

Submission to Department for Infrastructure and Transport about South Australia’s Public Transport Strategy

27 June 2025

About the Submitter

JFA Purple Orange is an independent, social-profit organisation that undertakes systemic policy analysis and advocacy across a range of issues affecting people with disability and their families.

Our work is characterised by co-design and co-production, and includes hosting a number of user-led initiatives.

Much of our work involves connecting people with disability to good information and to each other. We also work extensively in multi-stakeholder consultation and collaboration, especially around policy and practice that helps ensure people with disability are welcomed as valued members of the mainstream community.

Our work is informed by a model called *Citizenhood*.

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Contents

[1. Summary and recommendations 4](#_Toc201841901)

[2. Introduction 6](#_Toc201841902)

[3. Draft Strategic Outcomes 7](#_Toc201841903)

[4. Keys for Increasing Transport Access and Inclusion 8](#_Toc201841904)

[4.1. Vehicles and Rolling Stock 8](#_Toc201841905)

[4.2. Infrastructure (stations, stops and interchanges) 9](#_Toc201841906)

[4.3. Service Frequency and Connectivity 10](#_Toc201841907)

[4.4. Communication and Information 11](#_Toc201841908)

[4.5. Personal Safety and Staff Assistance 12](#_Toc201841909)

[5. Access Taxis and Point-to-Point Transport 13](#_Toc201841910)

[6. Improved Language In Transport Strategies 17](#_Toc201841911)

[6.1. Further Language Improvement Possible 18](#_Toc201841912)

[7. Co-Design 19](#_Toc201841913)

[8. Conclusion 21](#_Toc201841914)

# Summary and recommendations

We recommend:

**Recommendation 1:** **The Public Transport Strategy should commit to a complete transition to a fully accessible fleet of buses, trains, and trams, including retrofitting older vehicles and prioritising low-floor and automated boarding technologies.**

**Recommendation 2: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to the auditing and upgrading of infrastructure at stations, stops, and interchanges to meet universal access standards. This includes installing ramps, tactile indicators, shelters, seating and pedestrian crossings, as well as ensuring step-free, smooth pathways.**

**Recommendation 3: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to the improvement of service frequency and connectivity, especially for cross-suburban travel and weekend schedules, and the reduction of overcrowding to make the system more reliable, accessible and inclusive.**

**Recommendation 4: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to increasing availability of accessible communication and information systems, such as real-time audio announcements on all vehicles, digital and non-digital formats, and signage with clear icons and easy-read formats.**

**Recommendation 5: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to further investment in passenger safety and support, including better lighting, CCTV, visible staff presence, and staff training to assist passengers with disability at key access points.**

**Recommendation 6: The Public Transport Strategy should explicitly include point-to-point transport (e.g. Access Taxis) as part of the broader public transport ecosystem, recognising their vital role for people with high support needs.**

**Recommendation 7: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to the transition of the taxi fleet to 100% accessible vehicles by a target date (e.g. 2033), and the adoption of a co-contribution model to reduce operator costs.**

**Recommendation 8: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to requiring the transparent use of the Point to Point Transport Service Transaction Levy and reinvesting funds directly into improving accessibility and service performance of Access Taxis.**

**Recommendation 9: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to mandating public reporting of Access Taxi performance, including metrics such as average wait times, unmet trip requests, fleet availability, and levy use.**

**Recommendation 10: The Public Transport Strategy should adopt universal design principles as a standard for all new infrastructure, vehicles, and digital systems to ensure inclusivity from the outset.**

**Recommendation 11: The Public Transport Strategy should use consistent, respectful, and empowering language that aligns with contemporary inclusive language guidelines, such as “people with disability”.**

**Recommendation 12: The Public Transport Strategy should embed co-design as a foundational method, committing to formal mechanisms for sustained engagement with people with disability, such as co-design advisory panels and partnerships with advocacy organisations.**

# Introduction

JFA Purple Orange welcomes the opportunity to provide input into the consultation on developing a Public Transport Strategy for South Australia. We support the Department for Infrastructure and Transport’s (DIT) intention of mapping out a 30-year vision to guide future public transport planning and decisions, as well as to set clear priorities for investment. The DIT have said that they will build upon what the community has already told them during the consultation for the recently published South Australian Transport Strategy, but will also look more deeply at what is important for public transport through this current consultation.

