

Accessibility Action Plan 2014

 QueenslandRail



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Introduction



I am excited to present our new Queensland Rail Accessibility Action Plan 2014, which I feel will make a real difference to customers safely accessing and navigating our network.

At Queensland Rail, we strive to promote accessibility for all members of the community. We do this by working with our customers to remove barriers and pioneer solutions that support inclusive communities.

Whether you are an older adult; have a disability; or are travelling with children, a pram or luggage, we take pride in providing rail services that are equitable, dignified and comfortable for all. This plan outlines our achievements and future steps towards this goal.

As a quick snapshot, last year we were pleased to announce two new, independently accessible stations Springfield Central and Springfield. We also delivered full station upgrades at Narangba and Sandgate stations. All of these stations now contain accessible paths of travel, including lifts and ramps, accessible unisex toilets, hearing loops, braille signs, tactile ground surface indicators and accessible parking. For our customers at Graceville, Newmarket, Alderley and Dinmore, new station designs are delivering higher levels of safety, security and comfort.

Something I am personally proud of is our work during Autism Awareness Week. Last year, we took the opportunity to educate our customer-facing people about how they can assist those living with the condition when they travel on our services.

This year, we are continuing our focus on delivering an accessible rail network and look forward to unveiling some fantastic new initiatives, including:

- upgrades at City Network stations including lifts, ramps, help phones, and priority seating
- the Spirit of Queensland which will service key tourist destinations along the coast and feature wheelchair allocated spaces, accessible railbeds, and visual and audible information, plus
- working with Transport and Main Roads to design a City Network fleet that offers increased accessibility for our customers through the New Generation Rollingstock and Moreton Bay Rail Link project.

Our program of work continues to be shaped by the voice of our customers. We are committed to capturing their feedback about accessibility issues and considering different perspectives.

At Rail Safety and Orientation Days, we work with school children, people with sensory and mobility impairments, mental health issues and learning difficulties. We also conduct a Safe Boarding Campaign to help customers with mobility devices to access services.

Our Accessibility Team also conducts numerous community presentations, engagements and sponsorships, as well as forums and workshops that connect us with our customers in meaningful ways. It's through their commitment that I can provide this plan to you today.

I would like to acknowledge their efforts in producing a plan we can all be proud of.

Helen Gluer

CEO Queensland Rail

Executive Summary

Public transport is integral for people to participate in community life. People with disabilities are entitled to the same rights, responsibilities and opportunities as other people. Queensland Rail understands the connective role it plays in peoples' lives and is committed to improving access to its passenger rail services.

Queensland Rail takes pride in its track record of improving accessibility. In support of the objectives outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) and the Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld), Queensland Rail, has invested heavily in improving train and station accessibility. As a part of this investment, Queensland Rail has continued to consult with customers with disabilities about the design and implementation of these improvements. Coupled with our customer service philosophy, this investment has seen significant accessibility improvements across the majority of the City network, Travel network and Tourist Train services.

Through this, our 2014 Action Plan, Queensland Rail reconfirms it's commitment to improving accessibility to its passenger rail services. This Action Plan will detail:

- the environment and context in which Queensland Rail provides accessible rail services;
- our recent accessibility achievements and progression towards meeting the *Disability Standards*¹; and
- Queensland Rail's focus and plans for improving access on its services in the future.

Principles

The following principles underpin Queensland RAILS Accessibility Action Plan:

- accessibility and inclusion
- engagement and collaborative work
- maximizing access and functional outcomes
- allocation of resources
- transport industry partnerships
- universal design

¹Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards) and the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010

Top 3 Commitments

Queensland Rail's approach to providing access is underpinned by 3 commitments which are identified below:

1. **We will upgrade all networks** - Infrastructure upgrades to stations and train overhauls remain the major focus for improving existing service accessibility.
2. **We will engage with people with disabilities** - Queensland Rail will continue to foster positive and constructive dialogue with our customers with disabilities so that they have a genuine opportunity to influence outcomes that best suit them.
3. **We will work to enhance accessibility** - whether its customer service, network extensions or improvements to existing services, providing an accessible network for a wide range of customers will be central to our decision making process.



Summary of community feedback

In the community consultation process, we learned about many key community concerns that we have documented and responded to in the relevant sections of this plan.

Consultation has utilised our existing Accessibility Reference Group to form the basis for seeking advice from customers with disabilities during the Action Plan development process.

The Accessibility Reference Group provides a forum for Queensland Rail to engage with disability sector organisations and obtain input into the development of non-discriminatory and accessible rail services. Membership is based on principles of cross-sectional representation to ensure the full spectrum of concerns and interests are included and balanced from a social and access needs perspective.

There are currently 15 members who have expertise in a range of disability issues and who are able to represent the access needs of the broader disability sector and community.

The role of Reference Group members in the development of the Action Plan has included:

- providing comment on Action Plan drafts
- facilitating comment from peak disability organisations and other relevant organisations on Action Plan drafts
- being involved in the evaluation and review of the Action Plan

Queensland Rail acknowledges the extraordinary time and valuable input that these customers have given to grow our understanding of policies and practices that may affect people accessing our services. We have used this input along with contributions from a range of stakeholders to make improvements. The involvement of our customers has been instrumental in assisting Queensland Rail to deliver a comprehensive plan that best reflects our customers' requirement

Development of this action plan

At the end of 2007, Queensland Rail released a DDA Action Plan for 2007 – 2012, to coincide with legislated timetable requirements, specifically the five yearly interim targets. This plan is Queensland Rail's second DDA Action Plan.

This plan provides information about Queensland Rail's achievements and future plans for improving access to stations and trains. Focus is on the removal of access barriers and progress to date in respect of the improvements Queensland Rail has made about accessibility. It also looks forward to and beyond 2017. The Plan is multifaceted, reflecting the complexity of issues involved in improving accessibility.

The Plan covers the following services provided by Queensland Rail:

- City network, services in South East Queensland,
- Travel network, regional services, and
- Tourist Train (Kuranda Scenic Railway and the Gulflander).

To ensure that the Plan upholds Queensland Rail's open and responsive approach to customers, it has been developed in consultation with customers with disabilities.

Context

Disability Discrimination Act and the Disability Standards

Disability Discrimination Act and action plans

The Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) makes it unlawful to discriminate in the provision of goods, services or facilities against people on the basis that they have, or may have, a disability.

*“The DDA ensures, as far as practicable, that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; and promotes recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community”.*²

As a public transport operator, Queensland Rail’s obligations under the DDA are specified in the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Transport Standards) and the Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 (Premises Standards). Both the Transport and Premises Standards (collectively referred to as the Disability Standards) stipulate minimum requirements for the provision of accessible transport premises, services and facilities. Many of the standards rely on Australian Standards in setting out the requirements.

The Disability Standards provide a timeframe in which progress towards full compliance must be achieved. They apply to all conveyances, premises and infrastructure. Compliance is to be achieved over a 20-year period from 2002, with interim progress requirements for most areas of the Disability Standards of 25%, 55%, 90% and 100% by the end of 2007, 2012, 2017 and 2022 respectively. There are some significant exceptions to this, such as waiting areas, signs and symbols, lighting, alarms, ticketing and information systems, most of which were required to be compliant by the end of 2007. Trains have until 2032 to achieve the last 10% of full compliance. All new services coming into operation after October 2002 must be fully compliant. Existing services must be retrofitted or replaced. The Disability Standards enable compliance to be achieved in a number of ways, including by providing direct assistance.

The Disability Standards assume that public transport users can travel independently or with the assistance of a companion and are able to understand the public transport system.

Disability Standards: the inter-relationship of the Premises and Transport Standards.

Since 2002, all new public transport buildings have been required to comply with the Transport Standards which, at the time, demanded higher levels of access than the Building Code of Australia (BCA). Additionally, existing public transport buildings were subject to a compliance timetable for progressive upgrades to meet the requirements of the Transport Standards.

In order to maintain these mandatory upgrade requirements and maintain continuity, the relevant parts of the Transport Standards covering passenger use areas of transport related buildings have been removed from the Transport Standards and placed in the Premises Standards.

This transfer of the building requirements for public transport buildings from the Transport Standards to the Premises Standards means that the requirements for public transport buildings are in some instances different from that required for other types of buildings. For example, requirements for public transport buildings refer to editions of Australian Standards which were applicable at the time the Transport Standards were developed

²Guideline on the application of the Premises Standards, version 2 – 2013, Australian Human Rights Commission

The Transport Standards continue to apply to features of public transport buildings that are not covered in the Premises Standards.

Conveyances and operational procedures are still subject to the requirements of the Transport Standards.

Guideline on the application of the Premises Standards, version 2 – 2013, Australian Human Rights Commission

Beyond compliance

The Disability Standards set out minimum requirements for the provision of access to fulfil legal responsibilities in relation to the DDA. As such, public transport operators may provide a higher level of access than the legislated standard if it meets the necessary performance requirements. For example, the Disability Standards require compliance with certain referenced editions of Australian Standards, however a public transport operator can use the more up-to-date Australian Standard if it still meets the performance requirement.

Where practicable, Queensland Rail has adopted the most up-to-date Australian Standards to provide a higher level of access than the minimum requirements. The up-to-date Australian Standards reflect improved application and understanding of the needs of customers with disabilities and this approach assists Queensland Rail in creating a more sustainable rail environment capable of responding to changing circumstances and local community needs.

Direct assistance

The Transport Standards allows for direct assistance to provide alternative access so long as an equivalence of amenity, availability, comfort, convenience, dignity, price and safety is maintained. These provisions relating to equivalent access have not been moved into the Premises Standards. However, the guidelines for the Premises Standards indicate that providing equivalent access may form part of a proposed alternative approach and references the relevant provisions of the Transport Standards.

Public transport operators must consult with customers with disabilities who use the service or with organisations representing those people about any proposal for equivalent access. Additionally, Operators must be able to demonstrate that equivalent access provides public transport without discrimination 'as far as possible'.

As reflected in Queensland Rail's Customer Charter, customer service excellence is a public commitment and the way direct assistance is provided is a central component of this commitment. For example, Queensland Rail staff assist customers to board and alight services by deploying a portable boarding ramp. Customers with disabilities have been consulted about this process and continue to be involved in initiatives and projects to enhance this service.

Unjustifiable hardship

While compliance with the DDA and the Disability Standards is required to the maximum extent possible, the legislation provides for a defence of unjustifiable hardship for transport operators and providers in exceptional circumstances. In determining what constitutes unjustifiable hardship, a court will consider all the relevant circumstances of the particular case, including the nature of the advantage or disadvantage caused to any person likely to be affected by the decision and the financial circumstances and the estimated cost required to be made by the transport operator or provider.

