



# Council for Intellectual Disability

## **POSITION STATEMENT ON TRANSPORT**

### **March 2020**

#### **Our goal**

People with intellectual disability should have public transport that is safe and easy to use.

#### **Where things stand**

“Transport is our ticket to the community. We want to be out in the community but many people can’t”.

“I’m worried I will be picked on again so I don’t go on the train anymore”.

Governments have done a lot of important work to increase the accessibility of transport for people with physical and sensory disabilities. But there has been very limited action on improving access for people with intellectual disability.

The current [Disability Standards for Accessible Transport 2002](#), and a [review by the Federal Government](#) in 2012 make no mention or recommendations specific to people with intellectual disability.

Transport for NSW’s [Disability Inclusion Action Plan](#) only has one action item specific to people with intellectual disability – about electronic orientation aids at stations.

People with intellectual disability have told us:

- Bus drivers and other transport staff should receive appropriate disability awareness training.
- The Opal ticketing system is confusing and difficult.
- Everyone is expected to use smartphone apps for trip planning, but this excludes many people.

- They are constantly told to get someone to help them to read information or use an app, when the information should be accessible.
- Information at major stations and interchanges is hard to understand.
- There is often no one to ask when you need help at a train station.
- There is poor communication when services are disrupted.
- The eligibility criteria for the Taxi Transport Subsidy Scheme are hard to understand.
- Taxi drivers sometimes increase the cost of fares on short trips.
- It takes too long to get a taxi that is accessible for people who use a wheelchair.
- People with intellectual disability often experience staring, verbal abuse, bullying and harassment on public transport.
- Transport staff are seldom present to help with bullying.
- Transit officers often do not understand how to interact with people with intellectual disability.
- There is not enough transport funding in NDIS plans.
- The NDIS does not cover the costs of community transport, which is often the only option for transport in regional areas.

## Case studies

**MYRA** (not her real name) regularly took the bus to attend recreational outings but was verbally abused and called names by another passenger. Myra asked the bus driver for help but he did not address the behaviour of the other passenger. Myra was upset by the experience and no longer feels safe catching a bus. She has been unable to travel outside of her regional town and has become more isolated from her friends.

**PETER** (not his real name) was on the train to the city from a regional area. There was a signal failure at Redfern station and the train was stuck for over 40 minutes. Peter became confused and anxious as the announcements by the guard were inaudible. Peter became overwhelmed and got off the train but could not find someone to help him.

## **What's the solution?**

- Signs and information should be made more accessible and include more appropriate pictograms.
- Disability awareness training of transport staff should be improved and increased.
- Transport staff need to be trained to be patient, polite and compassionate, as their advice often has safety implications for people with intellectual disability.
- A community awareness campaign should be implemented to reduce bullying and harassment on public transport.
- The Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 should be amended to include specific provisions for people with intellectual disability. For example, by requiring information that is accessible for people with intellectual disability, and extra staff to discourage bullying on public transport.
- There must be staff available to help on transport infolines and at stations. The expectation that everyone can use technology to find information is not equitable as many people with intellectual disability can't use or don't have the internet.
- Better enforcement of taxi meter regulations and disability awareness training for taxi drivers.

## **What CID has done**

Our transport advocacy has included:

- Supporting a person with intellectual disability to be a member of the Accessible Transport Advisory Committee.
- Supporting people with intellectual disability to participate in transport consultations, for example on the new inter-city fleet, Sydney Metro, and station design.
- Making formal and informal submissions to Transport for NSW about how to increase its focus on people with intellectual disability in transport design and policy.
- Undertaking consultations to Transport for NSW.
- Leading community advocacy against restricting access to the Transport Infoline for trip planning.

## **What CID has achieved**

CID's advocacy has been central to:

- Improved understanding of the issues for people with intellectual disability by policy and management staff at Transport for NSW.
- Preventing the Transport Infoline being closed for trip planning for people with disability.