JFA Purple Orange acknowledges the release of the final version of South Australia’s Transport Strategy in March 2025. Our submission on the draft South Australian Transport Strategy highlighted several key areas for improvement – notably, the need to strengthen commitments to accessibility and inclusion in transport, to embed co-design with people with disability, and to use accurate, respectful terminology throughout.

Research and lived experience consistently demonstrate that accessible transport is essential for independent living and community participation. When transport systems have barriers, whether it be inaccessible vehicles, stops, or services, they effectively exclude people with disability from jobs, education, healthcare and social life.

Conversely, when we design transport for inclusion, the benefits are widespread. Features like safer footpaths, step-free access, clear signage and audible announcements help not only people with disability but also parents with prams, seniors, and people with temporary injuries, exemplifying the universal benefits of accessibility . An inclusive transport system is a fundamental aspect of a modern, efficient, and equitable transport network.

While we are encouraged by the high-level commitments and improved tone of the South Australian Transport Strategy, our submission will also identify areas where further work is needed to translate vision into reality. Despite improvements over recent years, the on-the-ground accessibility of public transport in South Australia still falls short of what it should be. In a July 2022 survey of South Australians with disability conducted by JFA Purple Orange, only 11% of respondents rated the accessibility of public transport as “good” or “very good,” whereas nearly

half rated it “poor” or “very poor” . Clearly, there is substantial room to improve the user experience.

We outline below several priority areas where focused action, guided by community input, can make public transport more accessible and inclusive. Addressing these practical barriers will be critical for the Public Transport Strategy to achieve its outcome of “safe and accessible public transport for everyone.” We draw attention to the Access Taxi service as a vital piece of the transport network that requires urgent strategic attention, and then discuss the importance of co-design in developing and implementing the Strategy.

# Draft Strategic Outcomes

The final South Australian Transport Strategy showed a clear improvement in its focus on accessibility and inclusion. Notably, one of the Transport Strategy’s five strategic outcomes is now “Connected and accessible,” underscoring that “our transport system is accessible and connects people and goods to where they need to go.” Another outcome, “Liveable,” explicitly states that “our transport system supports wellbeing, inclusivity and quality of life.”This framing is a significant step forward from the draft Strategy. It affirms that an accessible transport network, one designed to be usable by people with diverse abilities, is fundamental to achieving the Transport Strategy’s 30-year vision. We applaud the Government for integrating inclusive language such as “inclusive travel for all” and a commitment to “easy-to-use and inclusive options that meet a variety of needs.”

Encouragingly, the Public Transport Strategy’s draft strategic outcomes echo this focus. Out of five draft outcomes, two resonate strongly with inclusion: “Safe and accessible public transport for everyone,” which asks how to provide a positive and safe experience for everyone regardless of their need, and “A great customer experience,” which aims to ensure comfort, easy connections and a smooth experience for users. These outcomes directly reflect the principle that transport must serve everyone, including people with disability, older adults, and others with mobility or sensory support needs. We strongly support these priorities.

Importantly, making public transport safe and accessible for all does not just respond to stakeholder feedback: it also fulfills human rights obligations and is backed by evidence. Article 9 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) obligates governments to make transportation accessible to persons with disabilities so they can participate in society “on an equal basis with others”. Providing inclusive transport is a duty, not just a desirable extra.

Equally, research consistently finds that accessible transport is essential for independent living.[[1]](#footnote-1) When transport systems have inaccessible vehicles or infrastructure, they exclude people with disability from full and active participation in community, effectively excluding them from jobs, education, and community life.[[2]](#footnote-2) An accessible and inclusive transport system is not a “special” consideration but rather a cornerstone of a modern transport strategy that benefits all members of the community, with or without disability.

Next, we will outline the necessary improvements the Public Transport Strategy must prioritise.