Exemptions

An operator can seek an exemption of up to five years from compliance with all or some of the Transport Standards from Australian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) through a public consultative process. The AHRC decision to grant an exemption and the conditions imposed have assisted in defining rights and responsibilities during the transition towards greater accessibility and promoted increased compliance.

Queensland Rail has been granted a number of exemptions to the Transport Standards, as an individual operator and via the Australasian Rail Association industry exemption application.

Disability defined

The DDA definition of 'disability' is broad-ranging and covers physical, sensory, intellectual and psychological disabilities. It includes:

- a disorder or malfunction that results in the person learning differently from a person without the disorder or malfunction
- total or partial loss of the person's bodily or mental functions
- total or partial loss of a part of the body
- the presence in the body of organisms causing disease or illness
- the presence in the body of organisms capable of causing disease or illness
- the malfunction, malformation or disfigurement of a part of the person's body
- a disorder, illness or disease that affects a person's thought processes, perception of reality, emotions or judgement or that results in disturbed behaviour.

The definition includes a disability that:

- presently exists, or
- previously existed but no longer exists, or
- may exist in the future, or
- is imputed to a person.

Demand for transport from people with disabilities

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) figures indicate four million people in Australia (18.5%) reported having a disability in 2009. Of these people, 1.2 million have experienced difficulties in using public transport.

The access barriers people with disabilities experience when using public transport vary with the nature of their disability. People with profound core activity limitations reported the most common difficulties they had using public transport were getting to stops or stations (38%) and getting in or out of vehicles or carriages due to steps (48%). In contrast, the main difficulties people with mild core activity limitations reported were due to difficulty getting into or out of vehicles because of steps (23%) and fear and anxiety (14%).

In order for people with disabilities to be able to participate effectively in society, they must be able to access a range of transport options as other citizens do. *'Few things are more fundamental than the ability to get where one needs to go. Without access to public transport, participation in such critical activities as education, employment and health care is difficult, if not impossible.'*

The definition of disability in the DDA is much broader than that used by the ABS. Additionally, the DDA also protects people who are associates of people with a disability (including families, friends and carers).

Australian Bureau of Statistics, Disability, Ageing and Carers: Summary of Findings, 2009.

Review of Transport Standards and implementation of recommendations

Under legislation, the Transport Standards are required to be reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness every five years. As a part of this review, the Department of Infrastructure and Transport:

- assess whether discrimination has been removed, as far as possible, according to the requirements for compliance set out in the Transport Standards, and
- advise on any necessary amendments to the Transport Standards.

The first review of the Transport Standards occurred in 2007 and coincided with the first interim target date. Queensland Rail's response to this review was included in the Queensland Department of Transport's submission. This review resulted in 15 recommendations carrying in-principle Government agreement. The implementation of these recommendations remains ongoing and will extend beyond 2012.

The Federal Department of Infrastructure and Transport is once again reviewing the Transport Standards in 2012 and Queensland Rail has submitted a response to the review advocating recommendations that provide better outcomes for customers with disabilities and allow public transport operators to more effectively manage their obligations under the Transport Standards.

Action plans

The DDA states that organisations may develop Action Plans to eliminate discriminatory practices and that these may be given to the AHRC. The DDA allows for preparation of Action Plans as a way of achieving compliance with obligations under the DDA, not as a substitute for compliance with those obligations.

Following the first interim target, at the end of 2007, Queensland Rail developed and implemented a five year DDA Action Plan, which is registered with the AHRC. The second interim target occurred at the end of 2012. Consequently, Queensland Rail has reviewed the initial Action Plan and developed a new plan to continue its commitment to improve accessibility to its rail services.

Queensland Rail services

Queensland Rail is an integrated passenger and rail infrastructure business, servicing the passenger, tourism, resources and freight markets across Queensland. Since 1865, Queensland Rail has played a critical role in connecting communities. As a passenger service operator, Queensland Rail runs over 260,000 scheduled services over 7000 kilometres of track and across 200 stations. With close to 300 trains, Queensland Rail offers mass transit services across South East Queensland and long distance services between Brisbane and key regional areas such as Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton, Longreach, Charleville and Mount Isa.

Over recent years, Queensland Rail has undergone significant change. In 2010, Queensland Rail Pty Ltd became Queensland's largest Government Owned Corporation following one of the biggest demergers in corporate Australia's history. In 2013, Queensland Rail became a statutory authority accountable to two responsible Ministers - the Minister for Transport and Main Roads and the Treasurer.

City network

Queensland Rail is the largest public transport operator in South-East Queensland. Our network extends from the centre of Brisbane:

- South to Beenleigh and Varsity Lakes on the Gold Coast
- North to Ferny Grove, Shorncliffe, Doomben, Caboolture and Gympie
- East to Cleveland, and
- West to Richlands, Ipswich and Rosewood.

Through its City network services, Queensland Rail plays an important role as a key strategic partner and service provider in the TransLink integrated public transport system. Our services are integral to the daily life of our customers, whether students, workers, tourists or residents, moving between suburbs and cities.

The City network covers approximately 300 kilometres of track serviced by 211 three car train sets and consists of 146 stations. Our customers make an estimated 50 million passenger journeys per year with a daily average of 140,000 journeys. Our key challenge in managing the City network is ensuring capacity in the face of growing demand. Aside from the rapid expansion in South East Queensland's population, commuter trains share the rail network with freight and coal trains.



Travel network

The Travel network integrates travel and regional access for commuters with a comfortable rail experience for international, interstate and intrastate tourists and holiday makers. The Travel network represents the largest and most comprehensive network of long distance and tourist trains in Australia. Our services extend:

- North from Brisbane to Cairns, and
- West to Charleville, Longreach and Mount Isa.

Consisting of 75 stations and serviced by 8 trains, the Travel network connects regional Queensland with the following services:

Outback Services

- Spirit of the Outback – Brisbane to Longreach
- The Inlander – Townsville to Mount Isa
- The Westlander – Brisbane to Charleville

Coastal Services

- The Spirit of Queensland – Brisbane to Cairns and
- Tilt Train – Brisbane to Cairns/Rockhampton/Bundaberg.

Tourist train

The Tourist Train network offers customers a unique travel experience. Utilising historic rolling stock, Tourist Train services offer tourists the opportunity to take a nostalgic journey of days gone by. Tourist Train services include:

- Kuranda Scenic Rail – Kuranda to Cairns
- The Gulflander – Normanton to Croydon.

Queensland Rail's unique challenges

The Queensland Rail built environment poses a number of unique challenges in addressing the requirements of the Transport Standards. The majority of these challenges stem from the fact that large portions of the rail network were constructed over 50 years ago and in some cases up to a century ago. During the time of construction, design specifications differed greatly from today's specifications and generally gave no consideration of accessibility for customers with disabilities.

Track layouts and rail corridors were generally narrow and followed existing roads resulting in a number of curved sections. Platforms and stations were constructed to meet the requirements of older steam-hauled carriages, not the current electric train sets in use since 1979. Stations were often built in cuttings where platforms were built low, curved and narrowed significantly towards either end. Obstacles along the platforms were common, and the use of steps and subways to access station buildings and other facilities were commonplace.

Queensland Rail operates 146 stations in the South East Queensland metropolitan area and over time, both commercial and residential properties have been built alongside the rail corridor. Road widening and other development activities have significantly constrained the railway corridor in many locations.

Building a modern accessible railway station requires a considerable amount of space, on the platform and on the concourse to house all of the necessary amenities. Building accessible stations within the older parts of the rail network poses substantial design challenges, which add significantly to the overall cost of construction. In many cases, the design may need to compromise on aspects of accessibility to fit within the physical constraints of the location.

Train and platform interface

The interface between train and platform poses significant issues with respect to providing everybody with independent access to Queensland Rail services. From a rail operations perspective, a wider gap prevents potentially dangerous incidents occurring from track movement, not only from passenger trains, but also heavy freight and coal trains. This danger is exacerbated on curved platforms.

On the other hand, the wider the gap between trains and platforms, the higher the risk customers could trip or fall while boarding and alighting from trains. In addition, it decreases the number of people who can board and alight safely and independently. These divergent interests have resulted in increased design and construction costs in a bid to strike the safest and most accessible balance for train-platform separation. While Queensland Rail has been able to reduce the gap between platform and train in many instances through extensive research costs and engineering, there may always be a need to provide assistance and boarding ramps for many customers with disabilities.

Narrow gauge track

Queensland railways have been constructed using narrow gauge (1067mm) track built in the early part of last century. Narrow gauge track imposes limitations to train carriage width and presents design and engineering constraints limiting the ability to design a carriage that meets the needs of all users, including customers with disabilities. For example, if a toilet facility and an access aisle are required to be adjacent to each other, construction to the dimensions specified in the Transport Standards is physically impossible. Challenges presented by Queensland Rail's narrow track gauge will continue to impact accessibility on trains.

A statutory authority

In April 2013, the Queensland Rail Transit Authority Act 2013 (Qld) 2013 created the Queensland Rail Transit Authority, now known as Queensland Rail. This transfer to a state statutory authority provided the Queensland Government greater control over the direction and operations of Queensland Rail. The change in legal status brings Queensland Rail closer to government, enabling us to work in partnership with the Department of Transport and Main Roads to more effectively deliver their vision of:

“a single integrated transport network accessible by everyone”.

This vision symbolises a positive future for accessibility not only on Queensland Rail services but also public transport in Queensland generally. Furthermore, a single integrated transport network with better interconnectivity will address accessibility on public transport more holistically. Previously, with a series of individual operators, access improvements to public transport were disjointed between public transport networks often resulting in people with disabilities being unable to use connecting services. An integrated network will consider access jointly across transport modes and therefore address access continuity for passenger journeys more effectively.

Our achievements

Queensland Rail has worked hard to improve the accessibility of its services. Underpinned by the 2007-2012 Action Plan, Queensland Rail in partnership with the Queensland Government and customers with disabilities, sought to identify and eliminate barriers to access on its services. Whilst infrastructure upgrades to stations and trains remain the major focus for improving service accessibility, Queensland Rail's customer service reform and community engagement have also played an essential role in the journey towards barrier free services.

