buses, coaches and taxis must be fully accessible
  - > any purchase of new trains, trams, buses and coaches must meet technical standards of DSAPT and the full accessibility requirements of all public transport users
  - > ensure design specifications comply with DSAPT and also deliver accessible outcomes for all passengers
  - > for new tram, train, bus and coach purchases, the rolling stock specifications must improve accessibility for people with a disability or mobility restriction
  - > continue to monitor and improve service and response times for WATs.



2. Improve on-board service and information to enhance accessibility and the customer service experience
  - > new metropolitan trains or existing trains undergoing major refurbishment are to have functioning and timely electronic screen displays on next stop and service delays
  - > new regional trains or existing trains undergoing major refurbishment are to have functioning and timely electronic screen displays on next stop and service delays
  - > metropolitan and regional trains to progressively have a functioning and audible intercom system for announcements in emergencies, station arrival and service delays
  - > new trams or those existing trams undergoing major refurbishment to have electronic display screens on stopping pattern, future services and delays
  - > trams to progressively have audible announcements through a functioning automated intercom system or from tram drivers for next stop, service delays and tram terminations
  - > on board announcements are audited on a regular and scheduled basis to ensure the quality and consistency of announcements.
3. Improve connectivity and interconnections between modes of transport to enhance broader access
  - > modify timetable and reduce wait times where buses interconnect with train or tram services
  - > any changes to accessibility of tram, train and bus services are done in a way that takes account of current level of access to facilities and any current or planned improvements or upgrades to facilities
  - > improve connections and access between railway stations and bus or tram interchanges/stops
  - > where new services are introduced, interconnections with other modes of transport will be a primary consideration
  - > way-finding and signage at stations, stops and interchanges to include distance to travel as well as direction.
4. Changes to the public transport network including existing routes are done with the aim of improved access for public transport users
  - > new public transport services are introduced on the basis of improved access to services
  - > alterations to existing routes and services be done in way that has a net access improvement for all users.





### 3.4 Priority Four: Access to facilities

*Access to buildings and public transport infrastructure will be based on universal design principles<sup>5</sup>, particularly where the network is expanded or upgraded.*

Key desired outcomes that are aimed at improving access to public transport buildings and infrastructure are:

1. Prioritise facilities for upgrade or redevelopment across the public transport network and build in accessibility outcomes
  - > establish an audit and monitoring framework for public transport facilities in Victoria
  - > utilise audit results to set priorities for upgrades or redevelopments
  - > use the findings of the Station User Panel<sup>6</sup> to help set the priority requirements for railway station upgrades
  - > build accessibility into project planning and delivery consistent with PTV policies and the PTV Accessibility Practice Notes.
2. Improve access to railway stations across Victoria
  - > identify access barriers to existing buildings and facilities and develop a priority list to address these barriers and improve accessibility outcomes
  - > the design specifications of new railway stations and major upgrades to existing railway stations are to follow a developed PTV Stations Policy and the Lifts, Ramps, Escalators and Stairs Policy combined with the Station User Panel's Station Useability Principles and achieve an accessibility outcome
  - > new stations and major upgrades to existing railway stations to include electronic screen display of next service and information about cancellations and disruptions
3. Improve access to tram stops across the metropolitan network
  - > increase the number of level access tram stops on tram routes where low-floor trams have been or will be deployed
  - > further develop solutions to address tram boarding gap at level access stops
  - > ensure that level access tram stops are designed to adequately take account of shared access for tram passengers, pedestrians and cyclists consistent with *Victoria's Road Safety Action Plan 2013-16*
  - > level access stops are constructed to allow safe access to and from trams for people who are blind or vision impaired.
4. Improve access to bus and coach services across Victoria
  - > new bus stops and major upgrades to existing bus stops and interchanges to be designed to achieve accessibility outcomes
  - > identify barriers to access to existing bus stops and interchanges and progressively remove them and improve accessibility outcomes
  - > ensure connecting pathways and way-finding between bus interchanges and railway stations are direct and easily accessible.
5. In high use stations, progressively implement access solutions to address boarding gap barrier for people with a disability or mobility restriction (eg. Raised platform ramps to allow level access boarding into the front carriage of train)
6. Increase the availability of accessible toilets for passengers where toilet facilities currently exist at railway stations or where major station upgrades occur<sup>7</sup>
7. Where parking is available at railway stations, dedicated disabled parking is allocated.

5 Universal design refers to products and built environments that are inherently accessible to both the able-bodied and people with a disability or mobility restriction

6 Station User Panel, 2011, Railway Station Useability Principles

7 Note that this action only applies to stations currently staffed typically, premium and host stations in the metropolitan area and most regional stations. Some unstaffed stations in the metropolitan area have toilets but they are not open to the public. DDA and DSAPT require equivalent access to toilets where any type of toilet is available to the public. The DSAPT target for accessible toilets at train stations is 55 per cent by 2012.

## 4. IMPLEMENTATION

### 4.1 Implementing the Action Plan

The government through PTV and transport operators will develop an implementation plan that outlines how priorities and outcomes from the Action Plan will be delivered and funded.

The implementation plan will cover the first one to two years of the five year action plan and will be publicly available on the PTV and DTPLI websites. PTV will update the implementation plan over the five year life of the Action Plan.

PTV and transport operators will work together to improve accessibility to public transport by developing projects that deliver on action plan outcomes within the framework of the implementation plan.

The long term aim of the government is to remove barriers and allow universal access to public transport particularly for people with a disability or mobility restrictions.

PTV will develop policies, procedures and processes to support priorities and outcomes of the Action Plan. Part of the implementation plan will be the embedding of these policies and procedures into PTV work practices. These policies and procedures will underpin projects developed within PTV to deliver on the outcomes. Projects will be developed within a framework that ensures there are common outcomes and actions under the Action Plan to improve public transport accessibility.