# Keys for Increasing Transport Access and Inclusion

## Vehicles and Rolling Stock

Many public transports in South Australia, particularly buses, still have design limitations that impede access or comfort. For example, bus travel can be dangerous or uncomfortable for wheelchair users due to wheelchairs moving or jolting when buses turn or brake, and respondents to our surveys have previously called for installing safety restraints or other stability technology on buses. Some train and tram users report similar stability concerns. Additionally, while Adelaide’s train and tram fleets are largely accessible, some older buses and coaches are not, and even accessible buses may have ramps that occasionally fail or steep entry angles.

We recommend accelerating the procurement of low-floor, accessible vehicles and upgrading existing ones with features like securement points, priority seating, and automation for boarding (so a passenger using a wheelchair can board independently without needing the driver to deploy a manual ramp). Moving toward a fleet where every vehicle is accessible is essential to meet the Commonwealth’s target of full compliance with transport accessibility standards in coming years. We note that the national Transport Standards, which originally envisioned full accessibility by 2022, are under review and it is likely new milestones will be set. South Australia should be ahead of the curve

by planning a complete transition to accessible vehicles well before 2030.

**Recommendation 1:** **The Public Transport Strategy should commit to a complete transition to a fully accessible fleet of buses, trains, and trams, including retrofitting older vehicles and prioritising low-floor and automated boarding technologies.**

## Infrastructure (stations, stops and interchanges)

The accessibility and amenity of stops and stations is critical for a seamless journey. Many train stations and tram stops lack adequate shelter or seating, which can be problematic for people with mobility support needs. Some stations remain partially inaccessible (for instance, lacking ramps or lifts to every platform). We have heard from community members that tactile ground surface indicators are missing in some locations, making navigation difficult for people who are blind or have low vision.

Bus stop infrastructure is also a concern: in some suburbs, stops have been consolidated or

removed, increasing distances that people need to travel to catch a bus. This disproportionately affects those who find it harder to traverse long distances. The Strategy should include initiatives to improve and audit the accessibility of all stations and stops – ensuring there are shelters, seating, ramps, tactile indicators, pedestrian crossings nearby, clear signage, and smooth, stepfree pathways at every access point. A *“*liveable and sustainable*”* transport network must consider the first and last mile; getting to and from public transport should be safe and easy for everyone.

**Recommendation 2: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to the auditing and upgrading of infrastructure at stations, stops, and interchanges to meet universal access standards. This includes installing ramps, tactile indicators, shelters, seating and pedestrian crossings, as well as ensuring step-free, smooth pathways.**

## Service Frequency and Connectivity

Service design can greatly impact accessibility. If buses or trains are infrequent or do not connect well, people with disability (who might not have other transport options) are disproportionately inconvenienced. Our previous research found many calls for increasing the frequency of public transport services, especially trains and weekend buses, and for more cross-suburban routes or feeder services so that travel is not always forced through the city center.

Overcrowding is another barrier. When vehicles are packed, the designated wheelchair spaces or priority seating can be unusable, effectively denying access. To align with the outcome of *“*moving more people, more reliably, more often*,”* the Strategy should consider capacity increases at peak times (to reduce overcrowding) and timetable improvements that minimize connection times. A reliable system with more turn-up-and-go frequency improves access for all by reducing the planning burden and the physical strain of long waits. It will also encourage more people with and without disability to choose public transport.

**Recommendation 3: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to the improvement of service frequency and connectivity, especially for cross-suburban travel and weekend schedules, and the reduction of overcrowding to make the system more reliable, accessible and inclusive.**

## Communication and Information

Accessible customer information is a vital part of a great customer experience. Currently, there are gaps in how information is provided. For instance, unlike trains and trams, most Adelaide Metro buses do not yet have automated audio announcements for stops, which would benefit passengers with vision impairment (and others, like newcomers who are

unfamiliar with routes). Real-time service information is often only accessible via smartphone apps, which not everyone can use. Static signage and timetables at stations and stops may be in small print or not in easy-to-understand formats, posing challenges for people with low vision or cognitive disabilities.

We recommend the Strategy commit to universal design in communication: provide information in multiple formats (visual, auditory, easy-read, digital and non-digital). This

could include installing audio next-stop announcements on all buses, ensuring digital apps meet accessibility standards, and offering printed or braille timetables on request. Wayfinding signage should incorporate clear icons/pictograms and logical layout. By making information accessible, this would improve the experience for everyone, since clearer information helps all users navigate the system confidently.