Our trains

With over 200 trains servicing Queensland Rail's three networks, improving accessibility on trains has been an area of focus. Despite the fact that the service life of a train generally far exceeds other modes of public transport, some of the trains utilised to service the Travel and Tourist networks are aged well over 20 years and offer limited accessibility. Despite the long service life of some train fleets, Queensland Rail with the support of the Queensland Government has invested heavily to improve accessibility.

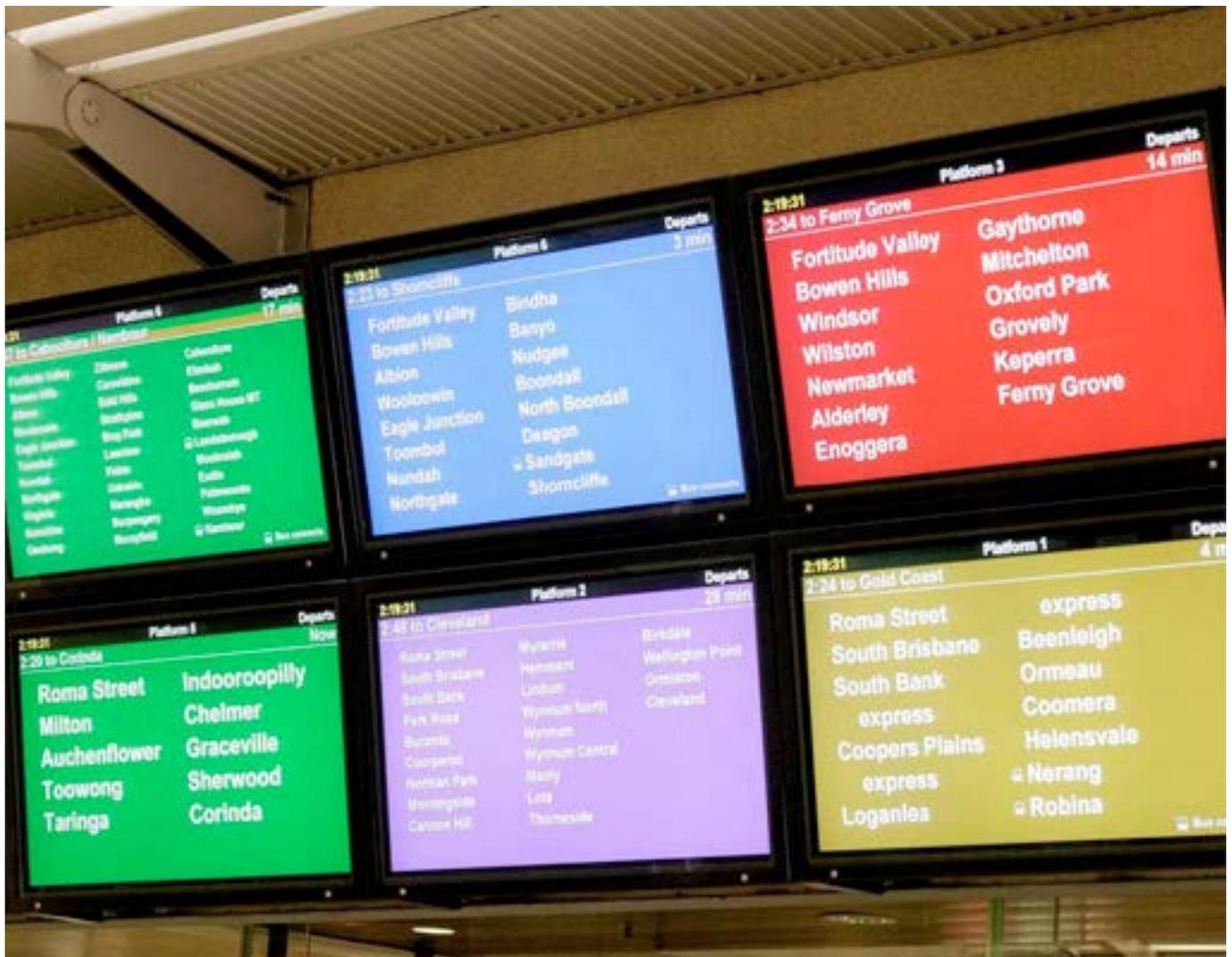
City network

Through a scheduled renewal program and the introduction of new fleet, it is proposed that City network trains will achieve accessibility sooner than the required timeframe.

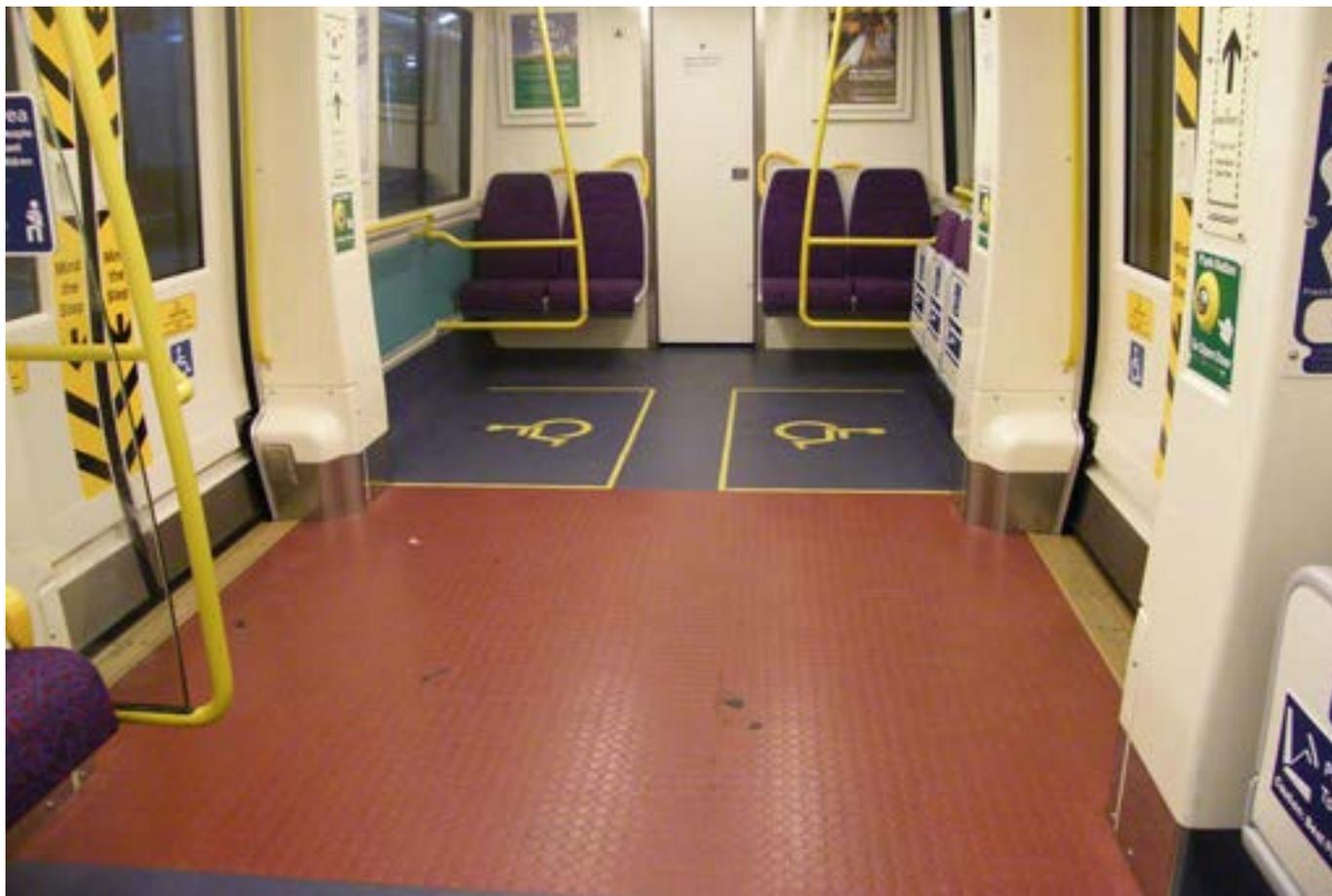
Existing train renewal program

To expedite accessibility on City network trains, Queensland Rail has implemented a structured upgrade program of its existing train fleet. Continued community consultation has been instrumental in both the design and implementation of upgrades. Some of the highlights from the City network train renewal program are:

- **Signage and symbol upgrades**– Through consultation with customers with disabilities, Queensland Rail identified onboard information as an important access requirement for a successful journey. As a part of this consultation, Queensland Rail and our Accessibility Reference Group has developed solutions to provide significant improvement to signage and symbols present on City network trains.
- **Installation of passenger information displays (PIDs)** – The installation of PIDS on the City network trains has made travelling considerably easier for all customers. Offering critical information about the journey in a visual format, PIDS are essential for customers with hearing disabilities. Through consultation with customers with disabilities, optimal luminance levels and colour contrasts were identified, Additionally, PIDS were designed to be versatile and provide a variety of information, which is critical in the event of a service disruption, to ensure the appropriate information is conveyed to all.
- **On board training** – On board attendants play a vital role in providing accessibility on Queensland Rail trains. Firstly, they provide direct assistance for customers with disabilities boarding the train. Secondly, they make public announcements to convey important journey information to customers, including those with vision impairments. Through working with our Accessibility Reference Group, Queensland Rail identified various improvements to enhance the customer experience for customers with disabilities. On board training has been recently reviewed and has resulted in significant improvements for customers with disabilities including the process for boarding and the type of information conveyed in public announcements.



- **Electric multiple unit (EMU) upgrades** – The most prominent trains in the City network fleet, the EMUs have been overhauled to provide improved accessibility. The delivered upgrades to the EMU fleet include:
 - Provision of allocated spaces
 - Improved Priority Seating
 - Push Button Door Controls – To support access when using train doors, Queensland Rail installed raised door buttons. While supporting those with physical impairment, these door controls were also illuminated with LED lights and have an audible tone to assist customers with vision impairment
 - Improved luminance and colour contrast for handrails and grab rails, and
 - Removal of obstacles such as long stanchions.
- **New trains** –The purchase of 64 new accessible trains over the last five years in response to Queensland’s population growth has significantly improved the accessibility of Queensland Rail’s City network services. As a part of the design phase for the purchase of these trains, Queensland Rail consulted with customers with disabilities to ensure that the new trains enhance accessibility.



