



Accessibility of Public Transport in South Australia Survey Results

Buses, Trains and Trams

October 2019

purpleorange.org.au

JFA Purple Orange is an independent, social-profit organisation that undertakes systemic policy analysis and advocacy across a range of issues affecting people living with disability and their families. Our work is characterised by co-design and co-production, and includes hosting a number of user-led initiatives.

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An online survey was used to explore the views and experiences of public transport for 87 South Australians living with disability

Objective

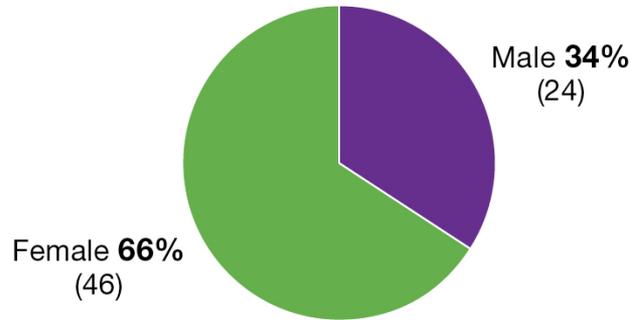
To better understand the views and experiences of public transport (including buses, trains, trams, taxis, rideshare and planes) for South Australians living with disability, so that we can identify what needs to be done to make public transport more accessible. **This slide pack focuses on buses, trains and trams.**

Methodology

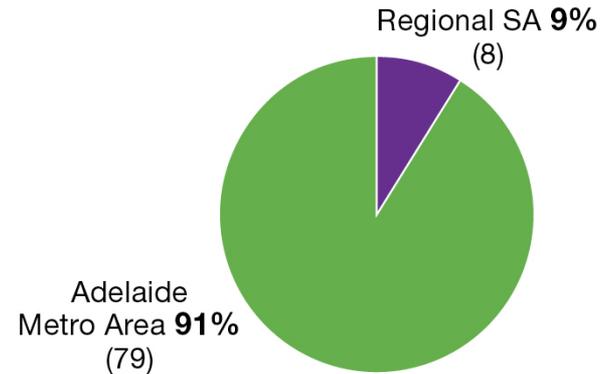
- **Sample:** South Australian adults living with disability or caring for someone living with disability
- **Source:** JFA Purple Orange contact lists
- **Online platform:** SurveyMonkey
- **Fieldwork period:** 13 Aug – 5 Sep 2019
- **Average survey length:** 19 mins
- **Total responses:** 87
- **Complete responses:** 70