**Recommendation 4: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to increasing availability of accessible communication and information systems, such as real-time audio announcements on all vehicles, digital and non-digital formats for timetables, and signage with clear icons and easy-read formats.**

## Personal Safety and Staff Assistance

Feeling safe and supported is a prerequisite for many people with disability (and indeed all passengers) to use public transport. Some have reported that a lack of staff presence or security on vehicles and at stations deters them from using services, especially at

night. There are also concerns about inadequate lighting around some stops and stations, and the need for better pedestrian safety measures (for example, lower speed limits or more zebra crossings in station precincts).

We suggest the Strategy include initiatives to enhance safety and customer service, such as increasing the visibility of trained staff or passenger service assistants on the network and improving lighting and CCTV coverage. Additionally, empowering staff to provide assistance, for example, helping a passenger in a wheelchair to navigate a gap, or guiding someone

who is blind at a station, can greatly improve accessibility. The Strategy’s focus on a “positive and safe” experience for everyone should translate into on-ground measures that make passengers with disability not only be safer, but feelsafer when using public transport.

Addressing these areas will require dedicated resources and ongoing commitment, but the return on investment is high. A public transport system that is accessible and convenient for people with disability is better for all users; it means a more comfortable, reliable, and user-friendly system overall. Crucially, it would enable the one in five South Australians with disability (and many more with temporary or situational support needs) to participate more fully in community life.

We are encouraged that the Strategy development is asking the right questions under each draft outcome (for instance, how to strengthen regional connections, how to improve reliability, how to ensure safety for everyone). We urge that, as answers are formulated, accessibility considerations are woven into each solution. Whether it is planning new “on-demand” transit services, upgrading trains to electric models, or redesigning bus routes, the needs of people with disability should be factored in from the start through co-design

and inclusive planning.

**Recommendation 5: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to further investment in passenger safety and support, including better lighting, CCTV, visible staff presence, and staff training to assist passengers with disability at key access points.**

# Access Taxis and Point-to-Point Transport

An area of particular concern is the provision of Access Taxis(wheelchair-accessible taxis) and other point-to-point transport services (such as rideshares). For many people with disability, especially those with high mobility support needs, conventional public transport (buses, trains, trams) may not always be a viable option. Access Taxis fill a crucial gap, providing door-to door transport for people who use wheelchairs or have other accessibility requirements that cannot be met by standard vehicles. In regional areas and during times when public transport is not running, these services can be a lifeline*.*  They are often the only means to get to medical appointments, work, or social activities.

The South Australian Transport Minister has “committed to identifying and addressing the issues as a matter of urgency”[[3]](#footnote-3). However, South Australia is still experiencing a chronic shortage of Access Taxis, alongside systemic issues in the way the service operates. This was a major focus of our 2022 submission to the Select Committee on Public and Active Transport, and it remains highly relevant to the Public Transport Strategy’s goal of a safe and accessible system. In that submission, we detailed how the shortage of accessible taxis was leaving many people stranded or facing excessive wait times, and we proposed a comprehensive plan to transition the state’s entire taxi fleet to accessible vehicles over 10 years. We reiterate those concerns and recommendations here, now updated in light of recent policy shifts.

While we acknowledge the Government has begun to recognise the importance of reform, significant challenges remainin the access taxi landscape. It is still reported that more than 500 people with disability each month experience waits longer than 30 minutes for an access taxi they have booked; an indicator that demand far outstrips supply at many times. [[4]](#footnote-4) We continue to hear first-hand accounts of unacceptably long waits or even no-shows. This situation has severe consequences: people missing medical appointments, being late for work or school, or even missing family events like funerals. Such outcomes are not acceptable in a modern, inclusive society. They undermine the confidence people have in the transport system and, ultimately, their ability to participate in community life.

Therefore, more ambitious action is needed to bolster the accessible taxi fleet and service level. The Public Transport Strategy should acknowledge the role of point-to-point transport (including taxis and rideshare) as part of the broader public transport ecosystem that delivers accessible mobility.

