

# Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport: Progress made in Western Australia

Prepared by Department for Planning and Infrastructure  
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## Background

Western Australia is a strong supporter and champion for ensuring public transport is accessible to all. While such access is vital for people with disabilities, it also assists the broader community, for example seniors and parents with prams.

The *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* (the Transport Standards) set certain milestones expected to be reached by all Australian public transport jurisdictions by the end of 2007. There are further milestones for 2012, 2017, 2022 and 2032.

More information about the Transport Standards is available online at [www.aq.gov.au/dsfapt/welcome.html](http://www.aq.gov.au/dsfapt/welcome.html).

The components of WA's public transport system that are subject to the Transport Standards and are included in this report are:

- bus vehicles (including coaches) and infrastructure, trains and train stations, and ferries, which are the responsibility of WA's Public Transport Authority; and
- accessible taxis and jetties, which are the responsibility of the Department for Planning and Infrastructure.

## Overview of progress

Western Australia has already made major progress in implementing the Transport Standards, as shown in the [data tables](#) at the end of this report.

Our achievements are evident right across the public transport system, with improvements to access for buses, coaches, bus infrastructure, trains, train stations, ferries, jetties and taxis.

Many access improvements have been developed in consultation with consumers with disabilities and we have created and adopted *best practice* approaches to ensuring equitable access for all.

The assessment of our progress shows that we are heading in the right direction through the specific programs we have initiated.

By the end of 2007, Western Australia will have reached all the key target milestones.

For buses, coaches, railcars and ferry vessels, the 2007 compliance target has already been achieved.

We are also confident that we will continue to meet the milestones as demands increase over future decades.

Progress made for each target area is shown in the [data tables](#) at the end of this report. The data show progress relative to the 2007 compliance targets, and are not based on performance relative to full fleet/asset compliance.

Progress and examples of *best practice* are highlighted below.

## Progress and best practice - Public Transport Authority (PTA)

Before the Transport Standards were introduced, the PTA had a comprehensive program in place to improve access to its fleet and infrastructure. This program (which had a different timeframe) is being adapted to best accommodate the national requirements.

**Buses and bus infrastructure:** The PTA has a *best practice* bus replacement program, developed as an action plan endorsed by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission. The program involves buying approximately 65 new buses each year with the tender specifying they must meet the Transport Standards. Of the 1050 buses in the fleet, 510 are now fully accessible. Because of this fleet replacement program, existing buses are not being retrofitted.

The bus replacement program is a key strategy for meeting requirements that involve structural changes to the bus fleet, such as priority seating. Items such as symbols, signs, alarms and information are being investigated.

A *Best Practice* program is in place to audit, refurbish and redesign older bus stations and bus-train interchanges to meet the Transport Standards.

**Trains and train infrastructure:** In line with *best practice*, all new rail stations since 1996 have been designed in consultation with representatives of people with disabilities. The rail stations include access provisions which anticipated the likely requirements of the Transport Standards.

Access provisions were included in the tender requirements for all new railcars and stations comprising the New MetroRail Project (Perth to Mandurah rail line and extension and upgrading to existing rail lines and stations).

The older electric railcars introduced to the Transperth system in 1992-93 were designed to be physically accessible and some modifications have been made subsequently. As part of a refurbishment program, some retrofitting is currently being undertaken to improve the accessibility of alarms, symbols and information. All Transperth railcars will meet the Transport Standards over time.

New trains bought for the Prospector Country Passenger Service were designed and the tender required that they be accessible.

A program is in place to audit and upgrade older train stations to meet the Transport Standards. This *Building Better Stations* program has included *best practice* consultation with people with disabilities.

The introduction of accessible emergency phones on stations is a further example of *best practice*.

A *best practice* design policy is in place to facilitate access to, on and through train stations for people with disabilities, pedestrians and cyclists.

**Ferries:** Work is currently under way to ensure that priority seating on ferries complies with the Transport Standards.

