![NSW Government logo]

Transport for NSW

Accessibility Audit Findings Report

Contents

Overview

Transport for NSW is committed to reducing barriers that people with disability face when accessing public transport services.

Public transport is an essential service that connects customers and communities to education, employment, recreation and many other aspects of society. More accessible public transport benefits everyone, particularly people with disability, the elderly and people travelling with young children.

In 2020, Transport completed an accessibility compliance audit of its train stations and ferry wharves. The Audit Office of NSW recommended that Transport audits and publicly reports on its progress in achieving accessibility outcomes for customers.

The accessibility audit has provided a baseline to help guide future infrastructure planning decisions and improve customer journey planning.

Based on the findings of the accessibility audit, Transport has revised the wheelchair accessibility classifications used on the transport network. The revised classifications provide greater information on the wheelchair accessibility classifications available at stations and wharves to assist customers in planning their journey. The new classifications are outlined in Table 1 below and will be reflected on the transportnsw.info website.

Table 1: Wheelchair accessibility classifications

	Independent Access	Customers can independently access all platforms/wharves and travel between platforms/wharves via accessible paths, ramps or lifts without using stairs.
	Assisted Access	Customers may require assistance from a carer or companion to access all platforms/wharves or travel between platforms/wharves as they may have steep ramps or a rail level crossing.
	Not Accessible	Customers are required to use stairs to access platforms/wharves or between platforms/wharves.

The accessibility audit found that 77 per cent of audited train stations provided either Independent Access or Assisted Access, while 65 per cent of ferry wharves provided Independent Access.

Transport is continuing to invest in upgrades and new infrastructure that will achieve greater compliance and improve accessibility for all customers.

This report outlines key findings of Transport's accessibility audit. The report also explains how Transport is improving its assessment and reporting on accessibility to public transport services.

Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport

In 2002, the Australian Government issued the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport (DSAPT)* to assist public transport operators, and providers, meet their obligations under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992.* The *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* seeks to eliminate discrimination, as far as possible, against people with disability.

Transport has an obligation to provide accessible public transport services to people with disabilities in a manner which is not discriminatory.

Under DSAPT, there is a requirement to modify existing transport infrastructure, and develop new infrastructure, to provide access for people with disabilities.

According to the DSAPT compliance schedule, all public transport services and infrastructure should be fully accessible by December 2022, except for trains, which are required to be compliant by 2032.

Why was an accessibility audit needed?

The Transport Access Program (TAP) is Transport's largest program that focuses on improving access to public transport for people with disability.

In 2019, the Audit Office of NSW reported on whether Transport had an effective process to assess and select projects as part of TAP. The Audit Office's performance audit focused on the third tranche of TAP (TAP 3) and considered how Transport performed against its obligations to provide accessible services to people with disabilities.

The conclusions from the performance audit were:

"Transport for NSW's process for selecting and prioritising projects for TAP 3 balanced DSAPT compliance goals with broader customer outcomes. It also considered demographics, deliverability and value for money. However, Transport for NSW does not know the complete scope of work required for full DSAPT compliance, and this limits its ability to demonstrate that its approach is effective." **NSW Auditor-General's Report to Parliament - Transport Access Program (2019)**

The performance audit report outlined five recommendations for Transport to implement. Table 2 below shows the status of the recommendations. This report addresses the final two recommendations.

Table 2: Audit report recommendations and status

Recommendation	Status
Within one month of finalising the TAP 3 project list, Transport for NSW should publish a schedule of stations and wharves that it plans to upgrade as part of TAP 3 with an estimated time of construction for each location.	**Completed.** Since March 2019, TAP 3 website includes: • indicative annual project completion dates • project information and status • artist impressions. Information about each project is regularly updated.
By March 2019, Transport for NSW should ensure decisions on how and why projects are prioritised for funding are recorded and maintained, in compliance with the *State Records Act 1998*.	**Completed.** In March 2019, Transport published: • TAP 3 prioritisation process • a complete list of TAP 3 projects. Any changes or new scope in TAP has been recorded through the approved TAP governance process.
By June 2019, Transport for NSW should develop a plan for a comprehensive audit of *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* compliance across all public transport networks.	**Completed.** The accessibility audit plan was approved through the TAP governance process in June 2019.