We urge the Government to adopt a long-term plan to increase the number of wheelchair-accessible vehicles and ensure their efficient operation. As mentioned in our previous recommendations, one approach we have put forward is a co-contribution grant scheme: the government could subsidise (for example, 50%) the cost of acquiring or converting vehicles to be wheelchair-accessible, in partnership with taxi operators. This would lower the financial barrier for operators to invest in accessible taxis. With such support, we envision that over a 10-year period, the fleet could transition to being 100% accessible. Indeed, we recommend setting a target deadline (e.g. by 1 January 2033) by which all taxis operating in South Australia must be accessible vehicles.

This kind of mandate, coupled with financial incentives, would ensure that the chronic shortage is definitively resolved rather than just ameliorated. It aligns with the expectation of the Disability Standards (which, pending reform, are likely to require increasing proportions of accessible vehicles in taxi fleets over time). South Australia could lead the nation by committing to a fully accessible taxi fleet – a milestone that would greatly enhance point-to-point transport options for people with disability.

Another crucial aspect is funding and transparency. There exists in SA a *Point to Point Transport Service Transaction Levy* which was originally introduced withthe understanding that its revenue would support the taxi industry (for example, through taxi license compensation and industry development). We recommend that the Strategy (or related policy) explicitly ensure that the revenue from this levy is directed towards improving accessibility and equity in point-to point transport. Whether it is used to fund the grant scheme for accessible vehicles, to subsidise ongoing operational costs (like the lifting fees or training), or to invest in related initiatives (like an improved centraldispatch system), the key is that the levy funds be transparently reinvested in the transport system for public benefit. This could be codified by amending the relevant Act to state the permissible uses of the levy – preventing the funds from simply disappearing into general revenue without accountability.

To monitor progress, we also echo our earlier call for public reporting on Access Taxi service performance. Data on how the system is functioning should be collected and published at least annually. This includes metrics like: the number of Access Taxi trips completed, the number of requested trips not fulfilled, average waiting times, and geographical coverage (are there particular areas or times where service is lacking?). It should also include reporting on the levy revenue collected and exactly how it was spent to improve services. Such transparency will build trust and allow the community and policymakers to identify where further improvements are needed. It may be appropriate for DIT’s annual reports or the Transport Strategy’s future progress reports to include a section on accessible transport

indicators, encompassing the Access Taxi system as well as the accessibility of mainstream services.

The Public Transport Strategy must not overlook the critical role of Access Taxis and point-to-point services in an accessible transport network. While buses, trains, and trams form the backbone of public transport, taxis and rideshares are the glue that often connect people to the network or provide a viable alternative when other options are unsuitable. A truly accessible public transport strategy will take a holistic view, ensuring that a person with mobility support needs can reliably get from any origin to any destination: whether that’s achieved on a bus, a train, or an accredited wheelchair taxi (or a combination of all three).

Recent reforms are a start, but continued effort and strategic investment are required. We are optimistic that, with initiatives like those discussed – expanding the fleet, ensuring fair dispatch, subsidising costs, and maintaining oversight – South Australia can transform its accessible taxi service into a model that other states emulate. This will directly support the Strategy’s vision of “safe and accessible public transport for everyone.”

**Recommendation 6: The Public Transport Strategy should explicitly include point-to-point transport (e.g. Access Taxis) as part of the broader public transport ecosystem, recognising their vital role for people with high support needs.**

**Recommendation 7: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to the transition of the taxi fleet to 100% accessible vehicles by a target date (e.g. 2033), and the adoption of a co-contribution model to reduce operator costs.**

**Recommendation 8: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to requiring the transparent use of the Point to Point Transport Service Transaction Levy and reinvesting funds directly into improving accessibility and service performance of Access Taxis.**

**Recommendation 9: The Public Transport Strategy should commit to mandating public reporting of Access Taxi performance, including metrics such as average wait times, unmet trip requests, fleet availability, and levy use.**

