

State and territory responses: public transport access for people with disability during the COVID-19 pandemic

Jurisdiction	Response
ACT	<p>The ACT is not planning on reducing numbers on public transport. The measures remain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid public Transport • Avoid peak hour Public transport • Good respiratory hygiene • Wash your hands
Queensland	<p>As restrictions ease and people start returning to their workplace, we expect to see an increase in the number of people using public transport. To support this transition, TMR has developed some simple guidelines to help everyone feel safe and comfortable when they're travelling:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leave a gap – Maintain distancing between you and others as much as possible while at stations, stops and on board. • Adjust your travel – Travel outside of peak times and use active transport, like cycling or walking, where you can. • Keep it clean – We've increased cleaning across the network and all SEQ services are cashless to help stop the spread of COVID-19. Please help us by staying home if you are unwell and maintaining good hand hygiene, as per Queensland Health's advice. <p>While TMR has issued advice encouraging public transport passengers to comply with health directives, limits on passenger numbers have not been imposed.</p> <p>However, Translink have advised our delivery partners that they should prioritise access for vulnerable passengers, and also provide necessary operational support for vulnerable customers to access vehicles. This includes allowing front door boarding and providing necessary assistance where a customer is not able to board from the rear door of a bus. Routine operational support continues to be place as it would pre COVID-19.</p> <p>Delivery partners in Queensland include Queensland Rail for trains and a range of bus and ferry operators, including local government. Some general information about safety arrangements for Queensland Rail is included in this website: https://www.queenslandrail.com.au/about%20us/Media%20Centre/Pages/Novel%20Coronavirus.aspx .</p> <div style="text-align: right;">  </div>
New South Wales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport for NSW has been running full services throughout COVID-19. This same level of service will continue. • To keep customers safe, cleaning regimes have been increased along with the launch of a campaign to encourage physical distancing on public transport services.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For customers who require extra assistance, such as people with disability, assistance is available as required from frontline staff. • Where possible, frontline staff will also board customers with disability as a priority. • Transport for NSW also continues to monitor and work with industries, such as Point to Point, to ensure the availability of services. • The NSW Government has allocated \$2.52 million in financial assistance to Wheelchair Accessible Taxi (WAT) vehicle owners to ensure they can continue to provide services. This support will provide \$2,900 to the owner of each registered WAT reflecting a six-month subsidy of CTP insurance, registration fees and other on road costs.
Victoria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Transport (Vic) has been running its regular timetabled services throughout COVID-19. The continuation of normal services ensures the availability of transport services for those not able to work from home and to support community members accessing the services able to be accessed according to the state and federal guidelines around travel restrictions. • Continuing to work closely with operators to deliver an enhanced cleaning regime that includes the increased frequency of deep cleaning of conveyances, stops and stations. • Monitoring the operations of “Travellers Aid Australia” services to ensure the continuation of service provision to some of our most vulnerable customers through their sites at Flinders St, Southern Cross and through the buggy service at Seymour Stations. • Consideration of customers with specific accessibility requirements when developing customer communication campaigns. • Consideration of increasing the support to customers through the Multi-Purpose Taxi Program (MPTP) subsidy program. • Continued support to customers requiring additional assistance through the assistance provided by the front line staff of our operators. • Advice to the public is on the Department of Transport website and includes key messages such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ We encourage everyone to practice good hygiene when on public transport. Wash your hands regularly, cover your mouth when you sneeze or cough, and avoid public transport if you’re unwell. ○ Keep your distance where you can and respect the clearance zone around our drivers. Spread out along the platform and keep doorways clear. When travelling on an escalator, use every fourth step and don't pass others. ○ Social distancing measures are currently in place and Victorians are being asked to consider staggering their travel times in the mornings and evenings on trains, trams and buses if they are able to. ○ If possible, when you are travelling in a taxi or ride-sharing service please sit in the back seat. ○ Taxi drivers should regularly clean and disinfect surfaces in their vehicle which passengers touch, and regularly wash their own hands thoroughly with soap and water or hand sanitiser.
Tasmania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel on public transport in Tasmania is exempt from restrictions on gatherings. However, passengers are encouraged to keep physical distancing in mind and choose a seat away from others where possible. No maximum passenger numbers are being imposed on public transport. • Creating a socially responsible passenger is key to encouraging the safe use of public transport as restrictions on non-essential travel are lifted.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasmania has launched a social media campaign called “travel safe together”, which describes the <i>socially responsible passenger</i> who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ gives people plenty of space at the bus stop and leaves spare seats between the next person on the bus if possible; ○ waits for the next bus if there’s not many spaces left, noting that children won’t be left behind; ○ avoids travelling in peak times, if possible (peaks are between 7-9am and 2.30-5.30pm); ○ uses active travel more often, like walking, jogging and cycling; ○ knows while there’s more cleaning occurring on buses, to keep what they touch on the bus to a minimum; ○ uses the free travel period (until 5 Jul) to get a travel smart card and electronic credit top up or 10 trip ticket; ○ uses good hygiene practices: avoids touching their face, uses hand sanitiser regularly; and ○ most importantly doesn’t catch the bus when sick. • A fare amnesty is in place until 5 July to allow time for passengers to obtain a smartcard and make electronic credit top up arrangements where available. Where only cash payment is available, encouragement to purchase 10 trip tickets will apply. • Metro Tasmania made an operational decision for boarding to occur through the rear doors on buses as a means of maximising physical distancing for bus drivers. Passengers requiring assistance can still board via the front doors. Passengers can also ask the bus driver re capacity of the bus to make a decision if they would get on or not. Once the fare amnesty ceases, boarding will re-commence through the front doors as this is where the ticket scanner is located. • Info on Coronavirus Tas https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au/families-community/public-transport • Info on Metro https://www.metrotas.com.au/communication/blog/2020/covid-19-coronavirus-advice-to-all-passengers/
South Australia	<p>The South Australian Public Transport Agency (SAPTA) has advised that in response to the current COVID-19 pandemic, South Australia has not prescribed maximum passenger limits on public transport services and are not currently planning to implement these restrictions. In the event that this changes, SAPTA will ensure that access for people with disabilities is considered as part of any proposed protocols and procedures.</p> <p>Public transport in South Australia has a range of strategies in place to reduce the risk of infection including increased cleaning, removal of all cash transactions requiring Metrocard only validations and installing signage on all public transport advising people to maintain social distance and not board if they are feeling unwell.</p>
Northern Territory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been no changes made to public transport i.e. services have neither been reduced or enforced physical distancing • There has been reduced numbers of passengers over the last few months so potentially this may resulted in some positive impacts for passengers. • The Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Logistics (DIPL) has implemented increased deep cleaning of public buses and provided the taxi industry etc. with cleaning products. • Additional cleaning has also been implemented on the specialist school transport buses. • DIPL has not received any concerns from the disability sector regarding transport issues relating to COVID-19.

