

TRIM Ref: DOC/17/565768

PO Box 4724
Melbourne Victoria 3001
Australia
Telephone 1800 800 007
ptv.vic.gov.au

Ms Natalie Curry
General Manager – Passenger & Industry Programs
Australasian Railway Association
PO Box 4608
KINGSTON ACT 2604

Dear Ms Curry

GRANT OF TEMPORARY EXEMPTIONS - REPORTING

I refer to the Australian Human Rights Commission's Notice of Decision to grant temporary exemptions to members of the Australasian Railway Association (ARA) dated 1 October 2015.

As required by the terms and conditions of the exemptions, please find **attached** the report of V/Line Pty Ltd (**V/Line**) for the reporting period 1 October 2016 to 30 September 2017.

PTV is pleased to endorse V/Line's report which relates to the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (DDA)*, the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Cth) (Transport Standards)* and the *Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 (Cth) (Premises Standards)*.

Again, I commend this year's achievements and continuous improvements implemented by V/Line. In the remaining four years of the exemption, PTV and V/Line will continue to work collaboratively to achieve incremental improvements each year.

PTV in partnership with V/Line share the vision to create a public transport system that is accessible to all members of the community.

PTV is working with V/Line to progress this commitment.

Yours sincerely



Jeroen Weimar
Chief Executive Officer
20/09/2017

Temporary Exemptions Report
Victorian Regional Railway Service
Reporting Period: 1 October 2016 to 30 September 2017

V/Line Pty Ltd
Level 9, 750 Collins Street
Docklands, Victoria, 3008

Contents

Introduction	3
Part A – Exemptions from the Transport Standards	6
2.1 Access paths – Unhindered passage	6
2.1 Access paths – Unhindered passage	9
2.4 Access paths – Minimum unobstructed width.....	10
2.6 Access paths – conveyances.....	11
4.2 Passing areas – Two-way access paths and aerobridges	12
5.1 Resting points – When resting points must be provided	13
6.4 Slope of external boarding ramps	14
11.2 Handrails and grabrails – Handrails to be provided on access paths	15
Part B – Exemptions from the Premises Standards.....	16
H2.2 Accessways	16
H2.2 Accessways	16
H2.2 Accessways	16
H2.2 Accessways	17
H2.4 Handrails and grabrails.....	17
Appendix A.....	18

Introduction

Operational Context

V/Line is Australia's largest regional public transport operator servicing the most passenger trips annually. In 2016-17 more than 19.3 million trips were taken on our trains and coaches. Every week, there are more than 1800 train services linking Melbourne with:

- Geelong and Warrnambool
- Ballarat, Maryborough and Ararat
- Bendigo, Swan Hill and Echuca
- Seymour, Shepparton and Albury
- Traralgon, Sale and Bairnsdale.

More than 1300 V/Line branded coach services each week connect with the rail network and serve regional Victorian communities. Some of our coach services also link Victoria with South Australia, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.

V/Line operates three types of passenger trains which include:

- 204 VLocity carriages
- 133 locomotive-hauled carriages
- 21 Sprinters (single unit).

All V/Line train services have conductors who provide on-board customer service.

V/Line has 91 stations across the regional Victorian passenger network. Of these stations, 46 are staffed for varying times during the day.

There are more than 1700 level and pedestrian crossings on the regional rail network. This includes a mix of active, passive and occupational crossings. This figure does not include crossings in the shared rail network that are the responsibility of the Australian Rail Track Corporation (**ARTC**).

V/Line's Accessibility Action Plan (**AAP**) 2015-18 was developed to lead the organisation in taking meaningful steps to improve accessibility. It supports the objectives outlined in the *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1992*, the *Equal Opportunity Act 2010* and the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (DSAPT)*. The AAP includes improvements based on compliance and consultation to develop customer-focused solutions founded on customer needs. It aligns with the Victorian Government approach, outlined in the *Victorian State Disability Plan 2017-20*, and the shift from compliance to accessibility and allows for more collaborative solutions for customers.

V/Line is committed to:

- Creating a safe and inclusive system.
- Having the customer experience front of mind.
- Being transparent and open to feedback.
- Collaboration and consultation for the best outcome.
- Having each staff member recognise their role in creating accessible services.