# Improved Language In Transport Strategies

We also note that the final Transport Strategy’s language around inclusion has become more person-centered. For example, references to people with disability are handled in a people-first manner and in the context of creating a “liveable” community for everyone. We hope this is also the case with the Public Transport Strategy as this choice in language resonates with our earlier call to make social inclusion a core outcome of transport policy. Studies have highlighted that mobility is a *“*key factor for economic and social integration”[[5]](#footnote-5)and that tackling barriers, whether geographical, physical, or social, in transport is essential for inclusive communities. In this light, the final Transport Strategy’s, and presumably the Public Transport Strategy’s, recognition that a “liveable” transport system must foster inclusivity is highly welcome. It suggests that the Transport Strategy and Public Transport Strategy view accessible transport not just as a disability issue, but as integral to community well-being and quality of life, which was a central argument of our original submission for the Transport Strategy.

Looking ahead, we encourage the Government to carry this commitment into the Public Transport Strategy, and into the implementation of the Transport Strategy. The true test of *“Connected and accessible”* will be in the detailed action plans and projects (such as upgrades to infrastructure, procurement of accessible vehicles, staff training) over the coming years. We recommend that the Public Transport Strategy and the forthcoming implementation plan for the Transport Strategy explicitly incorporate universal design principles, ensuring that new transport infrastructure projects, vehicles and digital systems are designed from the outset to be usable by as many people as possible. This would operationalise the vision of inclusive, easy-to-use transport. We are ready to support initiatives that “offer easy-to-understand, comfortable and fatigue-free” transport experiences for a diverse community, in line with best-practice guidelines . Overall, we commend the Government for strengthening its commitment to accessibility and inclusion, and we support these as foundational priorities going forward.

**Recommendation 10: The Public Transport Strategy should adopt universal design principles as a standard for all new infrastructure, vehicles, and digital systems to ensure inclusivity from the outset.**

## Further Language Improvement Possible

The language used in policy documents is not merely cosmetic; it has real impact on attitudes and inclusion. In our original submission to the Transport Strategy, we urged that the Transport Strategy use accurate and respectful terminology when referring to people with disability, consistent with contemporary inclusive language guidelines. We are pleased to observe that the final South Australian Transport Strategy has generally adopted people-focused and respectful language. For instance, the Transport Strategy talks about *“*individuals with disabilities or access requirements*”* (in the “What We Heard” summary) and emphasises *“*inclusivity*”* in outcomes. We urge the Government continue with this use of terminology in the Public Transport Strategy.

This use of people-focused and respectful language represents an improvement over any draft phrasing that may have been of concern. Such attention to language is important. As the United Nations disability-inclusive language guidelines state, *“*Words matter*.*”*[[6]](#footnote-6)* The language we use *“*shapes our perception of the world*,*”*[[7]](#footnote-7)* and inappropriate or outdated terms can *“*make people feel excluded or offend them and can be a barrier to full and meaningful participation*.*”*[[8]](#footnote-8)*

In the context of transport, using correct terminology helps ensure that the Public Transport Strategy’s intent is clear; that it is focused on removing barriers in the environment, rather than characterising people as the problem. Speaking to creating an inclusive system for all aligns with the social model of disability and respectful language practices. We particularly support the Transport Strategy’s use of person-first language. It is worth noting that within the disability community some prefer identity-first language (e.g. “disabled people”), and preferences can vary. However, the key is that language should empower and respect.

The final Transport Strategy’s terminology largely meets this mark. It treats disability as a natural part of human diversity, using neutral terms. This change, compared to any inconsistent terminology in the draft, demonstrates a responsive and mature approach by the Strategy’s authors. JFA Purple Orange recently undertook a widespread consultation about preferred terminology in the disability community. The most commonly preferred term was ‘people with disability.’ This is the language we now use as an organisation, and we encourage DIT to follow suit.

**Recommendation 11: The Public Transport Strategy should use consistent, respectful, and empowering language that aligns with contemporary inclusive language guidelines, such as “people with disability”.**

# Co-Design

We have previously emphasised the importance of co-design**:** the active involvement of people with diverse experiences, including people with disability, in the design, delivery, and evaluation of transport initiatives. We again want to emphasise this point, and call for the Public Transport Strategy to explicitly commit to co-design and ongoing partnership with the community, rather than relying solely on one-off consultations.

