

ARA18DB/55

28 September 2018

Ms Julie O'Brien
General Counsel
Australian Human Rights Commission
Level 3, 175 Pitt Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000
julie.obrien@humanrights.gov.au

Dear Ms O'Brien,

RE: TEMPORARY EXEMPTIONS REPORTS

I write to provide the Australian Human Rights Commission with reports prepared by Australasian Railway Association (ARA) members for the period 1 October 2017 to 30 September 2018 against the temporary exemptions that have reporting requirements.

As referenced in the temporary exemptions granted to ARA members on 1 October 2015, the exemptions reports relate 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)*.

The reports enclosed with this letter cover the following jurisdictions and ARA members:

- Queensland: Queensland Rail
- New South Wales: Transport for New South Wales, NSW TrainLink and Sydney Trains
- Victoria: Public Transport Victoria, Metro Trains Melbourne Pty Ltd, V/Line Corporation and Yarra Trams
- South Australia: Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure
- Western Australia: Public Transport Authority of WA, Transperth Train Operations and TransWA

The individual ARA member annual reports to the Australian Human Rights Commission highlight the rail industry's commitment to and progress in continually improving the accessibility of passenger rail services in Australia.

ARA members recognise that urban, regional and light rail passenger services are integral for the efficient movement of people within cities and between regions. Further, given rail's importance as a transport service to all, passenger rail operators are committed to actively enhancing and continually improving the access that rail provides for all individuals in our communities.

The passenger rail industry implements a wide variety of programs that directly engage with people with disability and disability sector advocates to continually meet the needs of and improve access to rail for people with disability.

As in previous years, throughout the past 12 months, ARA members have continued to upgrade rollingstock and infrastructure to increase the accessibility of rail services. Efforts also continue to improve the customer experience for customers with disability.

Legacy infrastructure and the multitude of rollingstock in operation mean that improving access is a continual process throughout the Australian rail industry. ARA members are committed to actively enhancing the access provided for all in our communities. This is demonstrated through the implementation of operator and state government disability action plans, ongoing consultation with the disability sector (both individually and collectively) regarding these plans, and investment decisions to ensure that accessibility improvements are conducted in collaboration with those with disability and their representative organisations.

Each ARA member employs Accessibility Specialists to engage people with disability and lead the implementation of disability action plans. The ARA also continues to convene our industry Accessibility Working Group which brings together these Accessibility Specialists to share key initiatives, lessons learned and identify collective improvement opportunities.

The rail industry continues to work with the Commonwealth Government as it moves towards the modernisation of the Transport Standards. It must be noted that the industry is not satisfied with the speed of progress to date with the modernisation, but continues to engage with the Commonwealth Government to ensure the Transport Standards are modernised in line with industry and community expectations.

While the detail against each temporary exemption is provided in the reports, the ARA would like to highlight some key achievements of ARA members during the past 12 months:

- **Department of Planning and Transport Infrastructure (DPTI), South Australia:** DPTI have employed a number of measures to improve the accessibility of their rail network over the past twelve months. In this time DPTI have upgraded eight crossings on the rail network to active pedestrian crossings to increase pedestrian safety. The Torrens Rail Junction work has also seen two grade separations and two crossings closed, and work is currently commencing at Oaklands which will see the closure of one pedestrian crossing and three crossings grade separated.
- **Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM):** Over the past year, MTM has made ongoing improvement to the accessibility of stations and trains: four new stations have opened on the MTM network as well as five stations receiving complete redevelopments, each of which is fully accessible. In addition, MTM has partnered with Seeing Eye Dogs Australia to assist in the development of a training facility with mock train to encourage confidence and safety on the rail network for people who are low vision or blind.
- **Queensland Rail (QR):** Queensland Rail is committed to providing accessible rail services that allow all customers to travel easily and safely on Queensland's rail network. The Queensland Government is investing \$300 million over the next five years to deliver accessibility upgrades at priority stations across the Citytrain network, to provide better access for all of customers, including customers with disabilities, seniors, parents with prams and young children and people with luggage. Five stations have so far undergone accessibility upgrades as part of this program, with three more stations planned to commence major construction before the end of 2018. A further eight stations have been announced for upgrade works and are currently in the design phase. The upgrade of these additional stations will increase the number of independently accessible stations on the Brisbane city network from 80 to 91, and means that 83 per cent of our customers will travel to and from accessible stations once these projects are complete.