Travel and tourist network

While only seven trains are used to service the Travel and Tourist train networks, these trains pose significant challenges with regards to providing accessibility. Although significantly less patronised than the City network fleet, Queensland Rail has worked hard to make improvements across the majority of the Travel and Tourist network fleet. The trains servicing these networks can be divided into two categories: Tilt Trains and Traditional Fleet. Queensland Rail's accessibility achievements over the past five years are:

Tilt trains

Since being introduced in 1998, Queensland Rail's Tilt Trains have connected Brisbane with the regional cities of Bundaberg, Rockhampton and Cairns. As the most utilised trains of the Travel network, Queensland Rail, in consultation with customers with disabilities, has improved access on these two trains.

However, the recently introduced, Spirit of Queensland service will be replacing the two Tilt Trains and the Sunlander service by late 2014.

Traditional Fleet

Queensland Rail's traditional fleet was constructed up to 50 years ago during a time when accessibility was not a major consideration. As such, due to the age, nature of construction and narrow rail gauge these trains offer limited accessibility. With community consultation, Queensland Rail has modified a number of carriages to provide a degree of accessibility. However, the traditional fleet largely relies upon the provision of direct assistance and use of an on-board wheelchair.

The Kuranda Scenic Rail (KSR) has been upgraded to include accessible handrails, grabrails, allocated spaces and an accessible toilet. For the remaining trains of Queensland Rail's traditional fleet, minor accessibility features have not been progressed as these trains are due for major overhaul or replacement.



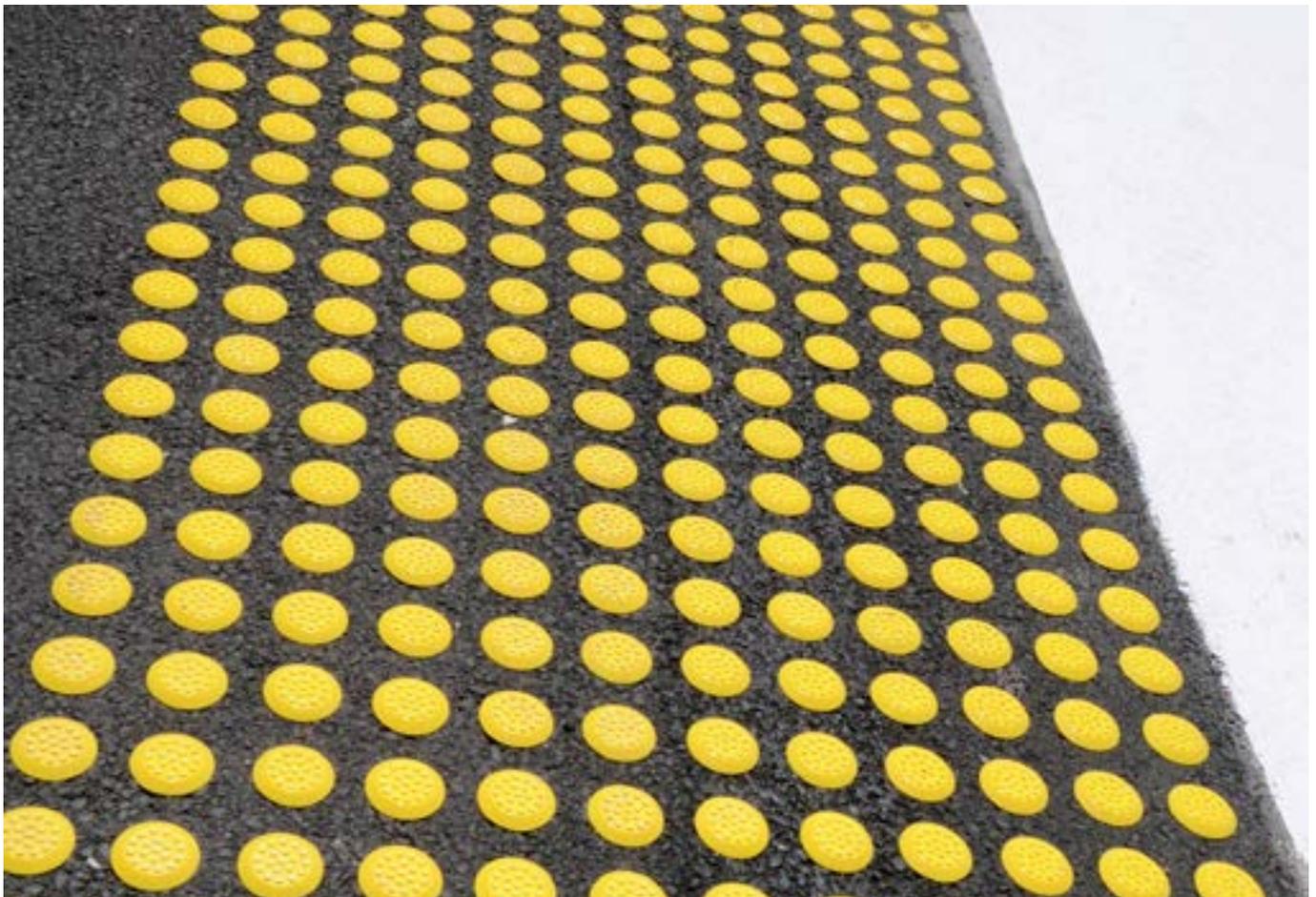
Our stations

Significant investment has enabled the improvement of station accessibility across all three of Queensland Rail's networks.

Highlights

Recent highlights in station accessibility across Queensland Rails networks include:

- An updated and enhanced Station Design Guide with a focus on accessibility outcomes
- Upgrades and refurbishments completed at 117 of the 146 City network stations
- Brand new accessible stations built at Varsity Lakes and Richlands
- Major works and accessibility upgrades at South Brisbane, Fortitude Valley, Indooroopilly, Ferny Grove, Petrie, Oxley, Grovely, Oxford Park and Darra stations. These upgrades included a mixture of accessible parking bays and end-to-end access paths including lifts, assisted boarding points, improved way finding and signage, accessible toilets, hearing loops, visual information screens, and new ticket windows
- Braille map trials at Varsity Lakes, Richlands and South Brisbane Station
- Consultation with disability sector organisations and customers with disabilities on designs for an updated help phone and timetable console, the use of Braille maps, ticket window design, visual information screens, surfaces and colour contrasts, and
- The development of a coordinated and integrated approach to way finding including signage, tactile ground surface indicators, colour contrast, audible cues and architectural features.



Upgrade program

As part of the Queensland Infrastructure Plan, Queensland Rail has undertaken an extensive program of work to deliver new lines, stations and trains to meet growing demand. There is also a strong focus on improving the customer experience for Queensland Rail customers. Station upgrade and renovation projects are critical to delivering enhanced levels of safety, security and comfort for customers.

Queensland Rail's station upgrade projects can be grouped into two programs:

1. Major Infrastructure Projects
2. City network Station Upgrade Program

Major infrastructure projects

South East Queensland is expanding rapidly. By 2031 it is anticipated the population of the region will increase to around 4.4 million people.

The Queensland Government plans for and manages this growth through the Queensland Infrastructure Plan (previously known as the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan). The rail component of this plan identifies essential infrastructure needed to support a sustainable and integrated transport system.

Projects completed to date on the Queensland Rail network include:

- Darra to Springfield Transport Corridor - Stage 1: Darra to Richlands and Stage 2: Springfield
- Corinda to Darra Rail upgrade
- Robina to Varsity Lakes rail line extension
- Beerwah Rail Crossing Project
- Caboolture to Beerburrum duplication
- Helensvale to Robina duplication
- Mitchelton to Keperra duplication
- Keperra to Ferny Grove duplication
- Salisbury to Kuraby Rail upgrade
- Ormeau to Coomera duplication

Stations that have received accessibility specific upgrades as part of the projects listed above include:

Altandi	Elimbah
Runcorn	Beerburrum
Fruitgrove	Ferny Grove
Kuraby	Coopers Plains
Grovely	Banoon
Oxley	Sunnybank
Darra	

New, accessible stations have also been added to the network:

Varsity Lakes

Richlands

Springfield

Springfield Central

Access facilities available at these stations include:

- Access paths
- Lifts, ramps and stairs
- Handrails and grabrails
- Raised platforms
- Accessible unisex toilets
- Improved signage including Braille, raised text and pictograms
- Hazard and directional tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs)
- Electronic information displays (LCD screens)
- Next train consoles (audible and visual information)
- Help and disability assistance phones
- Low height ticket counters
- Priority seating
- Waiting shelters
- Wheelchair waiting areas
- Hearing loops at ticket windows and on platforms
- Public Announcements systems
- Tactile assisted boarding mats
- Colour and luminance contrast for fixtures and fittings
- Accessible parking bays

Recently completed projects:

Springfield Central and Springfield Station

The Darra to Springfield Transport Corridor – Stage 2, Richlands to Springfield Project is being delivered as an integrated road and rail project.

The new Springfield Central Station has been designed to service the future development and anticipated growth of the greater Springfield area. The station building is elevated 18 m above ground level and provides:

- two lifts to access the high level platforms
- extensive hearing loops throughout the plaza and platform levels
- unisex accessible toilets
- ambulant toilets
- accessible taxi and drop off zones
- tactile ground surface indicators on both the plaza and platform levels
- accessible signage with Braille and tactile information, and
- visual and audible information

Springfield Station is situated in an already well developed section of the greater Springfield area on the western side of the Centenary Highway with access from Nev Smith Drive. The station sits within a deep cutting so that the building does not intrude on the suburban landscape.



City network station upgrade program

Queensland Rail established the City network Station Upgrade Program to determine how to most effectively meet the legislative obligations laid out under the Disability Standards.

The objectives and outcomes of the City network Upgrade Program align with:

- the Department of Transport and Main Road's infrastructure objectives
- TransLink's vision of making it easy to travel in South East Queensland, and
- Queensland Rail's vision of providing a network accessible to all customers.

Under the City Network Upgrade Program, the following station upgrades have been delivered at:

Fortitude Valley	Petrie (partial)
Oxley (partial)	Central and Roma Street (toilets)
Indooroopilly	Cleveland (partial)
South Brisbane	Narangba
Toowong (partial)	Sandgate
Eagle Junction (partial)	

Access features available at these stations generally include:

- Access paths
- Lifts, ramps and stairs
- Improved signage
- Platform edge tactile indicators
- Electronic information displays
- Next train console (audible and visual information)
- Help phones
- Ticket counters
- Priority seating
- Waiting shelters
- Wheelchair waiting areas
- Hearing augmentation devices
- Tactile assisted boarding points
- Colour and luminance contrasting
- Raised platforms.