Recommendation	Status
By June 2020, Transport for NSW should complete a comprehensive audit of *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* compliance across all public transport networks and publicly report this information.	**Completed.** The accessibility audit was completed in 2020. This report outlines the key findings and provides a basis for Transport to better understand its level of DSAPT compliance and develop a long term strategy for accessibility beyond TAP 3.
By June 2020, Transport for NSW should improve how it measures, and publicly reports on, accessibility outcomes for people with disability.	**Completed.** This report explains Transport's progress in improving its assessment and reporting on accessibility outcomes.

While the accessibility audit highlighted that TAP 3 played a pivotal role in achieving DSAPT compliance, it was acknowledged that Transport may not achieve the 2022 scheduled compliance target.

Meeting the prescriptive compliance requirements under DSAPT is complex. This is due to the technical and financial constraints involved in trying to upgrade ageing infrastructure within required timeframes while maintaining operational capacity.

How was the accessibility audit performed?

Transport engaged an independent specialist to complete the accessibility audit in 2020. This included 373 train stations and 48 ferry wharves across NSW. The accessibility audit included desktop analysis for locations that were planned for or were undergoing significant upgrades at the time of the audit and site inspections for the remainder of locations.

The accessibility audit was designed to measure DSAPT compliance of station and wharf infrastructure and linking transport services within a 100-metre radius.

The accessibility audit considered two main barriers that people with disability may face when using public transport services:
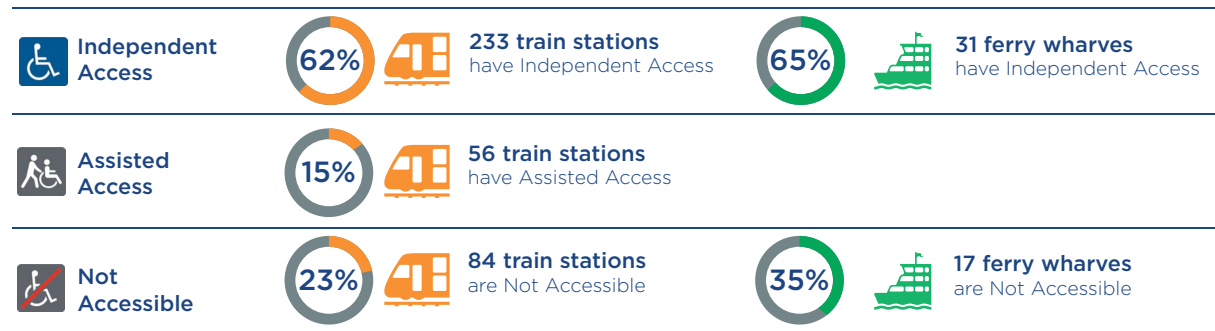
- a person's mobility,
- communication items, including lack of access to information about services, location, navigation and other public transport information.