Project funding for delivering the Action Plan outcomes will be decided within government on an annual basis over the five-year life of the plan. PTV will take all practical measures to ensure the Action Plan is implemented and becomes part of business practice.

### 4.2 Responsibility for the planning and implementation process

Accessibility will be embedded into the functions of PTV work programs as a way of ensuring better outcomes.

To assist with the embedding process and to take responsibility for the Action Plan outcomes and priorities, there will initially be four dedicated staff in the new PTV organisational structure within Network Operations Division to manage these functions. The initial role of staff working on accessibility will be to finalise the implementation plan and support other divisions in PTV to develop associated policies and procedures within PTV to deliver on the Action Plan outcomes.

### 4.3 Implementation plan consultation

The implementation plan will be developed in consultation with PTAC and PTOC before it is publicly released by PTV.

Like the Action Plan, it will be available on the PTV and DTPLI websites in a range of formats including MS Word, RTF and large print.

### 4.4 Promoting the Action Plan to staff

As part of embedding accessibility within PTV, all new staff members will receive information on PTV responsibilities under the DDA, DSAPT and equal opportunity legislation at Commonwealth and State level. Existing staff will be informed broadly of accessibility issues through PTV's Intranet.

PTV will ensure that all customer service staff are given the appropriate training and skills to provide information, support and assistance to all passengers including those with a disability or mobility restriction and older people.

## 4.5 Communicating the Action Plan to stakeholders and the community

A copy of the Action Plan will be sent electronically to all stakeholders on PTV's contact database involved with accessibility issues including the Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) and the VEOHRC. A copy of the Action Plan will be available on PTV's website. PTV will also make the Action Plan available in the following formats:

- > in electronic format;
- > in hard copy standard and large print;
- > in audio format;
- > Easy English summary;
- > Auslan video;
- > community languages; and
- > Braille on request.

A copy of the Action Plan will be lodged with the AHRC for registration on its website.

## 4.6 Review and evaluation

The priorities and outcomes of the Action Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis following the commencement of the plan to ensure PTV and transport operators are delivering accessible outcomes for public transport and ensuring the focus remains on customer based service delivery. If the Action Plan is amended, the revised copy will be lodged with the AHRC and made publicly available.

The review and evaluation process for the Action Plan will consider:

- > achievement of specific access outcomes under the Action Plan priorities;
- > compliance with PTV's policies and procedures relating to access including those developed specifically under the Action Plan;
- > compliance with DSAPT milestones;
- > a review of PTV practices aimed at identifying any discriminatory practices;
- > audits of access to trains, trams and buses in Victoria;

- > complaints by public transport users about access to the network; and
- > feedback from stakeholders and public transport users particularly those with a disability or mobility restriction, about access to the public transport network.

The key measures of success over the five years of the Action Plan will be:

- > improvement of public transport accessibility against DSAPT milestones;
- > proportion of people with a disability or mobility restriction using public transport;
- > proportion of people with a disability or mobility restriction who have experienced difficulty using public transport; and
- > proportion of people with a disability or mobility restriction who used public transport for their most recent journey.

## 4.7 Performance reporting

PTV will publicly report on the implementation of the Action Plan on an annual basis following the review and evaluation process including:

- > progress towards outcomes listed under each priority of the Action Plan;
- > progress towards meeting DSAPT milestones;
- > progress of transport operators and contractors towards meeting the four priorities and associated outcomes of the Action Plan; and
- > the implementation of policies and procedures to ensure public transport projects have access outcomes of the Action Plan built in.



# APPENDIX 1 – DISABILITY STANDARDS COMPLIANCE MILESTONES

DSAPT area	Scope	% progress required by:				
		2007	2012	2017	2022	
2	Access paths	Within vehicles and infrastructure	25	55	90	100
3	Manoeuvring areas		25	55	90	100
4	Passing areas	Within infrastructure and trains	25	55	90	100
5	Resting points	Infrastructure only	25	55	90	100
6	Ramps	Within infrastructure and vehicle boarding ramps	25	55	90	100
7	Waiting areas	General infrastructure	100			
		At bus and tram stops	25	55	90	100
8	Boarding	Vehicles and infrastructure at boarding points	25	55	90	100
9	Allocated space	Mainly vehicles	25	55	90	100
10	Surfaces		NA	100		
11	Handrails/grab rails		NA	100		
12	Doorways and doors		25	55	90	100
13	Lifts	Infrastructure only	25	55	90	100
14	Stairs	Infrastructure and steps onto vehicles	25	55	90	100
15	Toilets		25	55	90	100
16	Symbols	Generally within infrastructure and vehicles	100			
		At bus and tram stops	25	55	90	100
17	Signs	Generally within infrastructure and vehicles	100			
		At bus and tram stops	25	55	90	100
18	Tactile ground surface indicators		25	55	90	100
19	Alarms		100			
20	Lighting	Generally within infrastructure and buildings	100			
		At bus and tram stops	25	55	90	100

DSAPT area		Scope	% progress required by:			
			2007	2012	2017	2022
21	Controls	Stop requests and door controls etc.	25	55	90	100
22	Furniture and fitments	Tables, benches etc. within infrastructure	100			
23	Street furniture		25	55	90	100
24	Gateways	Ticket barriers etc	NA	100		
25	Payment of fares	Including vending machines	NA	100		
26	Hearing augmentation – listening systems		100			
27	Information	Generally within infrastructure and vehicles	100			
		At bus and tram stops	25	55	90	100
28	Booked services	Trains and coaches only	100			
29	Food and drink services	Infrastructure and regional trains	100			
30	Belongings	Carriage of disability aids in vehicles	100			
31	Priority seating	Within vehicles	100			