Accessibility Reference Group

V/Line's Accessibility Reference Group (ARG) provides V/Line with information and advice that customers have on:

- accessibility issues with customer service
- accessibility issues with trains and train stations
- the progress of the V/Line AAP
- V/Line customer service plans.

Members of the ARG understand or experience the difficulties with public transport accessibility faced by:

- people with disability
- people with communication difficulty
- people with mobility issues
- the vulnerable
- the elderly.

V/Line undertakes a variety of customer consultations through feedback channels, focus groups, workshops, forums and surveys. These are both targeted consultations focussing on specific issues and concerns as well as more broader consultations on improving accessibility for customers using V/Line services.

Regional Rail Revival

In May 2017, the Victorian Government announced the Regional Rail Revival. Supporting the intent of the Regional Network Development Plan (**RNDP**) released in May 2016, the Regional Rail Revival provides State and Federal Government funding of \$1.57 billion to upgrade the regional Victorian rail network. The RNDP's strategic network-wide priorities include making transport accessible, the provision of better passenger information and better facilities and customer experience. V/Line is committed to working with stakeholders to deliver on these priorities.

Regional Network Development Plan

As part of the Regional Network Development Plan, the Victorian Government has provided funding to upgrade the stair access between the platforms at Bendigo Station through the provision of a lift. Detailed scope and design work is currently being undertaken with construction scheduled to commence during 2018. V/Line has equivalent access procedures in place at this station for customers who are unable to navigate the stairs.

Temporary Exemptions Reporting

The Public Transport Development Authority (trading as 'Public Transport Victoria' and 'PTV') (**PTV**), established under the *Transport Integration Act 2010 (Vic)*, is the statutory authority responsible for managing the regional rail network on behalf of the State of Victoria. V/Line is responsible to the Victorian Minister for Public Transport and the Victorian Treasurer.

Pursuant to a Services Agreement between PTV and V/Line dated 13 November 2013, V/Line is the operator and maintainer of the regional network.

V/Line and PTV are members of the Australasian Railway Association (**ARA**). V/Line participates in the ARA Disability Policy Working Group.

On 1 October 2015, the Australian Human Rights Commission (**AHRC**) granted temporary exemptions to members of the ARA in relation to various provisions of the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Cth)* (**Transport Standards**) and the *Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 (Cth)* (**Premises Standards**).

V/Line provides this report in relation to the regional Victorian passenger rail network and the relevant temporary exemptions which contained reporting requirements.

This report is for the period 1 October 2016 to 30 September 2017.

If you wish to provide feedback or require further information on this report please contact V/Line:

- call
1800 800 007
TTY (03) 9619 2727
- in writing
Customer Relations
Reply Paid 5343
Melbourne VIC 8060
- online at www.vline.com.au/Contact-us

Part A – Exemptions from the Transport Standards

2.1 Access paths – Unhindered passage

Temporary Exemption: rail premises and rail infrastructure

For a period of five years, flange gaps of up to 75mm are permitted where a level crossing forms part of an access path on rail premises or rail infrastructure.

Reporting Requirements:

- a. Action taken to improve safe use of level crossings where they form part of an access path**

Safety education

Safety is V/Line's highest priority and educating customers and regional Victorian communities about safe behaviour at level crossings forms a large part of V/Line's safety campaign activity. During the reporting period V/Line worked with Public Transport Victoria (PTV) and the Tracksafe Foundation on coordinated activities throughout the year and during Rail Safety Week 14-20 August 2017. Additionally, V/Line has conducted targeted activities at level crossings where:

- upgrade works have occurred
- there was an extended period of track works
- the timetable changed
- a level or pedestrian crossing was closed.

Timetable change safety campaigns

V/Line undertook targeted safety campaigns in conjunction with timetable changes in January and August 2017.



Don't Push Your X-ing Luck - Timetable change advertisement.

Technical investigations

VeloSTRAIL

VeloSTRAIL is an inner panel system that eliminates the flange grooves and that has been designed for a train speed of maximum 120 km/h. VeloSTRAIL presses the replaceable flangeway element down but accommodates enough resistance for pedestrians, cyclists, wheelchair users, baby carriages and inline skaters¹.

V/Line has identified a location on the Victorian regional rail network that is suitable for VeloSTRAIL and will commence a trial during 2018, subject to V/Line's equipment type approval process. This product is not suitable for use in all locations across the regional rail network due to the high-speed lines that V/Line operates.

