



# Accessibility Action Plan 2019 - 2021

## CEO Foreword

Metro plays a vital role in connecting people and places within Melbourne. We strive to deliver people to their destinations safely and seamlessly every time. We believe that rail should be all inclusive, bringing independence and confidence to everyone, whatever their circumstance.

Melbourne's transport network is seeing unprecedented investment. Integrating the voice of our passengers into a transforming network is a priority, allowing us to provide confident advice to shape a service that works for all. We know that there is strength in partnership, and we will continue to work with the State Government, transport authorities and our passengers for a network that is safe and accessible.

We are dedicated to continuous improvement. The Metro Accessibility Action Plan 2019 to 2021 highlights our commitment to bringing meaningful and collaborative improvements to our passengers. As the plan evolves, we will be transparent in our successes and challenges.

To complement the Metro Accessibility Action Plan 2019 to 2021, we will also develop an Accessibility Implementation Plan annually to detail the specifics of how we will deliver on our actions. Consultation will remain our priority to ensure we deliver a service for our passengers, with our passengers.



**Raymond O'Flaherty**  
Chief Executive Officer



## Background to this document

The Accessibility Action Plan (the AAP) was developed to communicate a program of priorities which aim to improve access for people with accessibility needs, as well as support the objectives of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (DSAPT) and the Equal Opportunity Act 2010.

In line with passenger expectation, the AAP shifts away from the former approach of reaching accessibility only through compliance with DSAPT, which can often bring about inconsistent outcomes for passengers as infrastructure improvements are gradually installed. The AAP incorporates the voice and needs of the passenger in prioritisation and decision making, as well as the role of staff in creating an accessible public transport system. The content of this document has been developed in consultation with:

- Metro's Accessibility Reference Group;
- Accessibility service providers and advocacy organisations;
- The Public Transport Access Committee; and
- Key internal stakeholders.

The content of this document has been developed according to the requirements defined in Metro Trains Melbourne contractual obligations with the State Government. The Australian Human Rights Commission's recommendations in developing an AAP have also guided the development of this plan.

## Who we are

Metro Trains Melbourne (Metro) operates the Melbourne metropolitan railway network on behalf of the State of Victoria.

With 222 stations and 17 train lines, including a special event line, Metro is vital to keeping Melbourne moving. Connecting people and places, Metro completes more than 800,000 passenger journeys a day.

In addition to operating and maintaining the network 365 days a year, Metro is proud to partner on many of Victoria's major transport projects to ensure that the best passenger outcomes are achieved.

## Introduction

Metro reflects the Victorian Government commitment of connecting people, places and opportunities through a seamless transport network that delivers choice, connectivity and confidence for all Victorians, irrespective of age or ability.

Through an aligned objective of creating a service Victorians value and choose to use, the Metro Accessibility Action Plan 2019 to 2021 captures the intent of the Victorian Government's agenda and provides realistic outcomes for passengers to overcome barriers to access within Metro's own remit.

In a complex environment with many legacy issues, the AAP focuses on a reflective combination of engagement with passengers, influencing upgrades and changes to the network to meet various needs, and the value of good customer service in providing accessible journeys.

# Progress against Metro's Accessibility Action Plan 2015 to 2018

Metro's Accessibility Action Plan 2015 to 2018 provided the business with key areas of focus and progress.

The AAP 2015 to 2018 saw progress in four distinct areas through the introduction of improvements within each priority. Our achievements from the Action Plan 2015 to 2018 are described below.

## Customer service

### What does success look like?

Our passengers can expect a high level of service each time they travel with us. Staff assistance will be consistent and reliable, and information readily available in different formats to provide passengers with confidence in planning and completing their journey.

### How did we make progress?

#### Text messaging service

Passengers with disabilities, such as communication difficulty, vision loss and mobility impairment now have greater choice in the way they seek information through the introduction of a text messaging assistance service. The service provides a backup option for Metro Trains passengers who rely on platform announcements, have difficulty vocalising their needs, or find it difficult to access the Customer Help Points button on station platforms.