Two thirds of respondents were female, most lived in the Adelaide Metro area

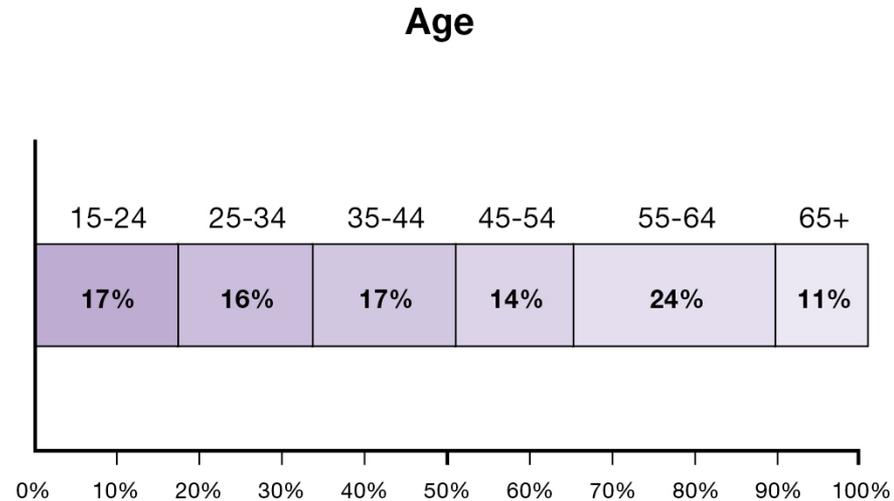
Gender



Location



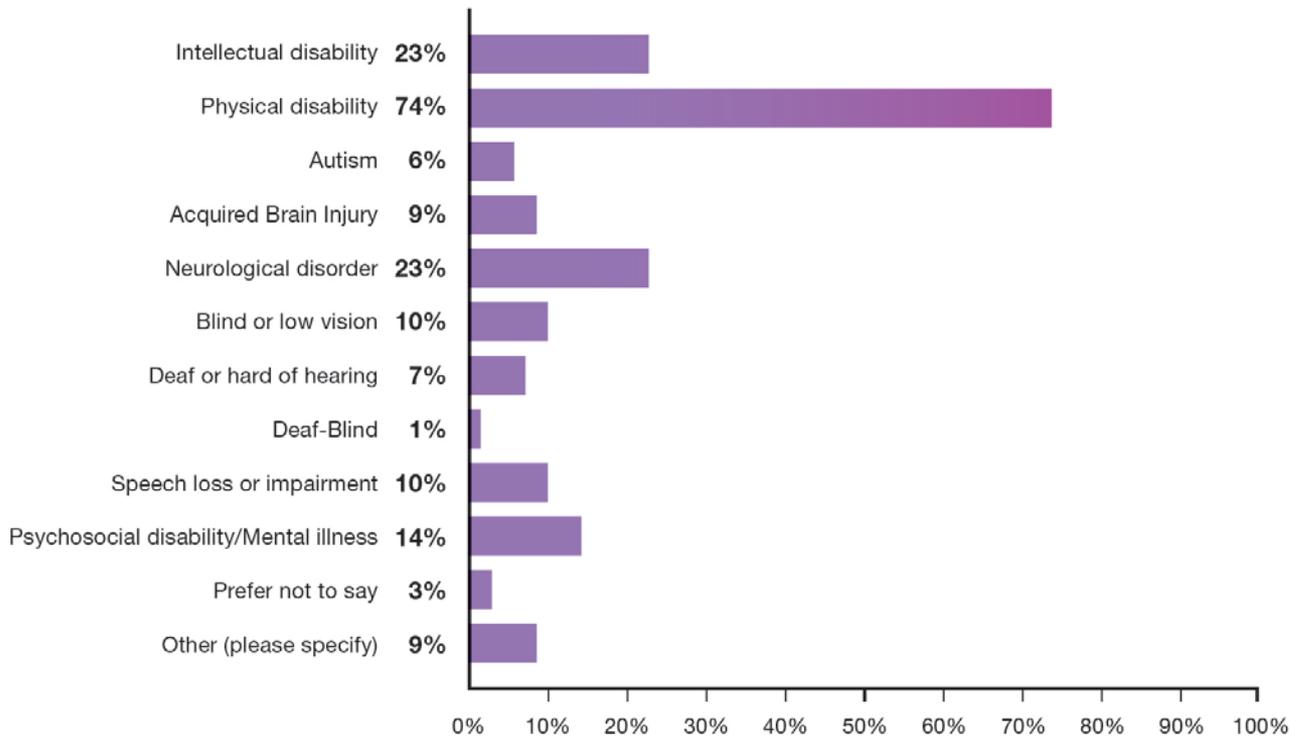
Respondents represented a diverse range of ages aged 15+



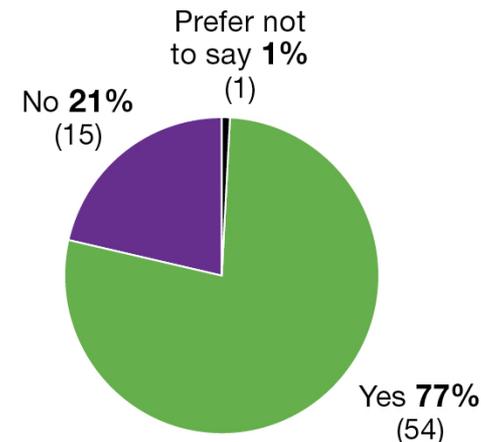
$\frac{3}{4}$ of respondents lived with physical disability, $\frac{1}{4}$ with intellectual disability and a neurological disorder, $\frac{3}{4}$ were NDIS participants