Western Australia	<p>While not specifically addressing the varying needs of people with disability to access public transport during this time, a number of measures implemented would reduce COVID-19 risks and enable safe access and utilisation to public transport more generally.</p> <p>In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, public transport patronage fell dramatically across all jurisdictions. In Western Australia, at the peak of the crisis, patronage levels fell by over 85%.</p> <p>Following a proactive response to the pandemic, jurisdictions are starting to see a gradual return of passengers to public transport networks, noting that schools are re-opening and people are now being encouraged to return to work. In Western Australia, a return to full bus service operations occurred on 29 April 2020, to support the decision to open schools and to meet the needs of an increasing number of passengers returning to their workplaces. Train services (with the exception of late night weekend services) returned to full operations on 4 May 2020. As at 22 May 2020, patronage levels across the Transperth network were at 45% of normal loads (using 2019 as a comparative base). In regional centres and on 'orange' school bus services, loadings were significantly higher at between 60% - 90%. Transwa services continue to observe a 50% loading restriction in consideration of the much longer journey times.</p> <p>Messaging and assistance to customers is provided via the Transperth Call Centre, website, static posters, social media platforms, MyAlerts (email messaging), push notifications via the Transperth App and live announcements. In addition, customer service and security officers are positioned around the network to provide assistance as required.</p> <p>A number of changes made in response to Covid-19 remain in place including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passengers are encouraged not to travel if sick, to observe correct hygiene and to allow as much distance from fellow passengers as possible;• The front row of seats behind and to the left of the driver (on buses) are blocked off;• Drivers are not required to handle cash and are provided with hand sanitiser;• Exiting from the rear door (of buses) is being encouraged;• Roof vents are being opened to encourage the flow of fresh air; and• The enhanced cleaning regime (facilities and conveyances) will continue for the foreseeable future.
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