Findings

The accessibility audit assessed several individual features and locations within each train station and ferry wharf. A summary of key findings from the assessment categories are outlined in this section.
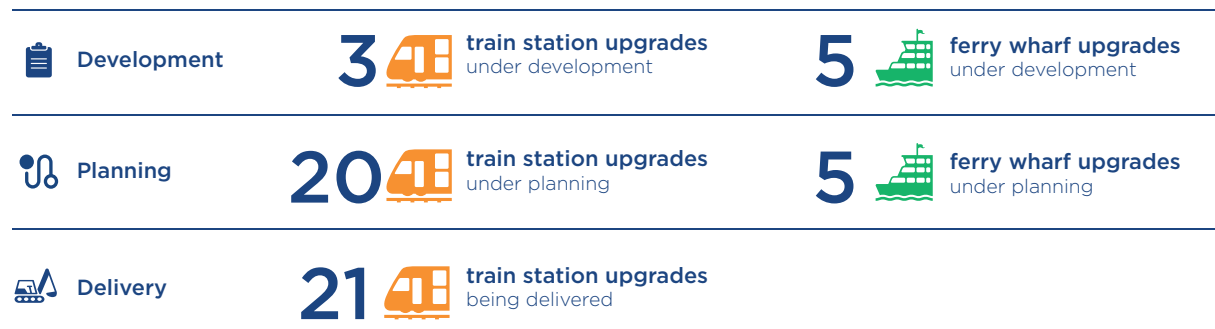
Wheelchair accessibility

The accessibility audit found that almost 77 per cent of the audited train stations have either Independent Access or Assisted Access, while 65 per cent of ferry wharves have Independent Access.

Independent Access	**62%**	**233 train stations** have Independent Access	**65%** **31 ferry wharves** have Independent Access
Assisted Access	**15%**	**56 train stations** have Assisted Access	
Not Accessible	**23%**	**84 train stations** are Not Accessible	**35%** **17 ferry wharves** are Not Accessible

Transport is currently planning to upgrade 44 train stations and 10 ferry wharves that are classified as Assisted Access or Not Accessible.

The figure below outlines the status of the upgrades:

|			
Development	**3**	train station upgrades under development	**5** ferry wharf upgrades under development
Planning	**20**	train station upgrades under planning	**5** ferry wharf upgrades under planning
Delivery	**21**	train station upgrades being delivered	

Communication items

Communication accessibility is as important as physical accessibility. It is a key part of journey experience and planning.

Communication items are features that benefit people who may encounter barriers in navigating the public transport system. This includes people who are blind or have low vision, people who are deaf or are hard of hearing, or people with limited English.

The accessibility audit revealed that almost all train stations have **public address system announcements** however this was applicable to only 73 per cent of ferry wharves.
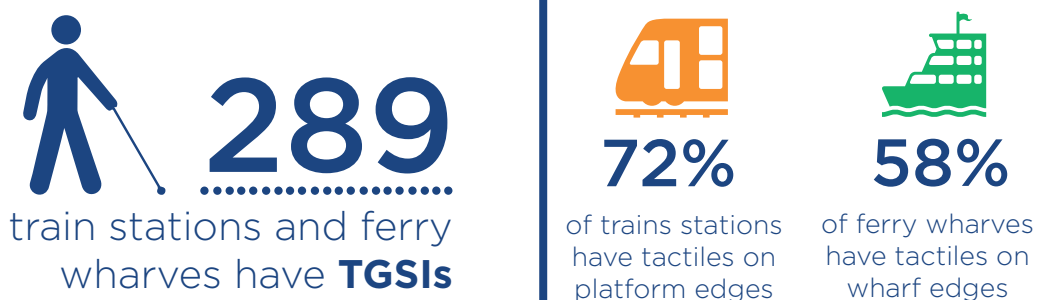
99% Of 373 train stations, 372 have have public address system announcements

73% Of 43 ferry wharves, 36 have public address system announcements
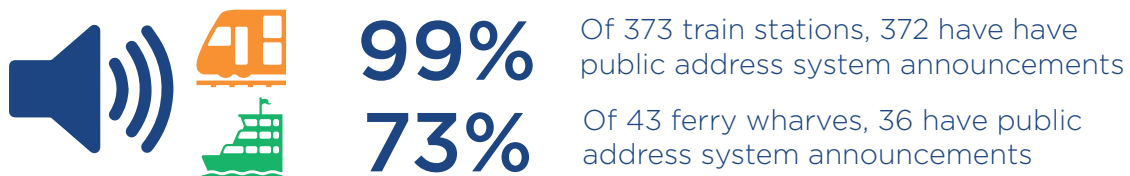
Approximatley 40 per cent of train stations and 63 per cent of ferry wharves have **hearing loops** available at train platforms or ferry wharves.