Disability

Number of respondents = 70



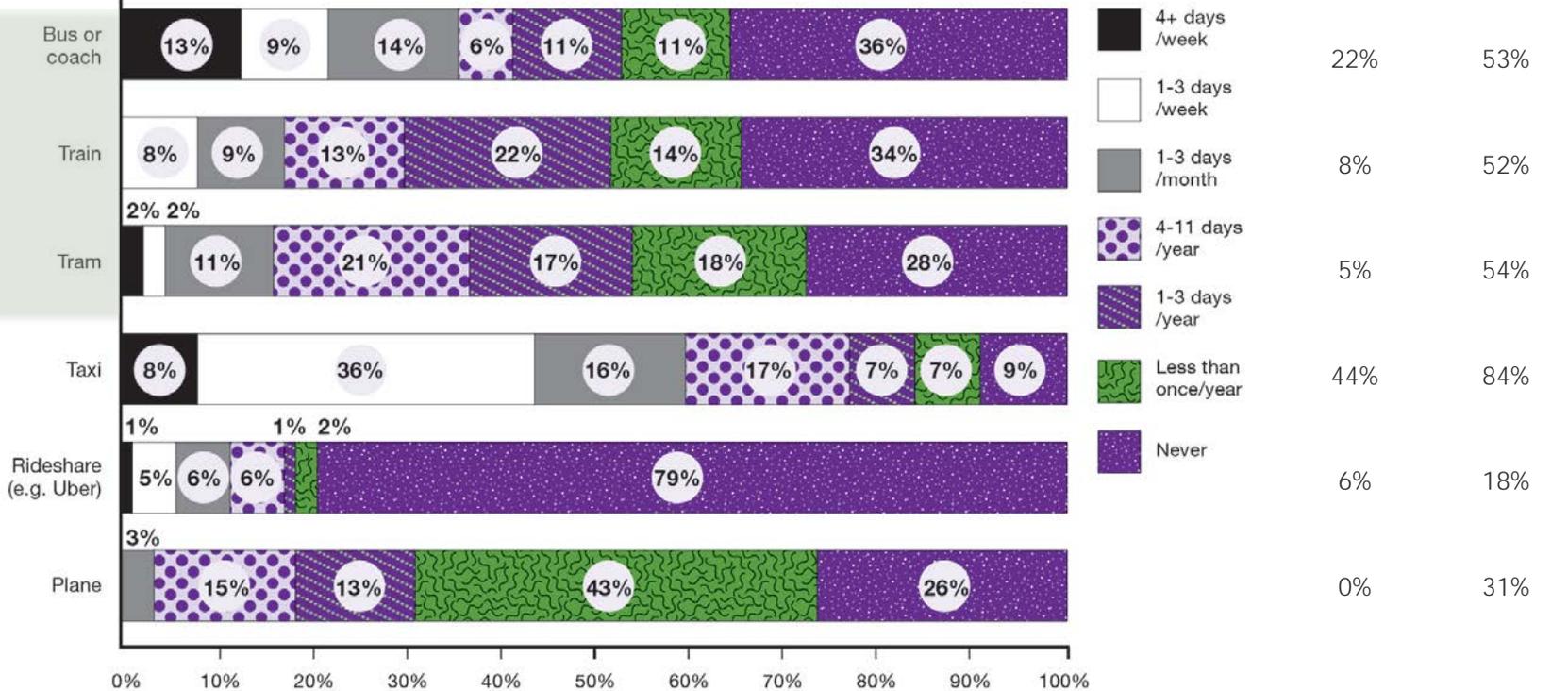
NDIS Participant?



Buses were the second most common mode of weekly public transport after taxis. Half of respondents used each of buses, trains and trams at least yearly