The Central Station concourse redevelopment has been completed in 2014. Access facilities provided at Central Station include:

- Additional faregates
- New ticket office with low-height ticket windows
- Improved signage.

Although not primarily for the purposes of improving accessibility, the stations below have also had renovations completed:

Deagon	Moorooka
Enoggera	Morningside
Newmarket	Toombul
Strathpine	Banyo
Zillmere	Woodridge
Yeerongpilly	Yeronga
Taringa	Bundamba
Corinda	Wooloowin
Coorparoo	Wynnum Central.
Dinmore	Cleveland
Loganlea	

Station access categories

To assist customers in using the network, planning a journey and determining if a station will meet their travel requirements, Queensland Rail in consultation with customers with disabilities has developed station access categories .

These categories provide customers with a quick reference guide to the available facilities at particular stations. The categories are not intended to define a station as compliant with the Disability Standards, but instead are provided specifically for customer information purposes.

These categories have also provided a guide for the City network Upgrade Program. For example, stations with limited or stair only access have been weighted more heavily, which in turn could result in higher overall prioritisation being given to these stations.

Currently 68 out of 146 of City network stations are classed as 'independently accessible' (including the recently completed Springfield and Springfield Central Stations). Independently accessible refers to the ability to enter a station, get to the platform and move between platforms independently without using stairs, via a compliant ramp, pathway or lift. Additionally, these stations provide a variety of access features such as hearing loops, tactile layouts, Braille trails, lower ticket counters, accessible signage, improved lighting and accessible toilets.



Independently accessible stations (68)

Altandi	Darra	Indooroopilly	Oxley	Sunnybank
Bald Hills	Eagle Junction	Ipswich	Park Road	Toombul
Banoon	Elimbah	Kingston	Petrie	Toowong
Beenleigh	Eumundi	Kuraby	Redbank	Varsity Lakes
Beerburrum	Ferny Grove	Landsborough	Richlands	Virginia
Beerwah	Fortitude Valley	Lawnton	Robina	Woodridge
Birkdale	Fruitgrove	Manly	Roma Street	Woombye
Bowen Hills	Glasshouse Mountains	Milton	Rosewood	Yeerongpilly
Caboolture	Goodna	Mitchelton	Runcorn	Zillmere
Carseldine	Grovely	Nambour	Sandgate	Domestic airport ¹
Central	Gympie North	Nerang	Shorncliffe	International airport ¹
Cleveland	Helensvale	Nundah	Southbank	
Coomera	Hemmant	Narangba	South Brisbane	
Coopers Plains	Hendra	Ormeau	Springfield	
Corinda		Oxford Park	Springfield Central	

The next level of station access is referred to as ‘assisted access.’ This station category refers to stations with ability to enter a station, get to the platform and move between platforms via a steep ramp or rail crossing. People with mobility aids or difficulties walking may prefer to be accompanied by a travelling companion for assistance at these stations. In other words a station providing ‘assisted access’ may still be ‘useable’ for some people with a mobility impairment but it cannot be classed as ‘accessible’.

Assisted access stations

Albion	Cooroy	Keperra	Palmwoods
Ascot	Coorparoo	Lindum	Pomona
Auchenflower	Deagon	Loganlea	Strathpine
Banyo	Doomben	Lota	Sunshine
Bethania	Dutton Park	Mooloolah	Thagoona
Boondall	Eden’s Landing	Morayfield	Thorneside
Booval	Enoggera	Morningside	Wacol
BrayPark	Eudlo	Murarrie	Walloon
Burpengary	Exhibition	Norman Park	Wellington Point
Cannon Hill	Geebung ³	Northgate	Windsor
Clayfield	Holmview	Nudgee	
Cooran	Karrabin	Ormiston	

The remaining stations are classed as ‘limited access’ and all platforms can only be accessed via stairs.

Limited access stations

Alderley ²	East Ipswich	Newmarket ²	Thomas Street
Bindha	Ebbw Vale	North Boondall	Traveston
Bundamba	Fairfield	Riverview	Trinder Park
Buranda	Gailes	Rocklea	Wilston
Chelmer	Gaythorne	Salisbury	Wynnum
Dakabin	Graceville ²	Sherwood	Yandina
Dinmore ²	Moorooka	Taringa	Yeronga

¹Queensland Rail does not own or operate the two airport stations

²Upgrades are planned at these stations

³Geebung Station will be classed as independently accessible following the completion of the BCC project

Station design

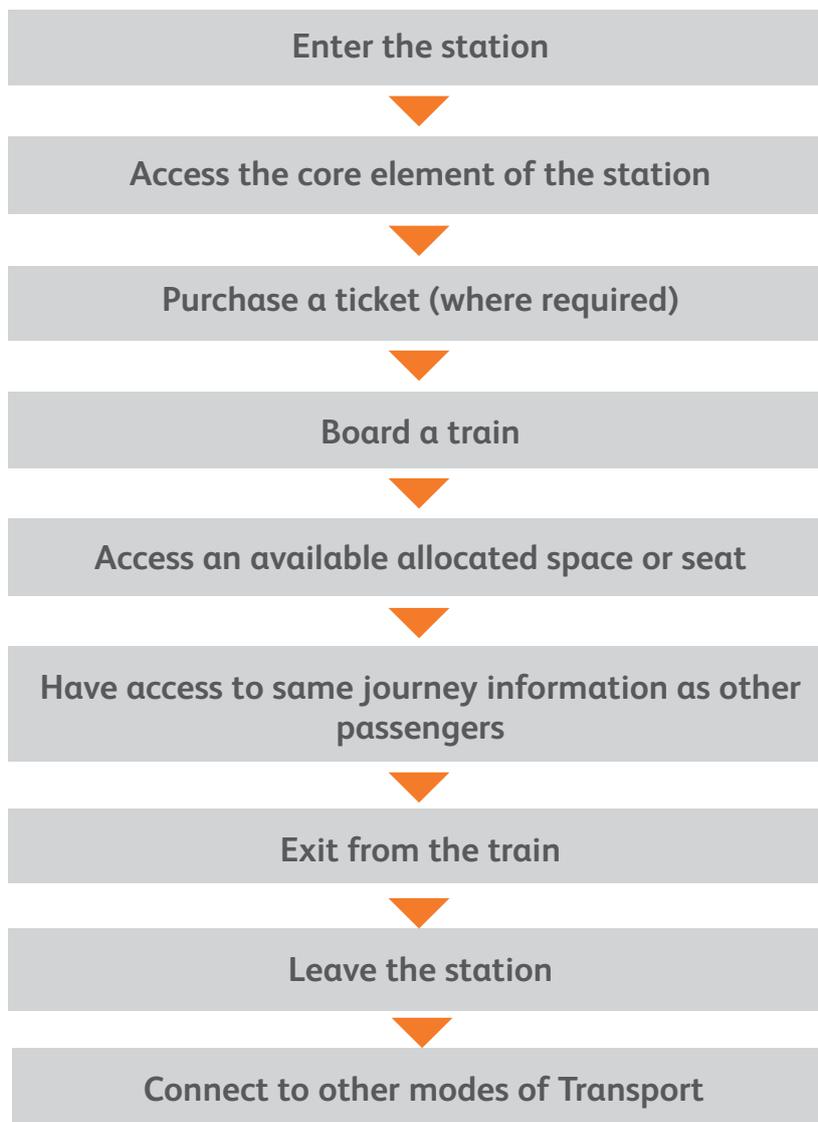
Queensland Rail has continued to develop and refine its approach to station design to ensure that new or upgraded stations provide access for all of our customers. Queensland Rail has an emphasis on providing accessible facilities for all customers, including those with visual, hearing or cognitive impairments, wheelchair and mobility scooter users, older and frail customers, carers with prams and young children and customers with luggage, including bicycles.

Accessible station design incorporates universal design, the removal of barriers to access and taking into account the diverse needs of different customers.

Urban railway stations have complex architectures, with a range of entry/exits points, structures, and path features that can include car parks, pedestrian entrances from the street, subways, over-bridges, stairs, ramps, walkways, lifts, shelters, station buildings and an array of columns and poles. Due to this complexity, upgrading existing stations can pose unique challenges.

The most important aspect of station design is that all customers, including those with a specific need can safely access a station and board a train (and vice versa). The access outcomes of Queensland Rail's approach to station design are listed below:

To access Queensland Rail services the customer shall be able to:



To achieve these outcomes, Queensland Rail focuses on providing competent circulation design which is legible, easy for customers to comprehend and requires little additional way finding assistance. The starting point for this is the assisted boarding point. From here, continuous accessible paths of travel connect station entries, toilets, ticketing, shelter/waiting areas, accessible parking, intermodal interchanges and travel information.

Queensland Rail carefully considers the location of each of the facilities listed below to enhance access. Key access provisions available at City network stations include:



Wayfinding

Accessible signage

Hazard and directional tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs)

Architectural features along the continuous path of accessible travel (handrails, fences, textured surfaces, colour contrasts, garden beds)

Electronic information displays (LCD screens)

Integrated next train consoles and emergency help and disability assistance phones

Tactile assisted boarding points

Lighting.

Continuous path of accessible travel

Accessible parking bays

Interchange facilities

Station entry/exit points

Lifts, ramps paths

Accessible unisex toilets

Low height ticket counters

Priority seating

Waiting shelters

Wheelchair waiting areas

Lighting.

Information and communication

Hearing loops at ticket windows and on platforms

Public Announcements systems

Accessible signage

Low height ticket counters

Electronic information displays (LCD screens)

Integrated next train consoles emergency help and disability assistance phones

Lighting.

Travel network

Queensland Rail has been progressively upgrading Travel network stations to meet the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (2002). This work has involved upgrading many stations with:

compliant ramps

lighting

accessible toilets

accessible car-parking facilities

TGSIs

public address systems with hearing aid loops

assistance phones for timetable information and reservations, and

accessible seating and shelters for passengers with mobility impairments.

Work has been completed on the North Coast, Great Northern, Central Western and South Western lines. As a result, the vast majority of Travel network stations offer a high level of accessibility.

Tourist network

Tourist train stations are located at Freshwater, Barron Falls and Kuranda on the Kuranda Scenic Railway, and at Normanton, Croydon, Blackbull and Critters Camp on the Gulflander Service.

- Accessibility improvements to Tourist Train Stations include:
- Freshwater station - platform wheelchair lifts
- Kuranda station - platform wheelchair lifts
- Barron Falls station - tactile ground surface indicators
- Normanton Station - accessible car parking, accessible unisex toilet, waiting shelters and improved signage
- Croydon Station - accessible unisex toilet and improved signage
- Blackbull Siding - accessible toilet, boarding area and sealed access path, and
- Critters Camp - boarding area and sealed access path.