Level crossing upgrades

V/Line continues to improve safety by upgrading pedestrian and level crossings on the regional rail network. Crossings that have been upgraded since 1 October 2016 are shown in Table 1 below.

Location
Heinz Lane, Invermay Park
Sandys Lane, Gnotuk
Tragowel Road, Tragowel
Kilmore East, Kilmore East
Wiridgil Lane, Weerite
Back Larpent Road, Larpent
Fairley Road, Reedy Lake
Mystic Park Road, Mystic Park
B Mc Cann Road, Lake Charm
Rileys Road, Bendigo
UeoP Clarkfield, Clarkfield
Robertsons Road, Winchelsea
Station Street, Panmure
Hallowells Road, Cudgee
Rowans Lane, Warrnambool

Table 1 Upgraded level and pedestrian crossings in regional Victoria

b. Progress made on the removal of level crossings

Since 1 October 2016, level and pedestrian crossings that have been closed in regional Victoria are listed below in Table 2.

Location
Private Access (J. Morrissey), Ingliston
Sandhill Road, Stratford

Table 2 Closed level and pedestrian crossings in regional Victoria

¹ Source: www.strail.de

c. Any developments in research into possible technical solutions for bridging flange gaps

V/Line participates in the rail industry research body, the Australasian Centre for Rail Innovation (ACRI), who have undertaken the following project into solutions for bridging flange gaps:

'Rail Flange Gap risk reduction – The rail flange gaps at pedestrian crossings have always been an issue for pedestrians, cyclist and wheelchairs / mobility device users to negotiate. This project will conduct an investigation of available treatments for rail flange gaps and trial a variety of solutions to provide advice on the safest and most suitable solution².

During 2018 V/Line, along with PTV, will review the outcomes of the ACRI report to identify any opportunities to trial other technologies in Victoria.

V/Line has identified a location on the Victorian regional rail network that is suitable for VeloSTRAIL and will commence a trial during 2018, subject to V/Line's equipment type approval process. This product is not suitable for use in all locations across the regional rail network due to the high-speed lines that V/Line operates.

² Source: www.acri.net.au

2.1 Access paths – Unhindered passage

Temporary Exemption: existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure

For a period of five years, an access path is required to provide entrance and exit only at a single boundary point for existing rail stations where providing access at each entrance would require significant structural building work or not be feasible due to space, topographical or heritage reasons.

Reporting Requirement: Rail stations that have inaccessible entrances

For the purpose of this report, a station with an 'inaccessible entrance' is a station which is 'only accessible by steps'. All V/Line stations have a step free accessible entrance.

In conjunction with our Accessibility Reference Group V/Line is undertaking a customer information project that will deliver access maps for each station on the V/Line network. Maps will be available from vline.com.au, at V/Line stations, through the PTV call centre and PTV hubs. An example map is shown in Appendix A.

2.4 Access paths – Minimum unobstructed width

Temporary Exemption: existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure

For a period of five years, for existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure:

1. where the 1200mm minimum unobstructed width for access paths cannot be met due to structural and technical constraints, an access path with a minimum unobstructed width of 1000mm may be provided;
2. the 850mm minimum unobstructed width (applicable to doorways and gateways) is also permitted on access paths for the purposes of passing an obstruction limited to less than 800mm in length; and
3. platform edge warning TGSIs are permitted to intrude into access paths.

Reporting Requirement: Rail stations which have restricted paths of travel within station precincts

The following regional stations have restricted paths of travel:

Bacchus Marsh
Bairnsdale
Beaufort
Benalla
Birregurra
Castlemaine
Clarkefield
Donnybrook
Drouin

Kyneton
Lara
Marshall
Melton
Morwell
North Geelong
Pyramid Hill
Rockbank
Swan Hill

Terang
Violet Town
Wandong
Wangaratta
Warragul
Warrnambool
Wendouree
Woodend

Source: PTV Railway Stations Audit, December 2014

V/Line has not received feedback regarding the reported matters during the reporting period. Monitoring and consultation will continue.