Travel by Public Transport

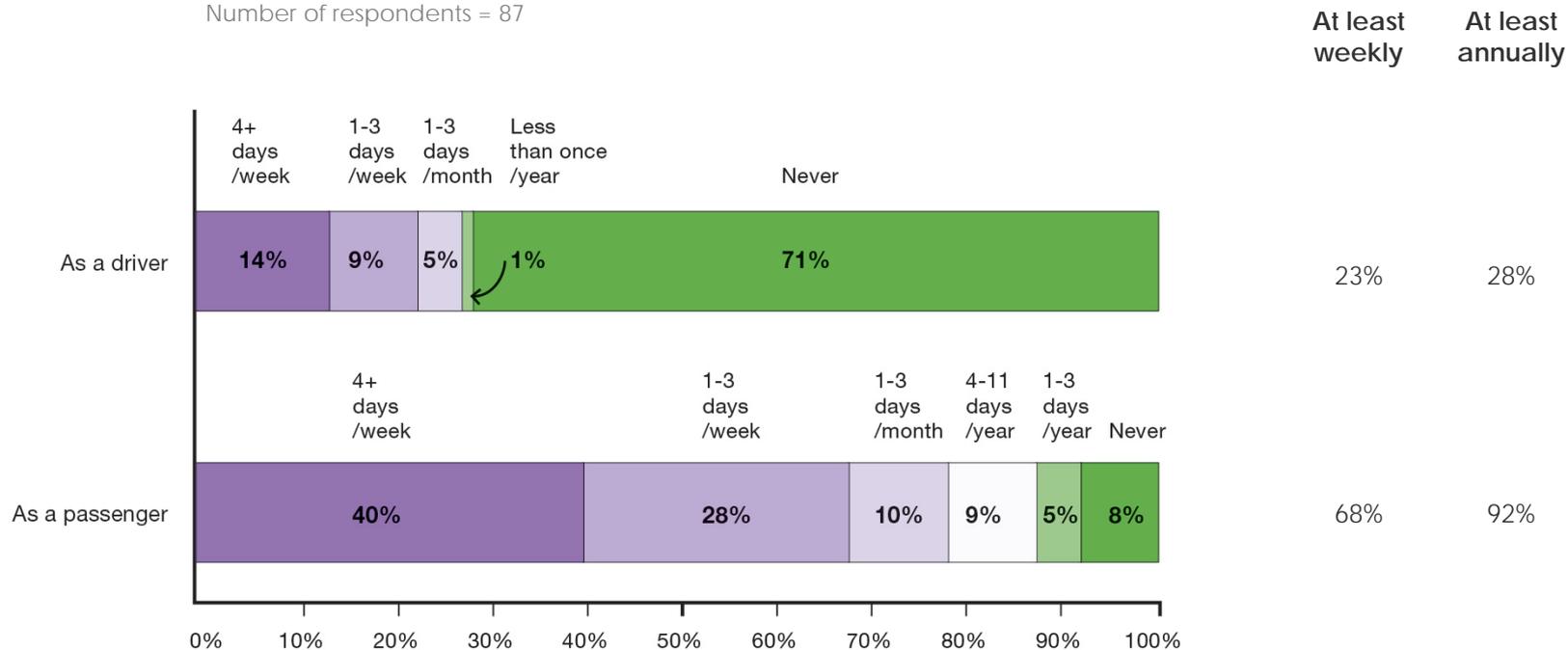
Number of respondents = 87



However, the most common way for respondents to travel was as a passenger in a private motor vehicle (only a minority were able to drive)

Private Motor Vehicle Travel

Number of respondents = 87



Public transport plays an important role when driving is impractical, for those who cannot drive or are on low incomes, and to give people more independence

Why public transport is important

"If attending a special event in the city parking is an issue."

"Less impact on the environment than car."

"I don't have the money to catch taxis on a disability pension. Will rely on public transport even more now that they have taken our taxis subsidy vouchers away."

"Without public transport I would not be able to work, study or hang out with friends. Public transport is vital to my independence."

"I have an ABI. I drive but it can be overwhelming so I use the train to go to busy places like Adelaide CBD."

"I can no longer afford a taxi."

"Cause is the only way to get around with no licence."

"To be able to get places independently without excessive cost."

"Public transport enables me to get to know other people in my community. And to possibly establish different hobbies and interests. It also allows for friendships to develop."

"It is important because I don't physically drive myself in a private vehicle, if I'm unable to catch a ride with family or friends, I will require power-wheelchair accessible public transport options to access my community."