Our customer service

- In placing customers at the heart of business decisions, Queensland Rail has continuously improved the experience for customers using rail services. Underpinned by the development of an award-winning Customer Charter, Queensland Rail has created a platform to measure and continuously improve upon servicing our customers' most important needs.
- To drive Queensland Rail's transformation to a customer-centric business, Queensland Rail has also implemented a range of initiatives designed to directly improve the customer experience.
- Some of the notable customer service initiatives that have directly assisted customers with disabilities include:
- Mobile customer care representatives – To provide a greater level of customer service both on trains and at stations, Queensland Rail employed additional staff to assist customers throughout their entire journey. The additional presence of Mobile Customer Care Representatives throughout the City network has ensured assistance is never far away for its customers.
- Customer service training – To equip Queensland Rail staff with the knowledge to transform Queensland Rail into a customer-centric organisation, Queensland Rail implemented an extensive customer service training program. Over 3000 Queensland Rail employees received nationally recognised customer service training.
- Disability awareness training – The provision of equivalent access through direct assistance plays a critical role for many customers with disabilities to access Queensland Rail's services. Building upon the customer service training, Queensland Rail identified the need to improve front line staffs' understanding and service to customers with disabilities. To facilitate this improvement, Queensland Rail undertook a comprehensive review of the disability discrimination awareness training provided to front line staff which has generated a heightened awareness of people with hidden disabilities, such as an acquired brain injury or mental health issue, a person with arthritis or a person with a sensory disability.
- Customer feedback process – One of the most important contributors to improving accessibility on public transport services is the identification of barriers to access. Queensland Rail's customer feedback process, now certified under an international quality assurance standard, provides customers, including those with disabilities, with a more effective and efficient means for both providing and receiving feedback. This process improvement, coupled with an internal Customer Advocate and a dedicated Accessibility Team have provided Queensland Rail with a standardised means for identifying and remedying accessibility concerns across its networks and services.

Partnerships and engagement

Community engagement and consultation with customers with disabilities is an integral part of Queensland Rail's planning for accessible rail services. As outlined in the Customer Charter, Queensland Rail welcomes customer feedback and remains committed to providing excellent customer service.

Established in 2003, Queensland Rail's Accessibility Reference Group is the primary forum for engagement with various disability groups. Its members comprise Vision Australia, Blind Citizens Australia, Guide Dogs Queensland, Better Hearing Australia, Deaf Services Queensland, Endeavour Foundation, Arthritis Queensland, Queenslanders with Disabilities Network and the MS Society. The reference group meets on a quarterly basis to ensure the voices of customers and the community are heard. In turn, this work provides valuable input into DDA decision making to deliver a more accessible rail network.

Key events

Key engagement highlights from 2008 to 2013 include:

- **Disability access forums** held in 2008 and 2009 provided a mechanism for engagement with a cross section of disability organisations, customers with disabilities and other external stakeholders regarding disability access issues.
- **Accessibility workshops** in 2010 and 2011 facilitated discussion on solutions to enhance the accessibility of our City, Travel and Tourist network services.
- **Accessibility surveys** in 2010, 2011 and 2012 were provided to Queensland Rail customers and/or frontline staff to share their views and suggestions on the accessibility of Queensland Rail services and plans for the future.
- **Community sponsorship** including support of events such as the Disability Action Week Awards and Mental Health and Deafness Forum.
- **Consultation** on customer service initiatives and major station and train fleet upgrades including the installation of onboard customer information screens for the existing City Network fleet, effective wayfinding at City Network Stations, use of the boarding ramps, enhancing rail services for people with a hearing impairment, the design of help phones, use of Braille maps, ticket window design, and surfaces and colour contrasts.

Ongoing awareness activities

Queensland Rail has aimed to increase awareness of accessibility on the Queensland Rail network by holding:

- **Rail safety and orientation days** - Four times a year the Accessibility Team hold Rail Safety Days which provide a safe environment for customers with disabilities to explore a stationary train and platform without other customers. Participants learn about onboard access features, station facilities and different types of assistance Queensland Rail staff can provide.
- **Orientation and mobility (O & M) sessions** - Queensland Rail has previously held O & M sessions for customers with a vision impairment when opening an upgraded station, such as the Fortitude Valley station. Staff have also attended O & M sessions provided by Guide Dogs Queensland to deliver information on accessing our services.

- **Community presentations** - Queensland Rail's Accessibility Team have attended various community group meetings to provide information on accessing services and provisions available for customers with disabilities.
- **Travel assistance** - Mobile Customer Care Representatives have assisted customers with disabilities on a one-to-one basis with journey planning and gaining confidence in accessing services independently. This service has been offered informally following customer enquires or requests.

Customer awareness campaigns

Customer information campaigns focused on a variety of topics including:

- **Station access guide** – An important guide which provides customers with a quick reference to all City network stations. This guide assists with journey planning and lists key access facilities available at individual stations such as lifts, ramps accessible toilets, car parks, lower tickets counters and hearing loops.
- **Safe boarding campaign** – This campaign aims to educate customers using mobility aids about safe boarding procedures, utilising the assisted boarding area and the types of assistance that can be provided by Queensland Rail staff.
- **Guide hearing and assistance dogs campaign** – A campaign designed to increase customer awareness of the role of guide, hearing and assistance dogs and their acceptance on Queensland Rail services.
- **SMS texting service leaflet** – This leaflet provides customers with information about Queensland Rail's text service for customers with disabilities. This service is particularly useful for customers who are deaf or hearing impaired. Customers can directly text Control Centre staff to ask for information including services, disruptions or access.

All of the above activities provide an important mechanism for Queensland Rail to reach and interact with a wide cross section of customers with disabilities and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to removing access barriers. Outcomes from these activities have informed the priorities and direction of our accessibility projects.

Employment

Queensland Rail is committed to building a diverse workforce and inclusive culture where all employees feel valued and respected. A diverse workforce helps Queensland Rail to better understand the differing needs of our customers, and improves business innovation and continuous improvement.

Queensland Rail, through our reasonable adjustment policy, is able to assist a diverse range of employees with achieving their employment goals.

Additionally Queensland Rail is a participant in the Paralympic Workplace Diversity Program which identifies businesses willing to be supportive of high level athletes requiring flexibility for training and travel.

Our focus

Queensland Rail is committed to working with our community and industry partners to ensure, to the maximum extent possible, that Queensland's transport passenger network is accessible to all customers, so they get to their destination safely and with ease.

To further improve accessibility, Queensland Rail is focused on four categories of work:

1. Customer service
2. Customer engagement and advocacy
3. Maximising resources
4. Transport industry partnerships

Customer service

While accessibility upgrades are occurring across services, Queensland Rail will work hard to improve the service experience for our customers with disabilities. Although train and station upgrades can improve accessibility on Queensland Rail services, significant opportunity exists to improve the service experience of customers with disabilities outside of infrastructure upgrades.

Where appropriate, Queensland Rail aims to provide direct assistance to our customers with disabilities so as to provide equivalent access.

The customer experience for people with disabilities will be improved through a comprehensive and continuous four stage process:

1. Review of the customer experience
2. Identify and plan opportunities for improvement
3. Deliver improvements to the customer experience, and
4. Measure the improvement to the customer experience.

As a continuous improvement cycle, this process will be repeated several times throughout the life of this Action Plan.

Review the customer experience

Queensland Rail will continue to work with its Accessibility Reference Group to examine the multiple perspectives of customers with disabilities using our services. Through this collaborative approach, Queensland Rail will continue to develop our understanding and knowledge of the experience of customers with disabilities.

Opportunities for improvement will also be identified through:

- Customer feedback
- Consultation with peak disability organisations and customers with disabilities
- Accessibility workshops and surveys, and
- Benchmarking international best practices.

Plan opportunities for improvement

Queensland Rail will ensure that customer experience and requirements are embedded into our future planning process. To date, our engagement with customers with disabilities has revealed three fundamental areas most important in their customer experience – access, safety and information.

Supported by previous analysis, a number of key initiatives will target improving these three service aspects. Examples of improvement initiatives currently under internal review and discussion include:

- **Emergency management procedures for people with disabilities (safety)** – Whilst not explicitly outlined within the Disability Standards, one of the key concerns for customers with disabilities are the procedures for managing an emergency situation. Queensland Rail is currently working on these procedures to ensure that they align with expectations of our customers with disabilities and provide adequate and safe arrangements in times of emergency.
- **Assistance cards (access)** – In consultation with the Accessibility Reference Group, Queensland Rail is exploring the possible introduction of assistance cards. An entirely voluntary process, holders of these cards could be identified and proactively offered assistance when using our services. It is believed that these cards would be of particular use for customers with learning difficulties, mental health issues or acquired brain injuries.
- **Travel network station access guide (information)** – As per the City Network, customers have requested that a station access guide is developed for the Travel network. A station access guide classifies stations based on their level of physical access to facilitate better journey planning for people with disabilities.
- **Accessible online information (information)** – Queensland Rail is constantly looking at new and better ways to keep our customers informed. Moving forward, Queensland Rail will introduce a number of electronic formats to convey key information about Queensland Rail services. These formats will be accessible and offer people with vision impairment the ability to both receive and interact with this information. Planning is also underway to look at introducing accessibility updates to Queensland Rail’s website.

Deliver accessibility improvements

- Initiatives will be delivered through a variety of means such as process redesign or introduction of new procedures or materials. One significant opportunity that Queensland Rail will leverage moving forward is greater utilisation of our customer service staff.

Dedicated team

Queensland Rail has a dedicated Accessibility Team which will continue to focus on implementing access initiatives. Additionally, this team:

- Engages with peak disability organisations and customers with disabilities
- Provides access advice and input into major infrastructure and rollingstock projects
- Responds to customer feedback relating to accessibility
- Works to ensure staff awareness and information on how to provide accessible services for customers with disabilities
- Provides information on the experience of customers with disabilities to the business

Measure improvement to the customer experience

- Queensland Rail will seek to evaluate the improvements made to the customer experience and ensure that the changes meet the expectations of our customers with disabilities. Improvements will be measured by both subjective and objective means and will assist in informing future programs of improvement initiatives. Throughout this process, Queensland Rail will provide updates to the community and communicate how these changes are improving the customer experience for our customers with disabilities.



Customer engagement and advocacy

Queensland Rail will continue to foster positive and constructive dialogue with our customers with disabilities so that they have a genuine opportunity to influence outcomes that best suit them.

