

ARA16DB/58

30 September 2016

Mr John Howell
Lawyer
Legal Section
Australian Human Rights Commission
Via Email: John.Howell@humanrights.gov.au

Dear Mr Howell,

RE: TEMPORARY EXEMPTIONS REPORTS

I write to provide the Australian Human Rights Commission with the temporary exemptions reports prepared by ARA members for the period 1 October 2015 to 30 September 2016.

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 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 and Yarra Trams
- South Australia: Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure
- Western Australia: Public Transport Authority of WA, Transperth Train Operations and TransWA

The passenger rail industry exists to provide transport services to members of the community and thus it views its role in providing access for all in the community with the utmost importance. As complete access cannot be achieved immediately, Australia's rail industry continues to be committed to achieving continuous improvements. This ensures rail is actively enhancing the access provided for all individuals in our communities throughout the year as operators and state entities implement their respective Disability Action Plans.

During the past 12 months, ARA members have continued to implement upgrades to increase the accessibility of rolling stock and infrastructure. In addition, ARA members have continued to actively improve customer service offerings by training and engaging staff so that better service is provided for customers. Improved customer service results reported through most independent customer service surveys is testament to improvements in this area.

ARA members are complementing improved customer service by implementing innovative technologies such as smart device Apps to assist customers to better understand and navigate rail networks and to plan their journeys.

ARA members value engagement and input from the disability sector to assist the industry in better meeting the needs of these stakeholders when delivering upgrades or program improvements. When jurisdictions plan an improvement, during the implementation phase and as part of the evaluation process, jurisdictions continue to closely engage and consult with a wide variety of stakeholders from the disability sector, both at an individual and collective level. Feedback from ongoing consultation is actively fed into jurisdictional Disability Action Plans to facilitate the industry's focus on continuous improvement and ensure the voice of the disability sector is both being heard, and acted upon by the passenger rail industry.

In 2012, the ARA and industry partners established the TrackSAFE Foundation, which is a registered Harm Prevention Charity that aims to reduce near collisions, injuries and fatalities on rail networks and in doing so, create a better workplaces for rail employees. On 28 and 29 June this year, the TrackSAFE Foundation held a Level Crossing Safety Forum with more than 90 delegates from rail, government, police, road user groups, representative bodies, universities and the National Rail Safety Regulator to address level crossing safety. A top list of 50 innovations, enforcement and technological solutions to level crossing safety were workshopped and circulated to industry as rail strives to continue improving level crossing safety for all.

With this letter, the ARA formally submits the industry's reports against the temporary exemptions that have reporting requirements. Each report has been prepared drawing on the best information available and collates a combination of desktop and on-the-ground reviews. It is the industry's belief that these annual reports to the Australian Human Rights Commission will highlight the rail industry's commitment to continual improvements.

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

- **Department of Planning and Transport Infrastructure (DPTI), South Australia:** DPTI is committed to continually improving public transport services and infrastructure, making public transport more accessible and easier to use for people with disabilities. Real-Time is a free, convenient and easy to use service available for 7,650 stops and stations. The technology has been rolled out across the Adelaide Metro bus, train and tram network. You can now check when your service will arrive in real-time from Adelaide Metro website using any internet-capable device. The information shows not only how far away a specific bus or tram is to their stop, but also if that service is accessible.
- The importance of accessible communication is recognised by DPTI who continue to make enhancements, with all online and printed material made available in a range of formats to ensure accessibility and inclusiveness. The department aims to have all publications, information and marketing material use inclusive language, correct symbols and access information (where relevant). Accessible design principles are applied when new publications are being developed. Information regarding accessible journeys has also been updated with the location of stop buttons, allocated spaces and priority seating for all modes of transport to aid journey planning.

