

# Sydney Metro access report

To the Minister for Transport and Transport for NSW

November 2019



Council for Intellectual Disability Advocacy Group heading to Chatswood to catch the Metro

## Top 3 issues

While the Sydney Metro has positive aspects, we think there are big problems with safety. This is because of the speed of the train, the doors and when staff will be reduced.

### **1. The staff help make it safe**

Transport for NSW (TfNSW) has told us that in November only every second train will have staff on the trains. The staff are really helpful and friendly and make us feel safe. If we get separated from our carers or family we can go to the staff for help. If they are not there, it will be a big problem. It will also make us feel very unsafe at night time.

### **2. The doors are unsafe**

The doors close too quickly. We know parents have been separated from their kids because the doors close too quickly. We now have to worry about the doors closing too quickly. This makes it very hard when there are lots of people.

### **3. The train takes off and stops too quickly**

The train stops and takes off really fast. This made us almost fall over many times. This makes it very unsafe for many people. We want the trains to be smoother when taking off and stopping.

See our full list of recommendations on other ways to make the Sydney Metro safer at the end of this report.

## **Purpose of this report**

Transport is very important to us. It is our ticket to accessing the community. We want to be part of the community and to help TfNSW and the Minister make transport accessible, safe and easy for everyone.

We wanted to test if the Sydney Metro is accessible because it is a new system, so the Council for Intellectual Disability (CID) Advocacy Group went on a research journey on the new Metro on 29 July 2019.

This report has direct quotes from us which are in purple.

We hope you enjoy reading this report and listen to us about ways to make things better. There were lots of positive things about the Metro but also areas to improve.

## **How we did the research and who we are**

There were a total of 12 researchers, including 10 of us with intellectual disability from the CID Advocacy Group. We had the help of two CID staff members.

We come from different backgrounds. We are all different ages, cultural backgrounds and from different parts of NSW. Some of us live in the city and some of us live in regional areas.

The CID staff wrote questions and surveys for us to fill out on the day. We also had two debriefing meetings to talk more about the things we liked and what could be better on the Metro.

We put it all together in this report.

## What you need to know about our travelling needs

We like to have chances to be as independent as possible. Many of us do not need support to be with us all the time. We don't always have people travelling with us. Public services that are for everyone can help make things easier for us to get around. This is important because travelling can be challenging.

These things are important for us:

- Finding our way around for the first time and learning for next time
- Keeping track of where we are and getting off at the right stop
- Changes in routines and unexpected situations are difficult
- Feeling safe (because of how our disability affects us, and how people treat us).



“You can get confused. You start to worry, even panic, about things like missing a stop. If this happens a lot, this leads to people not wanting to use the train”.

## 1. Staff

The staff are really helpful and gave information in a clear way. They were easy to find and friendly. We all gave staff 5 out of 5 stars.



“They helped my mate on and off the trains. They were helpful. They engaged in talk. They were there”.



### **Staff are friendly and available**

For people with intellectual disability, having staff available to talk to and assist is very important.

The staff we encountered on our journey were extremely helpful and friendly. The level of customer service was much higher than on other modes of transport. This increased a sense of safety and reduced anxiety.

“The staff on the train and at the stations were very helpful and friendly. There were also more staff at vital points. The staff offered a lot of help, not like staff on other stations, you have to ask and they are often very busy. The staff at Chatswood were also more helpful than at other stations”.



We are very worried that staff will be reduced after the first six months of operation. The removal of staff for night time trains is a big concern for us. Staff make us feel safe because we know we can ask them for help and we have someone to go to if we are bullied.

### **Recommendation 1**

Do not reduce staff numbers after the first six months. They are needed on trains, platforms and stations.



### **Information points**

We had mixed results talking to staff through the information points. At Tallawong station, the information point did not display video and took 4 minutes 7 seconds for someone to answer, whereas at Rouse Hill station the staff answered in 17 seconds and the video was working.



Advocacy Group testing the information points



## Recommendation 2

Reduce the time people wait to get information from info points and make video screens work at all stations.

## 2. Announcements on the platform and station

The announcements at Tallawong and Rouse Hill stations were easy to understand. The sound level and speed was good. We gave them 5 out of 5 stars.



“The announcements were good and clear”.



The CID Advocacy Group at Tallawong station

### 3. Announcements and sounds on the train

We found announcements on the train confusing and of different quality.

We gave announcements on the train 1 out of 5 stars.



When the train was arriving at a station, the train would announce “this train will end at Tallawong” which is very confusing. We thought we were at the end of the journey all the time. The announcement for what the next station would be was very soon after we left the last station. This needs to be fixed.

“It says the wrong thing, that station is at the end not what station we are at”.

#### **Recommendation 3**

Only announce that the train will end at Tallawong when the train is near Tallawong.



#### **Recommendation 4**

Announce the name of the next stop when the train is leaving the previous stop **and** when it is near the stop.



We liked that the train would announce what side to get out of the train along with the light indicators. This really helped, but not everyone knows what left of right is.



The beeping sound for when the doors were opening was extremely loud and ear piecing, but the beeping sound when the doors were closing was not loud enough. We thought this was strange. It was very uncomfortable.

#### **Recommendation 5**

Make the beeping sound when doors are opening and closing the same volume. The volume must not be uncomfortably loud or piercing in tone.

#### 4. Signs and indicators on the train

The signs on the train are good and easy to understand. We gave signage 5 out of 5. There are some things to change.



We gave 3 out of 5 stars for indicator boards. There are some areas to improve.