Queensland Rail has developed and maintained constructive working relationships with disability sector organisations and customers with disabilities. We will continue to build upon these relationships with a program of ongoing consultations and regular meetings. Moving forward, Queensland Rail will maintain an open and collaborative approach to removing access barriers and negotiating challenges associated with providing access on our services.

Key community and stakeholder activities

- **Accessibility reference group** – As mentioned previously, Queensland Rail facilitates an Accessibility Reference Group comprised of representatives from peak disability sector organisations. This group provides the core consultation mechanism for Queensland Rail to obtain input into the development of non-discriminatory and accessible infrastructure, trains and customer service. Queensland Rail will continue to facilitate quarterly meetings with this group and ensure the group's input into all major train and infrastructure projects. Members of the Accessibility Reference Group have continued to provide valuable advice and knowledge helping Queensland Rail shape its approach to providing accessible rail services.
- **Accessibility surveys and workshops** – Moving forward, Queensland Rail will continue to host accessibility workshops and conduct surveys. These activities both provide an annual assessment on Queensland Rail's progress but also help inform our future plans. Workshops provide an opportunity for all participants to contribute by providing their opinion and help structure the overall priorities for accessibility.
- **Rail safety and orientation days** – Queensland Rail currently holds quarterly Rail Safety and Orientation Days and will continue to offer this important learning opportunity for the community. Rail Safety Days educate school children on being 'Rail Smart' by highlighting behavioural expectations and the dangers of being in and around railways. Children are also provided with the opportunity to explore stationary trains as part of the presentation.

These days also offer an opportunity for people with disabilities, both adults and school children, to explore and discuss the features, facilities and layouts of the trains. Participants with mobility impairments and sensory impairment have the opportunity to experience a range of access features including: hearing loops; tactile layouts; lifts; locating the boarding point; using the ramp; and accessing the emergency and disability assistance phone. In addition, participants with learning difficulties or a mental health issues have an opportunity to learn about safety features on the train and who to ask for assistance when travelling.



Customer information and education campaigns

- Queensland Rail has developed a number of campaigns and materials to ensure that customers with disabilities are informed on access provisions and the assistance Queensland Rail can provide. The successful Safe Boarding Campaign has recently been re-launched to reiterate information around safe boarding practices and procedures at Queensland Rail Stations for people with mobility aids. Queensland Rail will continue to update the City network Station Access Guide to provide journey certainty for our customers with disabilities. Queensland Rail has also planned on producing an access guide for the Travel network along with updates to the Travel fact sheets and accessibility information.

Consultation

- Queensland Rail is committed to an ongoing program of community engagement and consultation with the disability sector and customers with disabilities. Consultations are conducted to focus on specific access provisions, access challenges and/or major projects. Through these consultations, participants have the opportunity to provide input and feedback assisting Queensland Rail to deliver optimal accessibility outcomes.

Maximising resources

Queensland Rail will ensure, to the maximum extent practicable, that all new stations, rollingstock and other facilities are constructed so as to be compliant with relevant anti-discrimination law. Any program of work (for new buildings and upgrades to stations, rolling stock and other facilities) to improve accessibility across the Queensland Rail network will be targeted at areas with the greatest need.

Stations

With such a large and dispersed network of stations, Queensland Rail in consultation with customers with disabilities and Department of Transport and Main Roads have developed a practical approach to delivering accessibility upgrades at our stations. In line with our customer focused approach, Queensland Rail has commenced prioritising stations for upgrades based on greatest need.

Prioritisation criteria

At the end of 2013 Queensland Rail undertook a review of the current City Network station upgrade strategy. A key outcome of this review was to ensure consultation with customers with disabilities is embedded in the decision process.

In April 2014, a Station Prioritisation Workshop was held to engage with customers with disabilities and, facilitate high level input from disability sector organisations. In addition to this Workshop a Questionnaire has also been distributed to key contacts in the disability sector.

Responses to this questionnaire are currently being collated and will be reviewed in tandem with the feedback received from the Workshop. When this process is completed, pertinent customer input will be included in the prioritisation methodology and overall station rankings. In the interim, the current criteria will continue to be utilised:

- **Level of Access** – Queensland Rail in consultation with its Accessibility Reference Group has categorised stations based on their level of access – Independent Access, Assisted Access and Limited Access. Stations offering less accessibility will be prioritised over stations offering a higher level of access.
- **Patronage** – The fundamental principle behind our approach is to use the available funding to maximise the accessibility benefits for customers. To ensure that these benefits reach the maximum number of customers, it is important that patronage is considered for station upgrades.
- **Asset Condition** – Safety is Queensland Rail's number one priority and as such, the condition of our stations is of utmost importance. By considering asset condition as a factor for prioritising station upgrades, Queensland Rail endeavours to make sure our stations are safe for both customers and our people.
- **Intermodal Interchange Facilities** – Queensland Rail's City network forms one part of the greater South East Queensland public transport. By prioritising stations which play a role connecting these networks, it helps ensure that customers using multiple modes of public transport have continuity in their access.

- **Nearby facilities such as hospitals, aged care facilities, special schools, businesses and other local attractors** – Local attractors, community hubs and essential services represent key locations for Queensland Rail’s customers’ lives. By prioritising these locations for accessibility upgrades, it improves the ability for customers with disabilities to access essential services and connect with the community.
- **Proximity of the station to other nearby accessible stations** – This factor allows Queensland Rail to better provide for the community by addressing locations without a nearby accessible station.

The upgrade program and station priority list is subject to continuous review to ensure changing circumstances and conditions are reflected. Delivery of the City network Upgrade Program is dependent on continued funding from the Queensland Government. The list of prioritised stations is reviewed with every funding allocation to ensure stations of greatest need are identified and allocated the required programs of work to increase accessibility.

From a network perspective, Queensland Rail will dedicate efforts toward improving access across the City network as it is more patronised than the other networks. In addition, the Travel network offers a high level accessibility at a number of stations.



First station upgrade program

Under this Action Plan, the top four stations will constitute Queensland Rail's first program towards upgrading station accessibility:

- Graceville
- Dinmore
- Newmarket, and
- Alderley.

At present, these key stations offer limited access. Funded by the Queensland Government, Queensland Rail will analyse the four locations individually to determine the most effective use of funding to improve accessibility.

The scope for the four stations is to undertake an accessibility upgrade to ensure all platforms can be accessed independently via paths, ramps or lifts, without using stairs. Queensland Rail Stakeholders have undertaken site visits to assess the particular issues at each of the stations. Subsequently a comprehensive list of station elements requiring upgrade has been developed and prioritised. These lists will be used to inform the proposed accessibility upgrades ensuring that the provision of independent accessibility at each location is ultimately the first step towards full access upgrades.

Consequently, the scope for each location will comprise elements of the following in order to achieve independent accessibility:

- Reconfiguration of existing ramps
- Refurbishment of subways and/or replacement of footbridges
- Lift installations to subway/footbridge
- Upgrade of accessible parking bays
- Accessible kiss n ride
- Unisex accessible toilet

The final scope for each station will be determined following the completion of the options study to be undertaken for each station and consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

Moving forward, this analysis and determination of accessibility upgrades will be critical for Queensland Rail with limited funding. Through consultation with customers with disabilities, Queensland Rail will define how to best improve accessibility at each of the stations. For some stations, this determination may mean initially upgrading a station to be "independently accessible". This approach will ensure that Queensland Rail's limited budget can be utilised in a way that provides the greatest access benefits to the greatest amount of our customers.



Future upgrade programs

Following the delivery of the first Station Upgrade Program, future station upgrade programs will be reviewed on a yearly basis to ensure that Queensland Rail is addressing locations with the greatest accessibility need, utilising the available funding effectively and meeting the needs of customers with disabilities.

Revised Station Design Guide

Queensland Rail has recently undertaken a detailed review of our Station Design Guide. The Guide aims to ensure a consistent approach to the design and construction of stations in order to optimise the urban context, sense of place and life cycle costs while creating stations that are welcoming, identifiable, aesthetically pleasing, accessible, safe, functional, efficient, sustainable, cost effective, value for money and require minimal maintenance. A key part of the review was to cross reference with relevant legislation, in particular the Premises Standard, and changes to Australian Standards and the Building Code of Australia.

The latest guide states that:

- Accessible station design caters for the requirements of our diverse customer base by adherence to the broader principles of universal design, removing barriers to access and focusing on access outcomes.
- Focus should not be limited to making isolated pieces of station infrastructure compliant with the standards. If a station environment does not provide a continuously accessible path from start to finish, then a journey cannot be completed.
- Queensland Rail encourages a holistic approach to accessible station design which results in optimal outcomes.

Current projects

Current integrated accessibility projects include:

Moreton Bay Rail Link

The Queensland Government, through the Department of Transport and Main Roads, is responsible for the delivery of the Moreton Bay Rail Link.

The project will deliver a new heavy rail passenger line between Petrie and Kippa-Ring, including 6 new stations at:

- Kallangur
- Murrumba Downs
- Mango Hill
- Mango Hill East
- Rothwell
- Kippa-Ring.

Designs for the 6 new stations included feedback received during community consultation in late 2010 to early 2011. The station design team looked at how each station would integrate with its local community.

Importantly, the stations will be designed and constructed to be a part of their community, not to stand out from it. The station designers have worked closely with Queensland Rail, Transport and Main Roads, TransLink, Moreton Bay Regional Council and the former Growth Management Queensland. The design process is considering how the rail line can act as a catalyst for growth along its alignment, with stations being the hub of new development in the medium to long term.

Trains

New Generation Rolling Stock

The New Generation Rolling Stock (NGR) project represents the largest ever single investment by the Queensland Government in trains. The project will result in a significant increase in the Queensland Rail fleet in order to meet the growing demand for rail services in South East Queensland.

The project involves purchasing 75 new six-car trains. A number of the new electric passenger trains will replace aging rolling stock, while the remainder will provide additional passenger services to accommodate forecasted growth on the City network.

The project will also include the maintenance of the trains for an extended period at a purpose-built maintenance centre at Wulkuraka.

The Department of Transport and Main Roads is delivering the project in partnership with Projects Queensland. Queensland Rail is providing technical input as well as ensuring the new trains will integrate with the existing network. A contract is expected to be awarded around late 2013 with delivery of the new trains commencing approximately two years after the contract is awarded.

