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GR & SE ROBERTS T/A BICHENO COACH SERVICE DDA ACTION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Bicheno Coach Service is a privately owned business which we have operated for 21 years, based at Coles Bay (population 200) bordered by the Freycinet National Park on the East Coast of Tasmania. Our business operates a service between Freycinet National Park Walking Track Car Park and Bicheno (45klms) and provides general charter service for this area. As a *very* small rural operator there is limited ability to fully comply with all the requirements of General Access Long Distance Bus Contract that was implemented in March 2009. We receive no remuneration or subsidy, except for "Top up" concession passengers so it is impossible to invest in new accessible vehicles sufficient to meet DDA requirements.

INTENTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

This Action Plan is intended to outline the ways in which this business will endeavour to attain DDA compliance and meet the reasonable needs without discrimination and respecting any travellers who need assistance with a disability.

LEGISLATION REQUIREMENTS

Discussions with the Manager of the Transport Services from the Department Infrastructure Energy and Resources and the Tasmanian Bus Association regarding issues of Tasmanian bus operations and regulations are ongoing.

Contractual arrangements are to be reviewed during the first five years of the 5+5 years contract, this Action Plan will again be reviewed at the end of the first term.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY BICHENO COACH SERVICE

The Long Distance Regional (booked) Route Service supplies bus service access to the Freycinet Peninsula from Bicheno (45klms) & connecting services with Tassielink Transit to & from Hobart / East Coast towns & some services that connect with Calows Coaches for access to Launceston / St Helens.

The main patronage on this service are tourists and bushwalkers accessing the Freycinet National Park. Community patronage is virtually non-existent.

Patronage during the tourist season would rarely exceed 10 passengers per service and during the off season we often operate a service with a single passenger.

We have four buses which consist of 33, 21, 13 and 12 seats. They do not meet all DDA requirements.

Given the nature of this patronage the need for wheelchair accommodation is very minimal. (In 21 years there has been no wheelchair bound passengers).

We have no "bus stops" as such. Passenger pickups are at non-kerbed roadsides with uneven approach paths and uneven "surfacing" at the stop location, thus access to vehicle mounted ramps and/or lifts for wheelchairs will not be easy.

We will endeavour to update vehicles to be fully DDA compliant but it will be impossible without major funding from DIER to operate our General Access Service Contract.

Passengers that require wheelchair access can be arranged if:

- Bookings made 48 hours prior to travel.

INFORMATION and OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Website and Timetable

- All information about our business is displayed on our website and is kept updated.
- Timetable & fare structure are readily available to download and a supply of timetables are available on all buses and Visitor Information Centres. Drivers will assist with information.
- Colour enhanced timetables are available.

Lighting

- All our services are conducted in daylight hours only. Standard ADR lighting is available.
- Driver will issue tickets to passengers when they are seated.

Hearing and Augmentation

- Some buses have a PA system but it is not financially possible to retro fit them with appropriate systems. Driver will use written and other assistance for hearing impaired passengers.

Location Information

- Office and or Mobile contact by phone is available even after hours, for bookings and information about our destinations and services.
- Drivers will assist passengers with route information and stopping place advice.

Seating of Carers and Service Animals

- Drivers will ensure carers and service animals are seated/located next to those in their care.

Baggage Allowances

- Disability aids will be carried additional to normal luggage allowances.
- Assistance will be given to stow or retrieve disability aids if required.
- A luggage trailer will be attached if necessary.

Priority Seating

- Signage will be provided on all vehicles indicating a need to save forward seats for elderly and disabled passengers.

Payment of Fares

- Drivers will assist disabled passengers to pay fares and collect tickets.
- Drivers will issue tickets to passengers when they are seated.
- Concession fares are available.

Driver Training

- Both myself and my partner will be driving the majority of services and are very experienced in catering for all passengers including passengers with disabilities or different nationalities.
- Training drivers to be efficient, courteous and helpful, will be provided to cover all aspects of assisting disabled passengers.

We are supplying this service to enable passengers to access this area, but with the seasonal patronage of tourists and minimal community patronage and with no DIER assistance except for concession fares it is virtually impossible to be fully compliant to meet the DDA requirements.

This Action Plan is provided in good faith as an honest attempt to meet our responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act, consistent with our limited ability to invest in new vehicles.

Contacts in regards to this Plan

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