***Other examples of best practice:***

- The Circle Route of fully accessible bus services linking to key suburban stations has given access across and through the Central Business District for people with disabilities.
- There has been extensive consultation with people with disabilities on railcar and bus designs that meet the Transport Standards, including low floor buses and audio and visual communication technology.
- The new fleet of Transwa road coaches all meet the highest standards for passengers with disabilities.
- The new fleet of Transwa country trains caters for people with disabilities, including those using electric wheelchairs.
- All customer service, transit guard and driver training includes information on the needs of passengers with disabilities.
- The Special Carers Permits (allowing free travel on public transport when accompanied by someone who cannot use public transport independently) will be replaced progressively by a Companion Card with the PTA's Transperth and Transwa systems being registered affiliates.
- There is an extensive education program for groups that represent people with disabilities, covering the services available and how best to access them.

## Progress and best practice - Department for Planning and Infrastructure

***Accessible taxis:*** The Department has focused initially on viability issues raised by the taxi industry as part of a staged process of improving Multi-Purpose Taxi (MPT) services.

The Department is reviewing the current MPT vehicle specifications and will incorporate the Transport Standards as minimum requirements in the new specifications. The review is scheduled for completion by December 2006. The report will reflect how the MPT vehicle *specifications* compare to the Transport Standards, ie it is not an audit of vehicles.

The Department is also reviewing the current requirement for vehicles to be able to carry two people in wheelchairs. There is limited use of this service and the industry has expressed concern that this requirement restricts the choice of vehicles for use as MPTs.

The Department provides a *best practice* service through the availability of a Taxi Users' Subsidy Scheme for eligible people with limited mobility.

### ***Other examples of best practice:***

- The introduction of dual MPT coordination from October 2005 has provided choice to customers and MPT operators and opens the market to new dispatching processes.
- The MPT industry has viability concerns resulting from the larger, more expensive vehicles used, rising fuel costs and the additional requirements on the operators of MPTs over conventional taxis, such as long distances between wheelchair jobs across the metropolitan area. Structural changes and initiatives are in place to improve service levels and taxi supply by increasing the attractiveness of the MPT sector to new entrants through:
  - Reducing cost structures through a buyback of MPT licences and replacing them with Government MPT lease plates at a reduced lease rate. (No licence is bought back without a replacement lease plate being issued.)
  - Increasing the number of MPT drivers by introducing an MPT Cadetship scheme with grants to suitable persons willing to train as drivers.
  - Addressing the higher operating costs incurred by operators with large diesel-fuelled vehicles by providing (from December 2005) a \$5 fuel subsidy for each wheelchair job – paid directly to drivers by the State Government.
  - Subsidising the cost of vehicle modifications (wheelchair hoists) for all new MPTs or replacement vehicles.

**Jetties:** The Department and the PTA work closely to ensure existing and new jetty facilities meet the Transport Standards. Disability access consultants provide detailed reports and recommendations are implemented in accordance with a specified program. Current outstanding items, including symbols, will be completed well before the 2007 target date.

The timing of improvements to jetties is limited by the availability of funds and the demand for jetty facilities for public transport. Compliance with the Transport Standards is also affected by large tide variations in the Swan River and by jetty facilities being used for purposes other than public transport, eg they are used by charter boats.

### **What you can do**

If you have limited mobility and difficulty in using public transport, we encourage you to talk with operators and relevant agencies to try to resolve the matter.

As a last resort, if there is no satisfactory result, you may lodge a complaint with the [Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission](#).

Further information on the Transport Standards is available from either the Department for Planning and Infrastructure or the Public Transport Authority of Western Australia. Contact details are below.

## Contact details

### Department for Planning and Infrastructure

***Principal office address:***

Albert Facey House, 469 Wellington Street, Perth 6000

***Telephone:***

- Office: (08) 9216 8000
- Taxis: 9216 8108
- Taxi User Subsidy Scheme: (08) 9216 8068
- Taxi licensing/plates: (08) 9216 8107
- Jetties: (08) 9239 2481 or (08) 9239 2482
- TTY numbers:
  - Fremantle office: (08) 9430 6263
  - Licensing information: (08) 9216 8484
  - Planning and land administration services: (08) 9264 7535
- [National Relay Service](#): If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, please call 13 36 77 and quote the number you want.