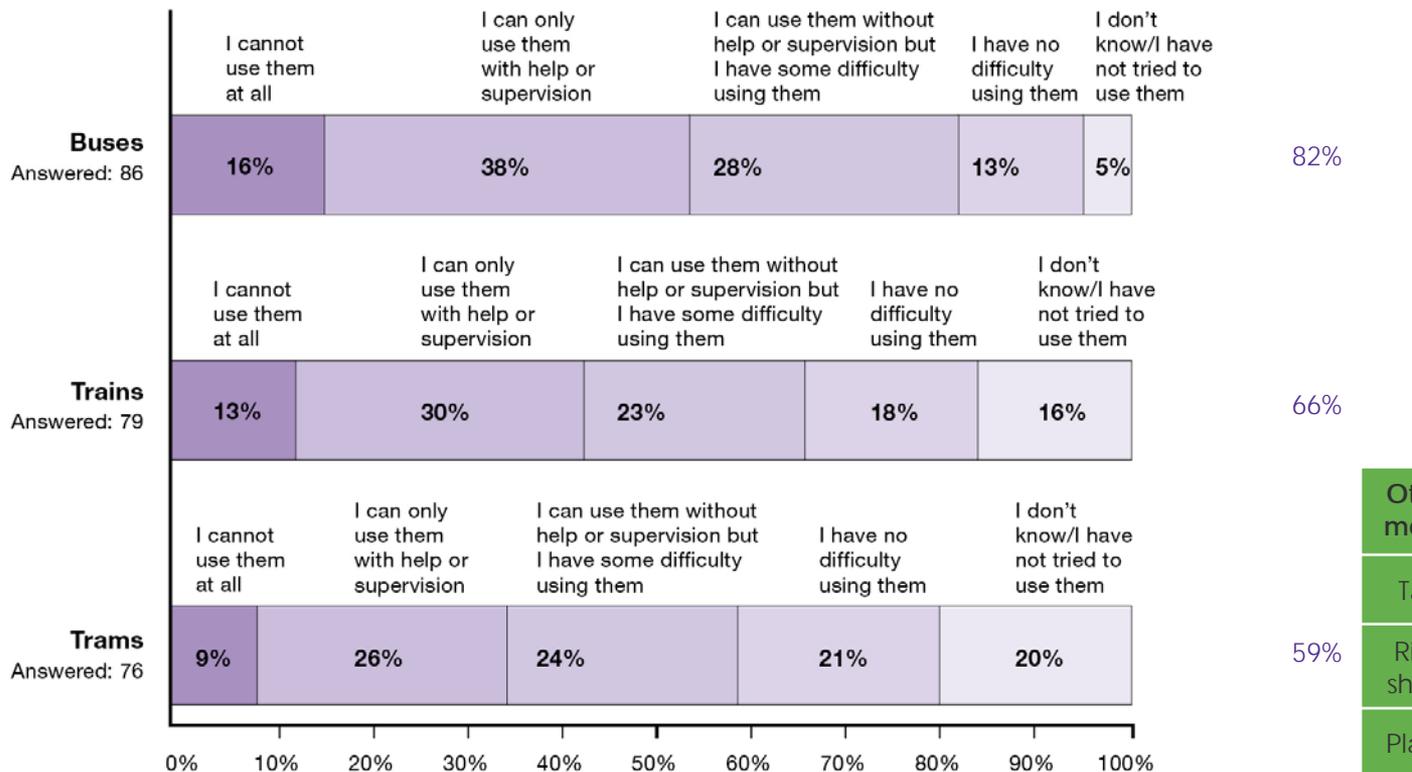
"Well I am unable to drive my car and carry my wheelchair in it, the cost of taxi means I am forced to use public transport over better forms."

"I can't get anywhere without it. Can't get to a job, doctors, shops, family or friends."

"It is important for people with disabilities to access public transport as it gives freedom to be able to go out to appointments and to meet up with our family and friends."

8 in 10 respondents indicated they had some difficulty using buses, two thirds using trains and 6 in 10 using trams. Taxis caused less difficulty

Ease of Using Public Transport Mode



Other mode	Some difficulty	No difficulty	Don't know
Taxi	51%	42%	7%
Ride share	25%	8%	67%
Plane	78%	11%	11%



Around a third of respondents could identify **bus** improvements in recent years, relating to accessibility of buses and information and driver help



Improvements in recent years to buses

More wheelchair accessible buses

"The number of wheelchair accessible bus routes and buses operating has increased over the years."