47 % Of 373 train stations, 176 have hearing loops

63 % Of 48 ferry wharves, 30 have hearing loops

Almost 60 per cent of train stations and 75 per cent of ferry wharves have **departure indicator screens**.

Tactile ground surface indicators (TGSIs) are present at 72 per cent of train platform edges and 59 per cent of ferry wharf edges.

289 train stations and ferry wharves have **TGSIs**

72% of trains stations have tactiles on platform edges

**58%** of ferry wharves have tactiles on wharf edges

Mobility items

Mobility items include features that benefit people who use wheelchairs, mobility scooters, walking aids or people with prams who are unable to use stairs.

The accessibility audit found that **step-free access from the street to a ferry wharf or a station platform** is possible for customers at 79 per cent of train stations and 65 per cent of ferry wharves.

Step-free access from street to all boarding points

79%
of train stations have step-free access from street to all boarding points

65%
of ferry wharves have step-free access from street to all boarding points

Step-free access between train platforms and all boarding points is present at 80 per cent of train stations, while step-free access between wharves and all boarding points is present at every wharf.

Step-free access between wharves/ platforms and all boarding points

80%
of train stations have step-free access between platforms and all boarding points

100%
of ferry wharves have step-free access between wharves and all boarding points
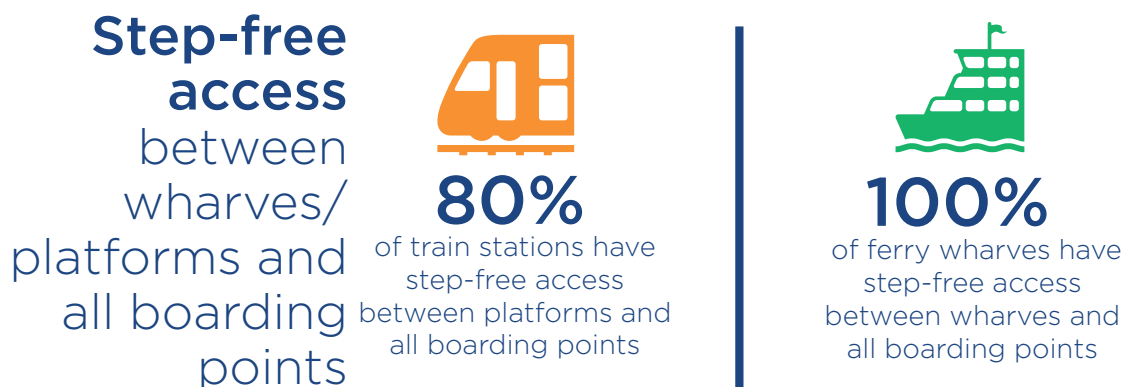
Boarding assistance zones are critical for accessibility across the Sydney Trains, Intercity and Regional rail networks. Currently there is a gap between the train platforms and the train. This means that a boarding ramp may be required for a customer to board and alight the train. To improve safety within these zones, sufficient space and a flat surface are needed to deploy a boarding ramp in order for customers with mobility devices to safely use the ramp.

There are 373 train stations and 839 train platforms across the NSW rail networks. The accessibility audit found that 53 per cent of train platforms had a compliant boarding assistance zone.

The newly built Sydney Metro provides level access between all platforms and trains. This means there is no 'step' into a carriage or requirement for a boarding ramp.

Other features

Other important features such as ramps, stairs, lifts and accessible toilets were assessed for compliance with DSAPT requirements. The results of the accessibility audit findings for these features are explained below.

The assessment of the **accessibility of toilets** is complex as there are over 70 individual assessments for one toilet. There are few fully compliant toilets however almost 90 per cent of accessible toilets are compliant in terms of the cubicle size.