#### Frontline staff training

Disability awareness training is provided to all frontline staff. With the introduction of 'Moving like a Metro' training, station staff and Authorised Officers receive up-to-date information and skills yearly to build upon their initial training.

#### Remote announcements

Passenger service staff remotely provide on-board announcements during service changes. In addition to online information, apps and station announcements, passengers now have various channels to receive information on upcoming changes.

#### Try before you ride

Each year, Metro has participated alongside other public transport operators in an event which allows passengers to practice boarding and alighting vehicles, the chance to ask questions about our services and receive valuable information about the accessible use of public transport.

## Community engagement and consultation

### What does success look like?

Our passengers will help us evolve the network for the better by including their voices in the decisions we make. We will regularly engage a range of stakeholders, including disability groups, and use feedback to influence positive changes.

### How did we make progress?

#### Accessibility Reference Group (ARG)

The ARG is a voluntary group of nine Metro train commuters, each with knowledge of accessibility issues relating to disability, mobility impairment, age or diversity.

The group help identify current, emerging or potential accessibility issues; provide advice on possible solutions and interventions to accessibility barriers; give guidance on projects with accessibility impacts; and consult broadly with people with disability or mobility issues, relevant organisations and the broader community.

#### Community Education Unit (CEU)

The CEU provides passengers and community with information on how to safely use Metro services. These sessions are developed to suit the specific needs of the group and aim to facilitate confidence on public transport. The CEU assists in making our services easy to use and explaining the different roles and availability of staff.

#### Seeing Eye Dogs Australia Leigh Garwood Mobility Training Facility

Metro partnered with Seeing Eye Dogs Australia to facilitate features within the Leigh Garwood Mobility Training Centre. The facility features a mock-up Metro train, complete with working doors, real windows and seating. The facility is used to train people who are blind or have low vision to confidently access public areas, including boarding Metro Trains, in a safe and simulated environment.

#### ATSA Independent Living Expo

The ATSA Independent Living Expo takes place regularly at Melbourne Showgrounds. For the last two events, Metro has provided a special event train to ensure passengers have an accessible option to the venue.

The CEU and Accessibility Team take the opportunity to promote the work of the CEU and speak to attendees about on-train safety and accessibility including travel passes, the journey planner and boarding with mobility devices and prams.

#### High Capacity Metro Trains

The High Capacity Metro Trains Project delivers 65 next-generation high capacity metro trains capable of carrying 20 per cent more passengers than any other train on the network. As the future operator of the fleet, Metro has played an important role in providing advice to the Victorian Government to produce the best possible outcomes for our passengers.

## Access to public transport services

### What does success look like?

Passengers will experience increased accessibility as older trains are refurbished to better cater to their needs. New trains will be well-designed and contribute to creating an easy journey. Passengers will find improved features and innovative solutions to issues raised through feedback.

## How did we make progress?

### Train reconfigurations

Allocated spaces were increased across all Metro train types to give greater access for people travelling with wheelchairs or scooters. X'Trapolis and Comeng fleet were fitted with additional Passenger Emergency Intercoms in accessible areas, to ensure easy communication to the driver. The visibility of priority seating on the Comeng fleet has increased by adding recognisable orange upholstery.

## Access to facilities

### What does success look like?

There will be more accessible facilities at stations, including toilets and wayfinding. Passengers will have an active voice in prioritisation of upgrades and design to achieve the most accessible outcome.

## How did we make progress?

### Station facility upgrades

Upgrades have been carried out at 59 stations around the Metro network. This has included installation of shelters, tactiles, additional car parking and accessible toilets. Some stations have received major upgrades or complete rebuilds achieving a more accessible and comfortable design for passengers.