- **Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW):** Transport for NSW continues to focus on delivery of strong customer outcomes and accessibility improvements. A key achievement has been the release of the Future Transport Strategy 2056, which sets the vision for the next 40 years and includes the core objective of providing access for all, no exceptions. A key support plan of this strategy is the disability action plan 2018-2022 which outlines over 160 commitments to reducing and eliminating the barriers people face in accessing public transport.

Transport for NSW has also made the commitment that at least 11 more train stations will receive upgrades under the Transport Access Program, which includes an investment of \$133 million in the next financial year and a further \$882 million over forward estimates. This will take total investment to over \$2 billion since 2011, making more than 90 per cent of customer journeys accessible. This is in addition to other major infrastructure projects underway such as Sydney Light Rail, Sydney Metro Northwest, Parramatta Light Rail and Sydney Metro City and Southwest.

- **Public Transport Authority of Western Australia:** The Western Australia Government has developed externally reviewed Design Specifications for New and Upgraded Train Stations for PTA. METRONET is a long-term project for an unprecedented increase in its metropolitan passenger rail network. Stage one of the METRONET project is expected to deliver 16 new and 5 fully redeveloped train stations and extending 4 of the 6 train lines and create a new underground train line to Forrestfield with a station at the Airport.

A major program (DDA Upgrades – Stage 3) has been funded to upgrade 24 existing train stations on the heritage lines to DDA standards by 2025.

- **V/Line Corporation:** V/Line has made significant progress in improving safety at pedestrian and level crossings throughout the state during the reporting period. 81 pedestrian and level crossings were upgraded or removed, along with the installation of veloSTRAIL at one pedestrian crossing. Through the trial of veloSTRAIL, V/Line aims to identify the safety benefits and applications within Victoria's regional rail network.

V/Line has continued to engage with and consult customers to drive improvement projects. Through our customer Accessibility Reference Group, a community Accessibility Forum and our quarterly Accessibility Newsletter, V/Line has sought feedback on improvement opportunities and kept customers informed as projects progress.

V/Line maintained certification under the Communication Access Symbol and began to embed ongoing improvements and learning opportunities throughout the business.

- **Yarra Trams:** Yarra Trams is constantly striving to provide a network that is inclusive and accessible for all. We work with the Victorian Government and other stakeholders to make traveling on Melbourne trams easier, safer and more accessible. As such, Yarra Trams has undertaken significant work across the business, to embed accessibility as a key performance indicator, to improve customer outcomes for the community. Our recent review and refresh of our Accessibility Reference Group ensures that we are taking full advantage of the expert advice and lived experience of members, to inform our focus for improvement works:
 - o Training: A new accessibility training package has been developed and is in delivery for all staff, to further embed accessibility in to everything we do.
 - o Operations: There is an enhanced accessibility focus in Operations, by upgrading stops, improving accessible options and information during disruptions and updating timetables to increase the number of low floor trams past the hospital precinct, particularly off peak.

As already noted, these are just a few key achievements that have been made over the past 12 months. I believe these and the detailed jurisdictional reports highlight the industry's continued efforts to improve the accessibility of Australia's passenger rail systems.

I commend the jurisdictional reports to the Australian Human Rights Commission.

As required, the reports have been uploaded to the ARA website to provide public access. A dedicated page on the ARA website is available at www.ara.net.au/disability-temporary-exemptions-reports.

To discuss the reports further, please contact Emma Woods, General Manager - Passenger and Corporate Services via ewoods@ara.net.au or 02 6270 4507.

Yours sincerely,



Danny Broad
Chief Executive Officer
Australasian Railway Association