An **accessible toilet is available** at 69 per cent of train stations and ferry wharves where other toilets are present.
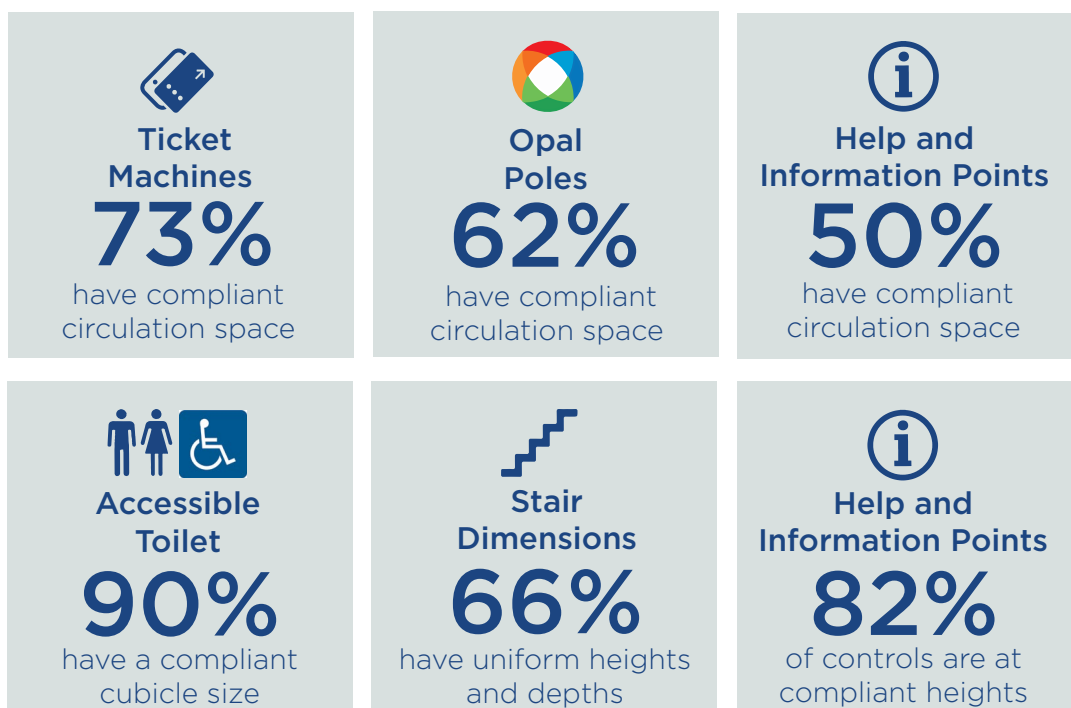
Over 500 **ramps** were assessed. The main non-compliance issues are related to the gradients, and the lack of handrails and tactile ground surface indicators at landings.

Over 1,080 sets of **stairs** were assessed. Of these, 66 per cent have uniform stair heights and depths. Over 94 per cent of stairs have a handrail on at least one side.

From the 477 **lifts** assessed, almost all meet the dimensional requirements. Since the introduction of DSAPT, lift standards have changed. Non-compliant lifts identified in the accessibility audit would have complied with industry standards at the time they were built. All but five lifts have a compliant door width of 900mm. Only eight per cent of lifts have issues with handrails.

Of the audited **Help and Information Points**, 50 per cent meet the requirements for circulation space and provided even-floor surfaces. Most non-compliances are related to floor surfaces, while circulation areas to manoeuvre around Help and Information Points are generally compliant. Of the controls for customers at Help and Information Points, 82 per cent are at a compliant height.

The accessibility audit found that 73 per cent of **ticket machines** and 62 per cent of **Opal poles** meet the requirements for circulation space and provided even-floor surfaces. A common problem at ticket machines and Opal poles are non-compliant floor surfaces, whereas the circulation areas around those are generally compliant.