- **Metro Trains Melbourne (MTM):** MTM is continually looking to improve the boarding experience for customers and create accessible outcomes through consultation and innovation. In October 2015, Metro invited 22 customers with mobility devices to a trial in which a test rig was used to simulate varying gaps between the train and platform. The test rig, which could be adjusted to create larger and smaller gaps (both horizontally and vertically), replicated the train and platform boarding environment and provided insight into how user ability, confidence and perception impacted the ability to navigate gaps. The findings are contributing to MTM's ongoing improvement of the customer boarding experience.
- **Queensland Rail (QR):** With TransLink and the Department of Transport and Main Roads, QR is already addressing many rail network challenges by delivering projects that expand and optimise the network and increase its accessibility. This includes enhancing the QR network through upgrading rollingstock to address demand, safety and comfort requirements, and modernising stations to improve customer experience and accessibility. A range of exciting projects are underway, including the delivery of New Generation Rollingstock and the imminent opening of the Redcliffe Peninsula Line, which will extend the network.
- Further, QR's ongoing Station Upgrade Program focuses on making access improvements to its existing stations and facilities which allow all customers to travel safely, easily and independently. As part of this program, the State Government committed \$212 million to deliver accessibility upgrades to 14 high priority stations across five years.
- **Transport for New South Wales (TfNSW):** Over the last year, TfNSW has been involved in the development of three new smartphone apps which help customers of varying degrees of ability to plan and organise their trips. Abil.io enables customers with limited mobility to avoid significant uphill or downhill slopes and stairs, Metarove offers trip planning with highly customisable features, including personal walking speed, maximum distance and an option to display accessible journeys and Stop Announcer (NSW) provides audio notifications of stops made along a route for customers with vision impairment.
- The existing New South Wales public transport network continues to be upgraded through the Transport Access Program with a further \$890 million to be invested over the following four years. 10 train stations have been upgraded in the last year alone.
- **Transperth:** The Transperth 'B' series railcar fleet was first introduced into service in 2004, and comply with the Transport Standards. In 2012, an additional 22 three car B-series trains were ordered, taking the total B-series fleet size to 68 three car trains. The design features the following improvements for customers:
 - o Improved priority seating– the seats have been moved away from the doors and closer to grab poles for improved support. The new railcars feature four sets of two seats identified as priority seats in each car of a three car set.
 - o Improved signage around the door buttons has been improved to include braille and tactile information for users. The improved signage will also be rolled out across the existing railcars.
- Transperth provides train replacement bus services whenever a train line is closed for track works and maintenance. The train replacement bus service is designed to match the train service as closely as possible with bus stops located close to each train station. During 2016, Transperth commenced a program to improve the standard of signage and information provided at Train Replacement Bus Stops with the



introduction of a specially designed Infocube. The new sign features the design maximises visibility for intending passengers and improved luminance contrast

- **V/Line:** In February 2016, V/Line became the first public transport operator in the world accredited in the international symbol for Communication Access. This 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 and V/Line communication tools are available to help customers get their message across and understand what people are telling them
- **Yarra Trams:** All 130 B-Class trams have been upgraded to provide automated audio and visual information to customers. While all customers benefit from this initiative, it is a significant improvement for customers with visual or hearing impairments. The information includes the tram's destination, next stop information and multimodal connectivity with other tram routes, train stations and major bus routes. The next stop information is also shown via on-board LED displays. Currently, 50 per cent of trams in service are fitted with the Vehicle Passenger Information System. All new trams are fitted with this system and an additional 69 trams are expected to be upgraded by mid-2017.

I commend these achievements, the detailed reports and continued improvements implemented by the jurisdictions to the Australian Human Rights Commission in continuing to improve the accessibility of Australia's passenger rail systems.

The rail industry is committed to achieving the best practical outcomes for customers with disabilities and will continue to work closely with the Federal Government as it modernises the Transport Standards

As required, the reports have been uploaded to the ARA website to provide public access. A dedicated page on the ARA website, under publications has been established. This is available at <http://www.ara.net.au/disability-temporary-exemptions-reports>.

To discuss the reports further, please contact Emma Woods, General Manager Passenger and Member Services via ewoods@ara.net.au or 02 6270 4512.

Yours sincerely,



Danny Broad
Chief Executive Officer
Australasian Railway Association