### Box Hill Boarding Trial

In September 2015, Metro invited 22 passengers who use a mobility device to participate in a trial in a test environment. The trial involved a test rig built to mimic the train and platform boarding environment. The test rig could be adjusted to create larger and smaller gaps, both horizontally and vertically. The trial asked participants to assess their level of comfort when traversing gaps of various sizes.

The trial identified a 'preferred gap' to meet the needs of passengers who use a mobility device. This will be able to be applied when any future raised boarding platforms are installed.

### Raised boarding platforms

There has been significant investment in facilitating independent boarding for passengers using mobility devices with 158 raised boarding platforms now installed across the network. Raised boarding platforms create a heightened section on the platform fitted with platform gap fillers which allow some passengers to board and alight without the assistance of a ramp.

## Priorities

Metro has developed a series of actions beneath four new priority areas. This includes improvements in the areas of:

- Our people
- Consultation, engagement and partnerships
- Supporting and informing passengers during network changes
- Influencing investment prioritisation

Each priority includes a brief overview of what these key areas mean for our passengers. Priorities have been developed to build upon the success of the previous years and reflect the evolving environment passengers will experience over the next three years.

## Actions

The actions developed represent the steps Metro will take to ensure the four priority areas are addressed. This includes short and long term actions, dependent on the nature of the progress needed, level of priority and the formulation of a realistic timeline.

## Measures of success

In measuring the success of our actions, we will be using a number of data sources. We recognise that using just one measure may not provide a realistic snapshot of our network. We are using a combination of:

- Complaints monitoring and continuous improvement opportunities
- Targeted passenger consultation
- Statistical data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics
- Compliance monitoring through the audit data<sup>1</sup>.

The Metro Accessibility team will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this plan.



## Priority one

### Our people

Metro strives to provide a high level of service for all passengers. It's important that we utilise our staff and resources to provide passengers with the right tools to access our services with greater ease.

### What does success look like?

Staff understand that passengers have varying needs, and are empowered to assist passengers in a way that works for them. Passengers are confident when they travel knowing assistance is never far away.

### How will we make progress?

Action	Measure	Delivery Timeline
Frontline staff will be provided training to ensure they have the knowledge to assist passengers with accessibility needs. Training will be ongoing, ensuring that skills are maintained and opportunities for continuous improvement are integrated.	Frontline staff are trained annually and receive ongoing information around changes to accessibility. Feedback from staff and passengers is integrated into training.	Ongoing
Metro will proactively seek opportunities for feedback from external organisations on how staff training can be improved. Where possible, people with lived experience will participate in staff training.	Increased participation of people with disability measured against number of training sessions delivered.	Year 1
Metro will annually review how we equip staff with the tools needed to support our passengers. This includes technology, training, information and empowerment to address individual passenger needs.	Prior to the annual Implementation Plan, frontline staff will be engaged to understand any changing needs. Feedback will be incorporated into the plan.	Annually
Metro will progress to the final stages of the accreditation of the Communication Access Symbol, which symbolises a communication accessible organisation through staff training and the availability of communication tools.	Metro will be accredited with the Scope Communication Access Symbol.	Year 1
Deeper relationships with employment organisations for people with disability will be explored to ensure policies and processes are accessible.	Recommendations from employment organisations for people with disability are considered and implemented where practicable.	Year 1

<sup>1</sup> In 2014, Public Transport Victoria undertook an audit of all train stations in Victoria to assess their accessibility.

## Priority two

### Consultation, engagement and partnerships

Including the voice of the passenger in the way we make decisions is important to reach the best passenger outcome. We know that through the engagement of our local communities and groups, Metro can provide a service that meets the needs of all passengers.

#### What does success look like?

We will regularly engage a range of stakeholders, including disability groups, and use feedback to influence positive changes. Passengers will have various channels to provide feedback and engage with our staff. Partnerships and collaboration will strengthen the way we connect people and places.