Ticket Machines	Opal Poles	Help and Information Points
73%	**62%**	**50%**
have compliant circulation space	have compliant circulation space	have compliant circulation space

Accessible Toilet	Stair Dimensions	Help and Information Points
90%	**66%**	**82%**
have a compliant cubicle size	have uniform heights and depths	of controls are at compliant heights

Plan to improve accessibility

While the accessibility audit has highlighted areas of good performance, there are several areas where improvement is needed. The accessibility audit has provided valuable information for identifying areas of greatest need.

Transport is committed to accessible and inclusive public transport services through the ongoing investment in train station and ferry wharf upgrades, new accessible trains, buses and ferries and accessible transport information systems. These upgrades and new infrastructure will be progressively delivered.

Improving assessment and reporting on accessibility outcomes

Transport has developed a new set of wheelchair accessibility classifications that provides customers with simpler and more accurate information about accessibility. It will enable them to plan their journeys and use public transport services more easily.

The previous classification provided limited accessibility information to customers. The new classifications are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3: Wheelchair accessibility classifications

	Independent Access	Customers can independently access all platforms/wharves and travel between platforms/wharves via accessible paths, ramps or lifts without using stairs.
	Assisted Access	Customers may require assistance from a carer or companion to access all platforms/wharves or travel between platforms/wharves as it may have steep ramps or a rail level crossing.
	Not Accessible	Customers are required to use stairs to access platforms/wharves or between platforms/wharves.

The new classifications were developed through internal Transport workshops and a review of other rail networks in Australia. Transport also consulted with its Accessible Transport Advisory Committee to ensure the new classifications were appropriate.

Updates will be made to the transportnsw.info website to help customers quickly identify each station's accessibility classification. Information about facilities and accessibility features on the website will also be updated to align with the accessibility classifications and the findings of the accessibility audit.

Continuing to engage with the disability and ageing sectors

Transport will continue to engage with its Accessible Transport Advisory Committee, which includes over 20 representatives from peak disability and ageing groups in NSW. The committee advises and provides feedback to Transport on a range of projects and programs being delivered. The Committee recently provided feedback on the new wheelchair accessibility classifications and pictograms for the transportnsw.info website.

Implementing the Disability Inclusion Action Plan

Transport's *Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2018-2022* outlines the commitments to reducing and eliminating barriers that people with disability face when accessing public transport services. The Plan includes initiatives, including the TAP and Rolling Stock Delivery Program, and over 160 actions to work towards meeting DSAPT compliance.

Delivering significant infrastructure improvements

Transport is already investing in upgrades and new infrastructure that will improve DSAPT compliance. The recently completed accessibility audit will be used to further inform future programs of works.

Transport is delivering significant transport infrastructure to meet the future needs of NSW. Since 2011, more than $2 billion has been invested in TAP to improve access to public transport and increases compliance with the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* and accompanying disability standards. Projects within TAP include accessibility upgrades such as lifts and ramps, improved interchanges and increased commuter car parking spaces.

Information on TAP 3, current projects and the prioritisation process for selecting locations can be found on the TAP 3 project webpage. The information may assist customers to make informed decisions about where they choose to live, work or study.

Other major investments and improvements that will help improve public transport accessibility include:

- the next generation of intercity trains that will provide a new level of comfort and convenience for customers who travel between Sydney and the Central Coast and Newcastle, the Blue Mountains, and the South Coast

- the replacement of the ageing regional train fleet as part of the Regional Rail Project

- all new buses acquired by the State Transit Authority now feature a 'kneeling' suspension for level entry, and a flat no-step floor

- the progressive upgrade of the Sydney ferry fleet

- delivery of the Parramatta Light Rail which will connect Westmead to Carlingford via the Parramatta CBD and Camellia.

- extension of the Sydney Metro network (City & Southwest, West and Western Sydney Airport). In 2024, Sydney will have 31 metro stations and by 2030, the network will be expanded to include 46 stations.