"Most buses have ramps now."

"The wheelchair ramps that fold out of the bus are great."

Greater assistance from drivers

"Driver seem well trained and alert to needs e.g. lifting seats up so can move into spot easier."

"Drivers are very polite and helpful."

"Drivers more helpful."

More accessible live information

"The digital timetables at some stops help."

"Real-Time Arrival signs generally helpful."

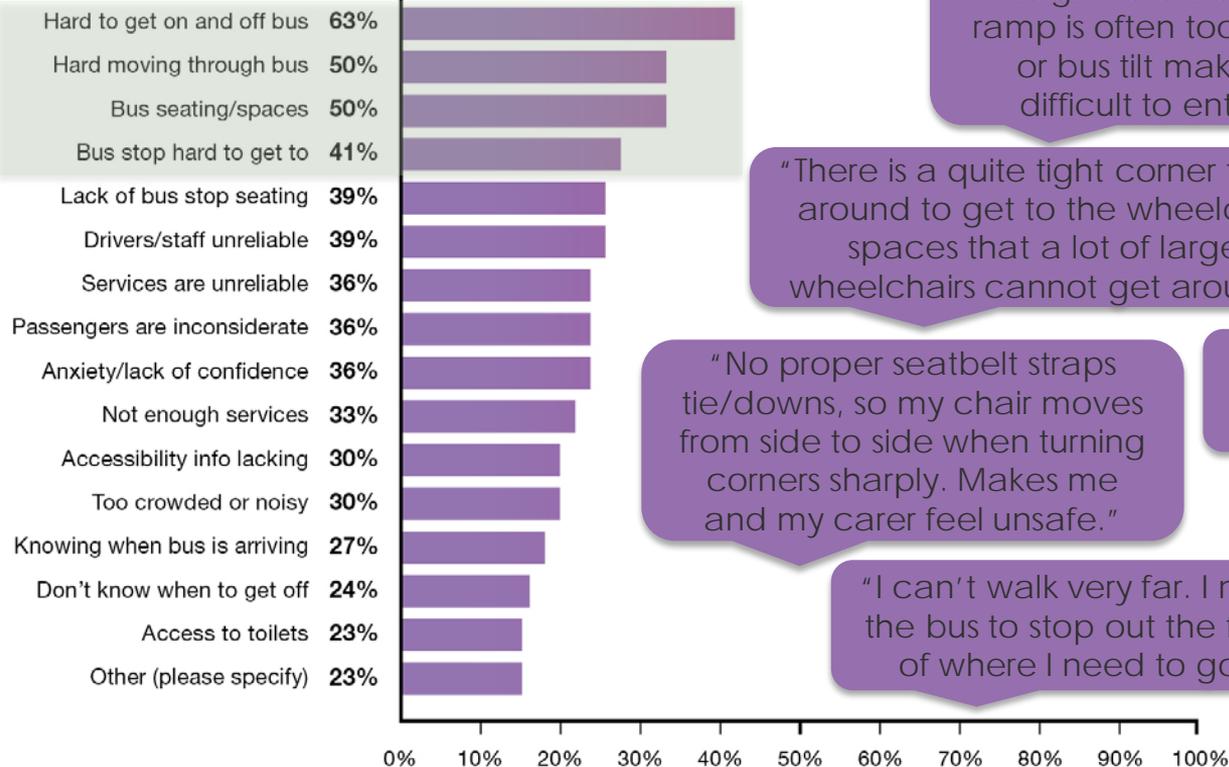
"Some buses have a verbal description of what bus it is e.g. H30 to Henley Beach which is very helpful for some people."

The most common difficulties using buses related to getting on and off, moving through the bus, bus seating and getting to the bus stop



Difficulties Using Buses

Number of respondents = 70; Responses shown where selected by at least 20%



"Kerbs not standard height so either the ramp is often too steep or bus tilt makes it difficult to enter."

"Older buses are still in use and not accessible. System does not reliably let me know when an accessible bus is coming. Adelaide Metro's advice was to phone the day before, which is NOT an accessible public transport policy."

"There is a quite tight corner to get around to get to the wheelchair spaces that a lot of larger wheelchairs cannot get around."