### **The passenger indicator display**

The passenger indicator display (PID) in the middle of the carriage was easy to see, but it would often cut off words halfway through displaying what the next station would be.

“[The] black indicator changes too quickly – you don’t know what the next stop is or current station”.

The pink background on the indicator board also made it harder to read.



The indicator boards are only on one side of the train and are hard to read.

### **Recommendation 6**

Slow down the indicator display in the middle of the carriage to allow time for reading.

### **Recommendation 7**

Please make all signage and indicators more accessible e.g. high contrast and big letters.

## Emergency signage



It was easy to find what to do in an emergency.  
Some of the signage and decals within the train need clarification. We think the following needs to be changed.



The fire extinguisher sign was confusing. It made it hard to find the fire extinguisher and know you have to look under the seat.



### Recommendation 8

The fire extinguisher sticker needs an arrow pointing down towards the fire extinguisher which is hidden underneath the seat.

## 5. Signs and finding your way around Tallawong station

We gave signs, and finding your way around Tallawong station 2 out of 5 stars. There are a lot of things that need to be fixed.



We found the signage and wayfinding at Tallawong was not very good. Overall, the information



was easy to understand, however, the size of the information was too small.



It was easy to work out which platform to get the correct train from.



The indicator boards on the platform were good, easy to read and see.



The maps inside and outside the stations were too small to read.

### **Recommendation 9**

Increase the size of the maps and information at the station. They are too small.



### **Toilets**

The signs to the toilets were clear but there was no auto door and it requires push and pull, making it harder for people with limited mobility. This will make it harder for people to access the toilet, and some people won't be able to use it.

### **Recommendation 10**

Put in a button to open the access toilets.



### **Opal card readers**

The thick plastic covers over the Opal machines at Tallawong made it hard for it to read your Opal card. This was very bad at the easy access gate. We had to try many times and it was very difficult for one of us who uses a wheelchair.



### **Recommendation 11**

Improve Opal card reader technology to be consistent with the network, so that tap on and off is easy for everyone.





### **Getting from the station to the buses**

Despite the bus stands being close by, it was not easy for us to recognise them. It was difficult to know where to go or how to get to the buses. The signage for the buses was not clear at all. There were not many signs outside the station and they were confusing.

### **Recommendation 12**

Better signage inside the station to direct people to buses outside the station. Signage indicating modes of transport consistent with the entire network.

## 6. On the train

We liked the train. We gave it 4 out of 5 stars. There are some areas that need improvement.



### **The seats**

The seats were very comfortable.



### **Space to move**

“There is more room on the train and less pushing to get around”.



There was a lot more room to move around, but people’s legs stick out and it is easy to trip over their bags on the floor.



## Getting on and off the train

We really liked being able to get onto the train without assistance. This is a positive step towards access for us.

“I didn’t need to worry about stepping up onto the train or stepping down. I didn’t need to worry to get help from staff or worry staff at the other end would forget me. I no longer have to worry about falling between the gap. I felt safe getting on and off the train”.





### **Moving between carriages**

We liked that you could see the whole length of the train and could move between carriages without a door or have to go up and down stairs.



### **Waiting times**

We liked that the trains were very frequent.



### **Stopping and starting**

“The train jolts suddenly when taking off and stopping. Sometimes we felt that we were going to fall over. It was like a strong gravity pulling you”.

This can be an issue for many people with intellectual disability. We often have issues with low vision and balance. Trains that take off or stop too suddenly are not good for us.

### **Recommendation 13**

Make the train move more smoothly so we don't fall over.



### **Air conditioning**

The air conditioning was inconsistent. It was strong in some carriages and not in others and cannot be felt when sitting down. It often felt windy and very cold inside the train when standing up.

### **Recommendation 14**

Make the air conditioning the same throughout the train.



### **Poles and handles**

The poles and handles were good, but a few of us hit our heads on them.



### **Cleanliness**

The trains were very clean.



### **Train doors**

The train doors were good but closed too quickly.

### **Recommendation 15**

Make the train doors stay open longer.

## 7. In and around the stations

It was hard to get around the stations. We went to Tallawong and Rouse Hill stations. We gave them 2 out of 5 stars.



### Finding your way

We think signage and finding our way around outside the station was not very good.



It was clear how to get in and out of the station.



At Tallawong station, it was really hard to work out how to get to the buses. Finding your way was very bad.



The stations need pictures, signs and arrows showing how to get to the shopping centre (Rouse Hill) and how to get from the shopping centre to the station and buses. It just looked like an office building to us.



### **Recommendation 16**

Put in signs and arrows outside the stations to make it easy to know it is a station. Also make the Night Rider signs easier to find.



It was hard to find the emergency help button at the stations.

### **Recommendation 17**

Make emergency help points easier to find with signs.



## Summary

We enjoyed testing the new Sydney Metro. We liked it but are very worried about safety. Although we don't have to worry about the gap between the platform and the train anymore, we now have to worry about the doors closing on us. We really hoped we didn't have to worry about getting on the train anymore.

The train jolting and moving very fast when taking off and stopping was also a big safety problem for us. We nearly fell over many times.

We loved the staff. They make a big difference. For people with intellectual disability, having staff available to talk to and assist is very important. Please don't remove the staff.

We hope you take our safety concerns seriously and do our recommendations.

## **Recommendations list**

### **Recommendation 1**

Do not reduce staff numbers after the first six months. They are needed on trains, platforms and stations.

### **Recommendation 2**

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**Recommendation 17**

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