In conjunction with our Accessibility Reference Group, V/Line is undertaking a customer information project that will deliver access maps for each station on the V/Line network. Maps will be available from vline.com.au, at V/Line stations, through the PTV call centre and PTV hubs. An example map is shown in Appendix A.

2.6 Access paths – conveyances

Temporary Exemption: existing rail conveyances

For a period of five years, an access path is only required at a single door rather than all doors of existing rail conveyances, subject to the following conditions:

- equivalent access is provided at an alternative door of the rail conveyance in the following circumstances:
 - if an allocated space is not available; or
 - to ensure access to unique facilities; or
 - to ensure a passenger can both board and alight the rail conveyance;

Reporting requirement: Measures taken to ensure that staff and passengers are adequately informed of both the access paths available at the doors of existing rail conveyances and the equivalent access measures available.

Customers can board at any door of V/Line trains.

Doors identified by the international symbol for access lead to on board accessible facilities including toilets and allocated spaces.

All V/Line stations, and the dedicated regional platforms at metropolitan stations, have a Boarding Assistance Zone where customers can choose to wait for V/Line staff if they need assistance to board.

All V/Line frontline staff have completed comprehensive disability awareness training and conductors are trained on how to deploy the portable boarding ramp for customers who require assistance to board.



V/Line hosts Try Before You Ride events at regional stations, where customers of all abilities are invited to try different modes of transport including a V/Line VLocity train, a regional coach and a low floor bus. V/Line also participates in similar events held in Melbourne.

V/Line staff on trains and at stations were accredited in the international symbol for Communication Access which means:

- V/Line frontline staff are able to communicate successfully with customers who have communication difficulties
- V/Line frontline staff are welcoming and treat people with dignity and respect
- Communication tools are available to help customers get their message across and understand what people are telling them.



4.2 Passing areas – Two-way access paths and aerobridges

Temporary Exemption: existing rail platforms

For a period of five years, for existing rail platforms, a passing area every 9 metres along any two-way access path that is less than 1800mm wide is permitted where it is not possible to provide one every 6 metres due to structural or heritage constraints.

Reporting Requirement: Rail station platforms which do not provide passing spaces every 6 metres where any two-way access path is less than 1800mm wide

Station	Platform
Macedon	Platform 2
Rockbank	Platform 2
Seymour	Platform 3
Trafalgar	Platform 2

Source: PTV Railway Stations Audit, December 2014

V/Line has not received feedback regarding the reported matters during the reporting period. Monitoring and consultation will continue.

5.1 Resting points – When resting points must be provided

Temporary Exemption: existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure

For a period of five years, compliance with clause 5.1 is not required for existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure to the extent that site constraints prevent compliance (rather than only added expense or difficulty).

Reporting Requirement:

a. Outcomes of consultations and locations where a resting point with a seat is not provided every 60m

Feedback has been received about seating at the taxi rank at Bendigo Station. This taxi rank is being upgraded as part of the Bendigo and Eaglehawk station upgrade project with construction expected to start in 2018.

No other feedback has been received during the reporting period. V/Line will continue to monitor and consult on these locations.

b. Locations where a resting point with a seat is not provided every 60m

The following station precincts do not have resting points with a seat every 60m:

Ararat
Ardeer
Avenel
Ballarat
Bendigo
Clunes
Colac
Corio
Creswick
Deer Park
Dingee
Eaglehawk
Elmore
Gisborne

Kilmore East
Lara
Little River
Longwarry
Marshall
Maryborough
Melton
Morwell
North Geelong
North Shore
Riddells Creek
Rockbank
Seymour
Sherwood Park

South Geelong
Swan Hill
Talbot
Tameit
Trafalgar
Traralgon
Violet Town
Wallan
Wangaratta
Warragul
Wendouree
Woodend
Wyndham Vale
Yarragon

Source: PTV Railway Stations Audit, December 2014

6.4 Slope of external boarding ramps

Temporary Exemption: rail conveyances

For a period of five years, where the relationship between the platform and rail carriage means that an external boarding ramp can only be provided at a gradient greater than 1 in 8 and less than 1 in 4, ARA members are not required to provide staff assistance in ascending or descending the ramp.