***Website:*** [www.dpi.wa.gov.au](http://www.dpi.wa.gov.au)

### Public Transport Authority

***Principal office street address:***

Public Transport Centre, West Parade, East Perth

***Postal address:***

PO Box 8125  
Perth Business Centre  
Perth WA 6849

***Telephone:***

- Transperth InfoLine: 13 62 13
- TTY: (08) 9428 1999
- Booking assistance on metropolitan train: 1800 800 022
- Facsimiles: (08) 9326 2949
- Emails: [enquiries@transperth.wa.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@transperth.wa.gov.au) or [jaltham@pta.wa.gov.au](mailto:jaltham@pta.wa.gov.au)

***Website:*** [www.transperth.wa.gov.au](http://www.transperth.wa.gov.au)

## Data report on compliance with disability standards

*Based on data as at 30 June 2005*

- The key aspects listed in the tables below are a subset of the 30 Parts specified in the standards. If you are interested in results for the other aspects, please contact the Department for Planning and Infrastructure (contact details are above).
- “2007 target” is the compliance target as specified in the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (2002).
- The Public Transport Authority has responsibility for buses, coaches, bus infrastructure, ferry vessels, trains and train stations.
- The Department for Planning and Infrastructure has responsibility for accessible taxis and jetties.
- These organisations work together to report on the accessibility of public transport in Western Australia.
- Some parts apply only “if” a facility is in place, eg alarms (part 19) in the form of emergency warning systems. Currently, the Public Transport Authority is not installing "Emergency Warning Systems". It uses site evacuation procedures, public address systems and personal assistance in case of emergencies. This is preferred over noisy alarms, to help maintain order, and reduce the possibility of panic, particularly in the vicinity of large buses.
- The Public Transport Authority is experimenting with Part 26 Hearing augmentation as the systems available do not work as effectively as desired.

## Buses

Key aspects	2007 target	Progress towards 2007 target as at June 2005
Ramps	25%	Target fully met
Boarding	25%	Target fully met
Allocated space	25%	Target fully met
Surfaces	First target is 100% by 2012	All new vehicles comply
Alarms	100%	Target fully met

## Coaches

Key aspects	2007 target	Progress towards 2007 target as at June 2005
Ramps	25%	Target fully met
Boarding	25%	Target fully met
Allocated space	25%	Target fully met
Surfaces	First target is 100% by 2012	2012 target fully met
Alarms	100%	Target fully met

## Bus infrastructure

Key aspects	2007 target	Progress towards 2007 target as at June 2005
Access paths	25%	Target fully met
Ramps	25%	Target fully met
Boarding	25%	Target fully met
Allocated space	25%	Target fully met
Surfaces	First target is 100% by 2012	New facilities comply
Lifts	25%	Target fully met
Toilets	25%	Target fully met
Alarms	100%	Target fully met
Hearing augmentation	100%	0%

## Trains

Key aspects	2007 target	Progress towards 2007 target as at June 2005
Boarding	25%	Target fully met
Allocated space	25%	Target fully met
Surfaces	First target is 100% by 2012	90% compliance with 2012 target
Alarms	100%	Target fully met

### Train stations

Key aspects	2007 target	Progress towards 2007 target as at June 2005
Access paths	25%	Target fully met
Ramps	25%	Target fully met
Boarding	25%	Target fully met
Allocated space	25%	Target fully met
Surfaces	First target is 100% by 2012	New facilities comply
Lifts	25%	Target fully met
Toilets	25%	Target fully met
Alarms	100%	68%
Hearing augmentation	100%	96%

### Ferry vessels

Key aspects	2007 target	Progress towards 2007 target as at June 2005
Boarding	25%	Target fully met
Allocated space	25%	Target fully met
Surfaces	First target is 100% by 2012	90% compliance with 2012 target
Alarms	100%	Target fully met

### Jetties

Key aspects	2007 target	Progress towards 2007 target as at June 2005
Access paths	25%	Target fully met
Ramps	25%	Target fully met
Boarding	25%	Target fully met
Allocated space	25%	Target fully met
Surfaces	First target is 100% by 2012	2012 target fully met
Lifts	25%	Target fully met
Toilets	25%	Target fully met
Alarms	100%	50%

### Accessible taxis

Key aspects	2007 target	Progress towards 2007 target as at June 2005
Ramps	25%	Target fully met
Boarding	25%	Target fully met
Allocated space	25%	Target fully met
Alarms	100%	0%