We acknowledge that the Department’s engagement process for the Transport Strategy was extensive, and the final Transport Strategy document recognises the value of that input. Over 6,000 community members and stakeholders were engaged during development, and the Transport Strategy acknowledges that “we will continue to work with you to create a better transport future that benefits many generations to come.” This promise to “continue to work with” stakeholders suggests an openness to ongoing dialogue. It aligns with contemporary views that those affected by transport policies should remain involved beyond the strategy phase, into implementation and monitoring.

However, we note that the final Transport Strategy itself stops short of explicitly using the term co-design or outlining formal mechanisms for continued co-development of transport solutions. In our view, this is an area that could be strengthened, and we hope the Public Transport Strategy will include the term “co-design”. International research underscores that involving people with disability as partners leads to better outcomes. When people with disability participate in co-design, the resulting solutions are far more likely to meet their needs and respect their perspectives.[[9]](#footnote-9) This echoes the disability community’s rallying principle, “nothing about us without us.”

The final Transport Strategy would be improved by making explicit reference to co-design principles. For example, it could commit to establishing a co-design groupto support the implementation of key initiatives. Similarly, we recommend that the Public Transport Strategy commit to establishing a co-design implementation advisory group. This wouldbe invaluable to supporting the many decisions that lie ahead, such as infrastructure upgrades and digital journey planning tools. A participatory approach is especially crucial when introducing new technologies or services; evidence from Europe’s recent accessible transport projects shows that participatory design research empowers people with disability to shape outcomes and improves those outcomes significantly.[[10]](#footnote-10)

We recommend the Public Transport Strategy explicitly embed co-design as a guiding method, as well as continue on with the robust consultation that shaped the Transport Strategy. The omission of the term “co-design” or a clear process for continued user involvement in the Transport Strategy is a missed opportunity to lock in a culture of collaboration – however this can still be used for the Public Transport Strategy. By committing to co-design in the Public Transport Strategy and in the implementation stage of the Transport Strategy, the Department would ensure that measures introduced under the both would truly reflect users’ needs and aspirations. It would also demonstrate leadership in line with emerging best practice: co-design is increasingly recognised as a “more democratic approach to design”[[11]](#footnote-11)that, despite challenges, leads to more inclusive transport systems.

**Recommendation 12: The Public Transport Strategy should embed co-design as a foundational method, committing to formal mechanisms for sustained engagement with people with disability, such as co-design advisory panels and partnerships with advocacy organisations.**

# Conclusion

The development of a Public Transport Strategy for South Australia presents a vital opportunity to embed accessibility, inclusion, and universal design at the core of our transport system over the next 30 years. As this submission has outlined, genuine inclusion is not just a desirable aspiration; it is a human right, a community necessity, and a strategic investment in our collective future.

We commend the Department for Infrastructure and Transport for its growing focus on accessibility and the inclusive framing of its draft strategic outcomes. The strategy’s success will depend on how effectively these high-level intentions are translated into detailed, measurable actions, through planning, procurement, infrastructure design, service delivery, and ongoing community engagement.

Accessible transport enables participation. It connects people with disability to jobs, healthcare, education, and community life. It benefits not only those with mobility or sensory support needs, but also families, older people, and anyone who may experience temporary limitations. In short, accessible public transport benefits everyone.

We urge the Department to adopt the twelve recommendations in this submission, which are informed by lived experience, research, and practical insight from people with disability. These recommendations, ranging from fleet accessibility and improved infrastructure to access taxi reform, communication, safety, language, and co-design, are key to building a truly inclusive and effective transport network.

JFA Purple Orange stands ready to support the Government in implementing these reforms, and we call for a public transport future in which no one is left behind. With the right vision, commitment, and collaboration, South Australia can lead the nation in delivering safe, accessible public transport for all.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide feedback as part of this consultation.

We are available to discuss the issues raised in this submission further. To arrange this, please contact Tracey Wallace, Strategy Leader, JFA Purple Orange, on (08) 8373 8333 or [traceyw@purpleorange.org.au](mailto:traceyw@purpleorange.org.au).

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