#### How will we make progress?

Action	Measure	Delivery Timeline
Metro's Community Education Unit will continue to engage community groups and individuals to promote confidence in the safe use of the network. We will continually review the content of travel training and seek opportunities to collaborate in training opportunities.	Community groups and individuals feel engaged by the Community Education Unit in session feedback and content is revised in line with participant feedback.	Ongoing
Passengers will have more opportunities to learn about our services on board a stationary train. Staff will be available to build confidence around how to access services.	Increased confidence in train use by participants recognised through session feedback.	Ongoing
Metro will continue to engage with the Metro Accessibility Reference Group to receive feedback and consult on upcoming changes on the network.	Formal meetings to take place quarterly and members given at least 3 out of session opportunities to provide feedback on arising matters.	Ongoing
We will continue to learn from other transport providers by participating in the Accessible Public Transport Operations Committee.	Metro will be represented at all Accessible Public Transport Operations Committees meetings.	Ongoing
We will work with Public Transport Victoria to strengthen partnerships with the Public Transport Access Committee.	Opportunities for collaboration between Metro and the Public Transport Access Committee are identified at the Accessible Public Transport Operations Committee.	Year 1
Passenger feedback will influence future station design and more opportunities to engage early will be explored.	Passenger feedback will be reviewed, collated and incorporated into station design requirements. Project teams will review localised consultations during major works at stations.	Year 2



## Priority three

### Supporting and informing passengers during network changes

Our network is experiencing unprecedented investment as the system continues to grow. It is important that throughout the change, passengers are able to get to where they need to go, are well-informed, and are confident with any temporary arrangements.

#### What does success look like?

Passengers are confident that during works that they will get a consistent and well supported experience. Passengers will know about changes ahead of time and information will be available via various channels.

#### How will we make progress?

Action	Measure	Delivery Timeline
We will maintain and continuously improve Good Practice Guidelines for accessibility during disruptions.	Good Practice Guidelines will be reviewed annually and updated as required.	Annually
We will continue to partner with Victorian Government to improve the consistency of information for planned works.	Metro Passenger Satisfaction scores in relation to information continue to increase.	Year 3
Familiarisation sessions will be available at new stations to allow passengers to gain confidence with station layouts with staff support.	Increased number familiarisation sessions.	Ongoing
We will partner with third party contract staff to ensure staff are equipped to be proactive in assisting passengers.	Reduction in negative passenger feedback in relation to third part staff assistance.	Year 2
We will continuously engage impacted passengers to understand the best format to communicate information. Communication methods will be reviewed to align with passenger needs.	Preferred formats are integrated into the Good Practice Guidelines for accessibility during disruptions. An accessibility register will be maintained to notify impacted passengers.	Year 1
We will partner with disability organisations and target information platforms used by people with disabilities, such as radio, certain websites and other social media platforms, to communicate pertinent information in a timely and accessible manner.	Organisations are engaged and information is shared for distribution.	Year 1

## Priority four

### Influencing investment prioritisation

Metro plays an important role in understanding passenger needs to ensure changes on the network reflect passenger value. We will continue to work with the Victorian Government to ensure our advice is aligned to the needs of our passengers.

#### What does success look like?

Passenger insights will be heard and integrated; allowing Metro to provide trusted advice to the Victorian Government to ensure investment in network changes adds value for our passengers.

#### How will we make progress?

Action	Measure	Delivery Timeline
We will provide options to the Victorian Government for upgrades and network changes in line with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport.	Increased compliance with the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport.	Ongoing
We will engage service providers to understand local needs. This includes sharing data in order to prioritise changes on the network.	Increased data sharing to inform the prioritisation of upgrades .	Year 2
We will work with the Major Transport Infrastructure Program to identify outcomes with the best passenger value.	Passenger feedback and network strategy is reviewed to provide advice to the Major Transport Infrastructure Program in line with passenger needs.	Year 3
New technologies and innovations relating to accessibility, such as way finding, reducing physical barriers and provision of service, will be monitored and communicated to the Victorian Government for potential implementation.	New technologies and innovations are identified and piloted.	Year 3





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