Reporting Requirements

a. Number of locations where boarding ramp slopes of one in eight or better cannot currently be achieved

Due to the current platform height standard defined by the Victorian Rail Industry Operator Group Standards (VRIOGS), the height and width of rolling stock that use the regional rail network, including freight trains, and the current design of V/Line boarding ramps, 123 platforms in the regional rail network cannot achieve a boarding ramp slope of one in eight or better.

b. Measures to be taken to increase the number of locations where external boarding ramp slopes of one in eight or better will be achieved

V/Line is working with PTV and Metro Trains Melbourne to review the platform height VRIOGS and have developed a draft standard (subject to approval) that would see future regional platforms compliant for un-assisted boarding in the regional area once implemented. Work continues to address the rail safety implications associated with the proposed draft and to undertake further investigations in reducing risk.

V/Line will continue to monitor initiatives undertaken by other operators to decrease both height and width gaps. Initiatives undertaken at metropolitan stations in Melbourne cannot be replicated in the high speed regional network due to differences in train fleet.

c. Results of examination of alternative methods of achieving accessible boarding

V/Line accepts the Companion Card issued by the Department of Health and Human Services to people who may require the assistance of a companion. It provides free travel for the carer/companion of the card holder on all public transport services³.

³ Victorian Fares and Ticketing Manual, Effective 1 January 2017, Public Transport Victoria.

11.2 Handrails and grabrails – Handrails to be provided on access paths

Temporary exemption: rail platforms

For a period of five years, rail platforms are exempt from clause 11.2.

Reporting requirement: where a request is made but the installation of a handrail does not proceed, report on the request and the reasons for not taking action

V/Line has not received any requests during the reporting period.

Part B – Exemptions from the Premises Standards

H2.2 Accessways

Temporary exemption: rail premises and rail infrastructure

For a period of five years, flange gaps of up to 75mm are permitted where a level crossing forms part of an access path on rail premises or rail infrastructure.

Reporting Requirements:

- a. action taken to improve safe use of level crossings where they form part of an access path;**
- b. progress made in the removal of level crossings; and**
- c. any developments in research into possible technical solutions for bridging flange gaps**

Please see V/Line's response to Part A: 2.1 Access paths – Unhindered passage.

H2.2 Accessways

Temporary exemption: existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure

For a period of five years, an access path is required to provide entrance and exit only at a single boundary point for existing rail stations where providing access at each entrance would require significant structural building work or not be feasible due to space, topographical or heritage reasons.

Reporting Requirement: rail stations which have inaccessible entrances

Please see V/Line's response to Part A: 2.1 Access paths – Unhindered passage.

H2.2 Accessways

Temporary exemption: existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure

For a period of five years, for existing rail premises and existing rail infrastructure:

- where the 1,200mm minimum unobstructed width for access paths cannot be met due to structural and technical constraints, an access path with a minimum unobstructed width of 1,000mm may be provided;
- the 850mm minimum unobstructed width (applicable to doorways and gateways) is also permitted on access paths for the purposes of passing an obstruction limited to less than 800mm in length; and
- platform edge warning TGSIs are permitted to intrude into access paths.

Reporting Requirement: rail stations which have restricted paths of travel

Please see V/Line's response to Part A: 2.4 Access paths – Minimum unobstructed width.

H2.2 Accessways

Temporary exemption: existing rail platforms

For a period of five years, for existing rail platforms, a passing area every 9 metres along any two-way access path that is less than 1,800mm wide is permitted where it is not possible to provide one every six metres due to structural or heritage constraints.

Reporting Requirement: Rail station platforms which do not provide passing spaces every six metres where any two-way access path is less than 1800mm wide, and provides an updated version of that report every 12 months, and that these reports include a description of any measures taken by the ARA member to address any impacts this may have on users

Please see V/Line's response to Part A: 4.2 Passing areas – Two-way access paths and aerobridges.

H2.4 Handrails and grabrails

Temporary exemption: rail platforms

For a period of five years, rail platforms are exempt from clause H2.4(2).

Reporting requirement: where a request is made but the installation of a handrail does not proceed, report on the request and the reasons for not taking action

Please see V/Line's response to Part A: 11.2 Handrails and grabrails – Handrails to be provided on access paths.

Dated 15 September 2017



.....
James Pinder
Chief Executive Officer
V/Line Pty Ltd

Appendix A

NORTH GEELONG ACCESSIBILITY MAP - PLATFORM 1 & 2

