



Inclusive transport

We all need to be able to move around, attend events or appointments and participate in community life. People with intellectual disability want and need to do these things just like everyone else.

The NSW Government needs to provide public transport services that are safe and accessible to people with intellectual disability.

They also need to provide transport information in a way that works for people with intellectual disability. Our information sheet on [Inclusion in Communications](#) says the Government should make information accessible whenever it affects the day to day lives of people with intellectual disability. It also talks about making sure there are ways to get information if you don't have a smart device.

When it comes to transport, getting these things right is important so that people can get on with their everyday lives.

“Transport is our ticket to freedom and the community”

– CID Advocacy Group member.

What needs to happen

By 2025 the NSW Government should:

1. Make all information about public transport accessible for people with intellectual disability. See our information sheet on [Inclusion in Communications](#) for more information. This should include using pictograms for way finding signs, and a 12-hour time format.
2. Provide transport information in both digital and printed formats.
3. User-test new transport and infrastructure by consulting with people with intellectual disability. This should happen from concept through to usage.

4. Sell Opal tickets at all major transport hubs and stations, not just shops.
5. Make sure transport staff get training in disability awareness. The training should be consistent across different transport providers.

The NSW Government should support changes to the national Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport to include cognitive access.

Where things stand

People with intellectual disability experience major barriers to using public transport. The NSW Government has done a lot of important work to make transport more accessible for people with physical and sensory disabilities. But much less has been done to improve access for people with intellectual disability.

Transport information is often not provided in an accessible way, though it could be.

More and more, the government is turning to digital ways to share information. But this requires web access and smart devices, which many people with intellectual disability do not have. In many places, a smart phone or a credit card, or both, are needed just to buy or top up an Opal card.

Most transport websites meet the international Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1, but these standards do not say much about cognitive accessibility. WCAG is currently being reviewed and the new version should have better coverage of cognitive accessibility.

A lot of the time, accessibility testing of new transport infrastructure only happens after it has been built. It's an add-on, not planned from the start. The result is a system that is more complex than it needs to be. It's better to consult early, and integrate accessibility into initial designs.

The right to inclusion

People with disability have a right to be included in public transport.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) talks about transport and transport information. This means the NSW Government must make sure people with disability can access transport on an equal basis with others.¹

The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 also says that governments need to do what they can to stop discrimination against people due to their disability in the provision of services. This includes stopping

discrimination in transport services. Under this law, the Commonwealth Government sets the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport, which apply in each state, including NSW.

Drivers for change

The Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport are being reviewed right now. The proposed changes include only limited attention to improving cognitive access.² But CID made a [submission](#) which makes detailed recommendations for improving cognitive accessibility.

[Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031](#) lists some priorities for Australia's policy making. One of them is that "Transport systems are accessible for the whole community", since being able to use transport "underpins all aspects of life for all people". The Strategy clearly recognises that ensuring "people with disability are able to fully participate in social, recreational sporting, religious, and cultural life ... requires going beyond just physical accessibility" to include provision of accessible information about community services and facilities.

The NSW Government is a party to the Australian Disability Strategy. The [NSW Disability Inclusion Plan 2021 – 2025](#) also identifies improved transport as a focus area. This focus will include consultation, with opportunities for feedback and engagement with people with disability. The Plan also aims to increase the transport options for people with disability, including in regional and remote areas. The Government has said they will give more training for all Transport for NSW staff who work with customers.

Transport for NSW's [Future Transport Strategy](#) acknowledges that people with disability face barriers to accessing information about transport. That document says that one of their key priorities to achieve in 1 – 5 years will be "embedding the principle of inclusion in processes and policies". Another is to establish "a standard for accessibility and inclusion that considers the needs of all customers across the end to end customer journey".

Transport for NSW is also currently working to review their Disability Inclusion Action Plan. This is an important opportunity to make sure people with intellectual disability are included in the next plan.

¹ <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>

² Reforms of the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002—Stage 2 Consultation Regulation Impact Statement