Queensland Rail is working with stakeholders to ensure innovative design concepts that include improved accessibility, safety, technology, efficiency, functionality, sustainability and whole-of-life reliability. Access provisions on board NGR trains will include:

- Wheelchair allocated spaces
- Priority seating
- Braille and tactile signage
- Colour contrasting grabrails and handrails
- Unisex accessible toilets
- Visual information screens, and
- Automated audible information.

As per the existing fleet, access provisions for the NGR are underpinned by the requirements specified in the Disability Standards. However, as many requirements are not prescriptive, Queensland Rail has established and will continue to develop access provisions which take into account customer feedback, stakeholder consultation, functional requirements and local community requirements. As part of the NGR project, Queensland Rail has already consulted with its disability sector contacts on a range of access provisions.

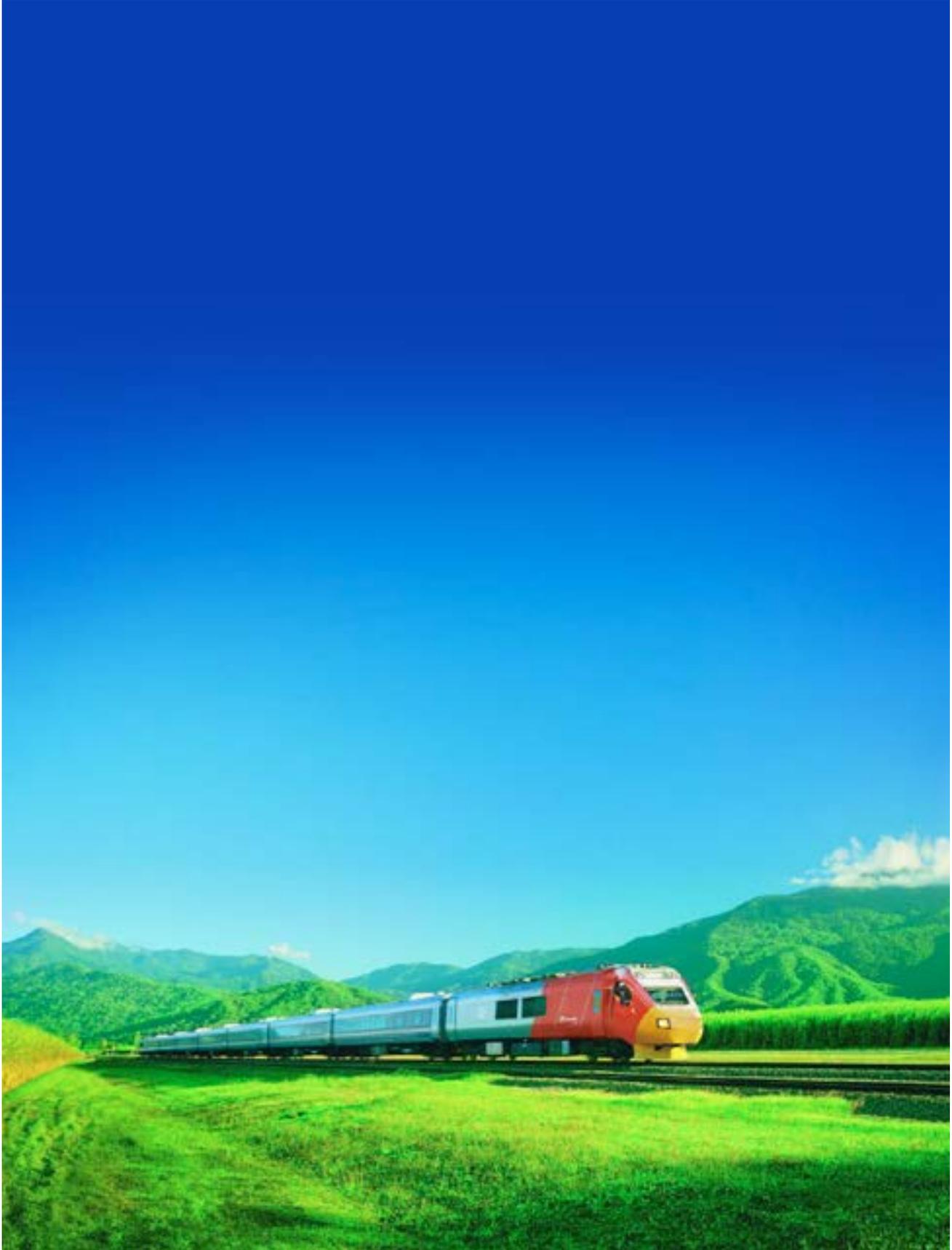
Consultation to date has covered a number of topics including:

- Optimal location for allocated spaces
- Locating a number of allocated spaces together
- Social inclusion (ensuring friends and carers etc. can sit close to an allocated space)
- Use of optional tie down straps
- Optimal colour contrasts, and
- Clarity of audible information.

These consultations assist Queensland Rail in translating legislative requirements into accessible fixtures and fittings that provide functionality based on community input.

Spirit of Queensland

The Spirit of Queensland Project entails the purchase another Tilt Train and refurbish the existing Cairns Tilt Train fleet to provide enhanced accessibility and an exceptional experience for our customers. The existing Sunlander and Tilt Train services represent the majority of Travel network bookings and form an important part of Queensland's tourism industry. Services operate along the Queensland coast and link tourist attractions such as the Great Barrier Reef and the Whitsunday Islands.



The first Spirit of Queensland train is now in service and all three trains will be completed by late-2014 when the current models will be retired. The new Spirit of Queensland service will:

- run 6 times a week, return, from Brisbane to Cairns
- be comprised of nine cars;
- provide two rail bed sleeper cars (one accessible)
- provide three Premium Economy sitter cars (one accessible), and
- transport up to 172 passengers a trip.

Both Railbed sleepers and Premium Economy seating will have personal in-seat electronic entertainment systems.

Accessibility enhancements will include:

- Colour contrasted handrails and grab rails
- Unisex accessible toilets
- Braille and raised text signage
- Wheelchair allocated spaces
- Priority seating
- Visual and audible information
- Hearing loop
- Accessible Railbeds



Queensland Rail has consulted with representatives from disability sector organisations and customers with disabilities through the design and construction stages of the Spirit of Queensland.

The Spirit of the Outback, the Westlander and the Inlander will continue to offer a traditional service for the Outback.

Business practices and governance

One of the most critical aspects of any Action Plan is that it delivers real accessibility improvements and helps eliminate discrimination on public transport services. Since Queensland Rail's previous Action Plan, Queensland Rail has undergone significant change. In 2010, Queensland Rail underwent the largest corporate demerger in Australian history and several business restructures. The most recent of these changes saw Queensland Rail transferred from a Government Owned Corporation to a Statutory Authority.

With continuing organisational reform, Queensland Rail will use these changes as an opportunity to better deliver on our commitment of an accessible and inclusive rail service. Queensland Rail will realign internal business practices and institute appropriate governance processes to more effectively and efficiently deliver an accessible rail service. Some of the internal changes Queensland Rail will implement include:

- **Business ownership** – Providing an accessible rail passenger service and fulfilling obligations under the DDA is a complex matter that requires many fields of expertise. Delivering accessibility transcends any single functional area of Queensland Rail's business. This complexity can often result in multiple interpretations of how to best deliver access outcomes and can prolong decision making. To address this issue, Queensland Rail will appoint an Executive Sponsor. This appointment will lead to more efficient decision making within Queensland Rail and as such, greater progress to improving accessibility on Queensland Rail services.
- **Policy and governance development** – To support our approach to accessibility, Queensland Rail will continue to develop the appropriate policies and governance mechanisms. Through a comprehensive policy framework, we can ensure organisational alignment and as a result, a more effective and consistent delivery of the desired accessibility outcomes for our customers with disabilities. Appropriate governance will also act as a checking mechanism to prevent any operational changes that adversely affect customers with disabilities.
- **Operational alignment** – From an operational perspective, it is of foremost importance that Queensland Rail's people involved with day to day operations are aware and empowered to deliver upon accessibility requirements. Building upon Queensland Rail's customer service journey, this empowerment will be provided through the appropriate recruitment, education and training. Whether it is utilising the appropriate train configuration to provide a continuous accessible path from the door to an allocated space or educating its customer service people on appropriate communication methods and delivering great service to all Queensland Rail customers, Queensland Rail will work hard to ensure that our daily operations enhance access across the network.

Transport industry partnerships

Within South East Queensland, buses, ferries and trains form an interconnected public transport network. As such, depending on a person's location, people will use multiple modes of transport to arrive at their destination. Previously, accessibility upgrades between different modes of transports had been planned separately. This disjointed approach to the public transport network as a whole has resulted in customers with disabilities being unable to reach their destination via public transport.

Queensland Rail will seek to improve accessibility through greater interconnectivity of its services and by integrating them with other modes of public transport so that our customers can enjoy a seamless travel experience. In addition, we will continue to liaise with the State Government and relevant agencies about access improvements so that our approach is efficient, consistent and coordinated.

Moving forward, Queensland Rail will work closely with its transport partners to ensure access upgrade plans across the various transport networks are coordinated. Greater coordination and collaboration between public transport operators in South East Queensland will ensure improved continuity in access throughout a person's journey regardless of the mode of transport.

To achieve integrated access across South East Queensland's public transport network, the Department of Transport and Main Roads will seek to establish a multimodal community reference group. Queensland Rail will support the establishment of this group and participate in the ongoing process.



Conclusion

Monitoring and review

Queensland Rail will publish the Accessibility Action Plan on our website as well as registering the document with the Australian Human Rights Commission.

Queensland Rail will monitor and report on implementation of the Accessibility Action Plan through:

- an annual review of the plan. A core component of this review will be the monitoring of projects and initiatives identified in the Accessibility Action Plan.
- The Accessibility Team will coordinate community engagement activities, reporting and customer information on accessibility across the organisation.
- We will continue to consult with the Accessibility Reference Group to provide feedback on implementation of this plan.
- The Accessibility Reference Group will also provide opportunities for dialogue with key external stakeholders including, advocates and groups with insight into particular needs and issues.
- Actions, new initiatives and extensions identified in this plan will be implemented and monitored by the relevant program areas within Queensland Rail through the usual work planning, budget allocation and reporting processes.

These methods provide monitoring, transparent reporting and ongoing commitment to working with customers with disabilities. Queensland Rail will continue to emphasize effective and inclusive consultation as part of its everyday practice.

We understand that building an accessible rail network benefits everyone and contributes to an inclusive community with social and economic advantages.



**For more information
visit queenslandrail.com.au**