"No proper seatbelt straps tie/downs, so my chair moves from side to side when turning corners sharply. Makes me and my carer feel unsafe."

"You have to travel facing backwards, the powered wheelchair cannot be secured and moves around on the bus."

"Sometimes I am left at an interchange because no wheelchair spaces left on bus."

"I can't walk very far. I need the bus to stop out the front of where I need to go."

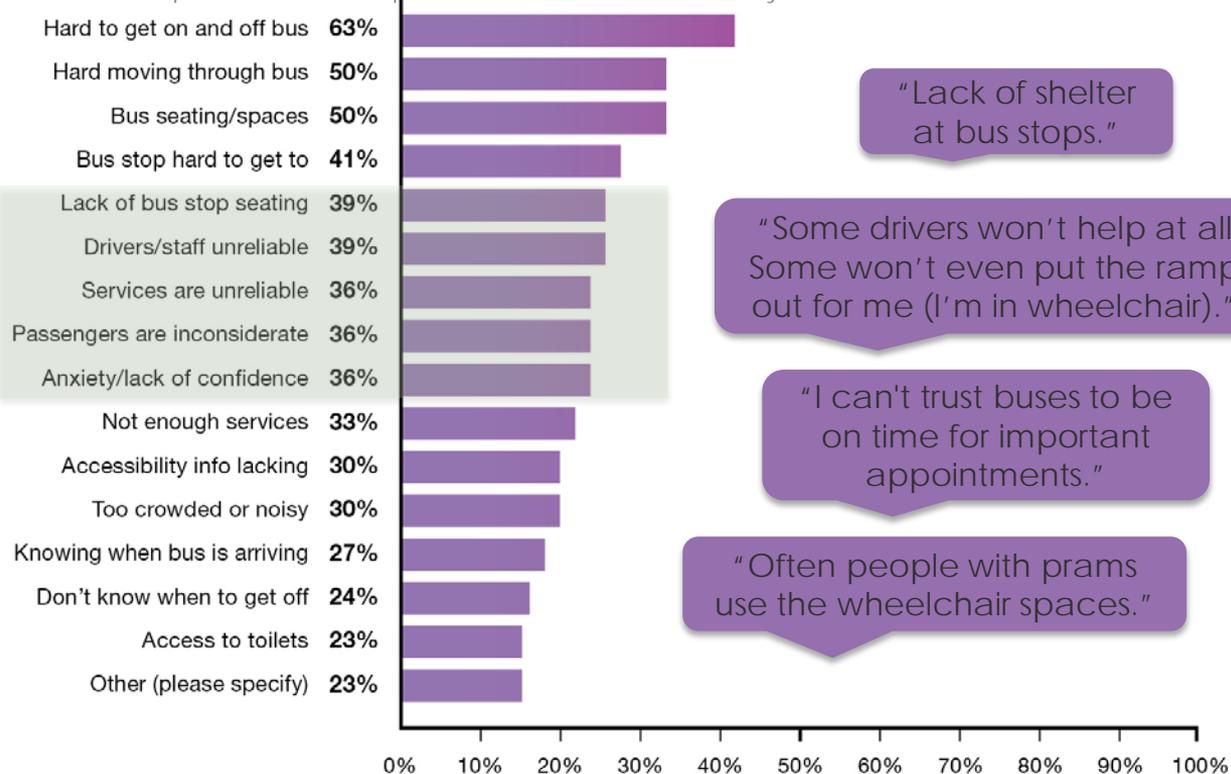
"Distance to stop from home and state of footpaths."

Other fairly common difficulties using buses related to bus stop seating, unreliable drivers and services, inconsiderate passengers and anxiety



Difficulties Using Buses

Number of respondents = 70; Responses shown where selected by at least 20%



"Lack of shelter at bus stops."

"Some drivers won't help at all. Some won't even put the ramp out for me (I'm in wheelchair)."

"Drivers sometimes leave it to you to ask passengers to move out of accessible spaces or to lift seats."

"I can't trust buses to be on time for important appointments."

"Bus driver often moves before I am able to sit down. This often causes me to fall down."

"Often people with prams use the wheelchair spaces."

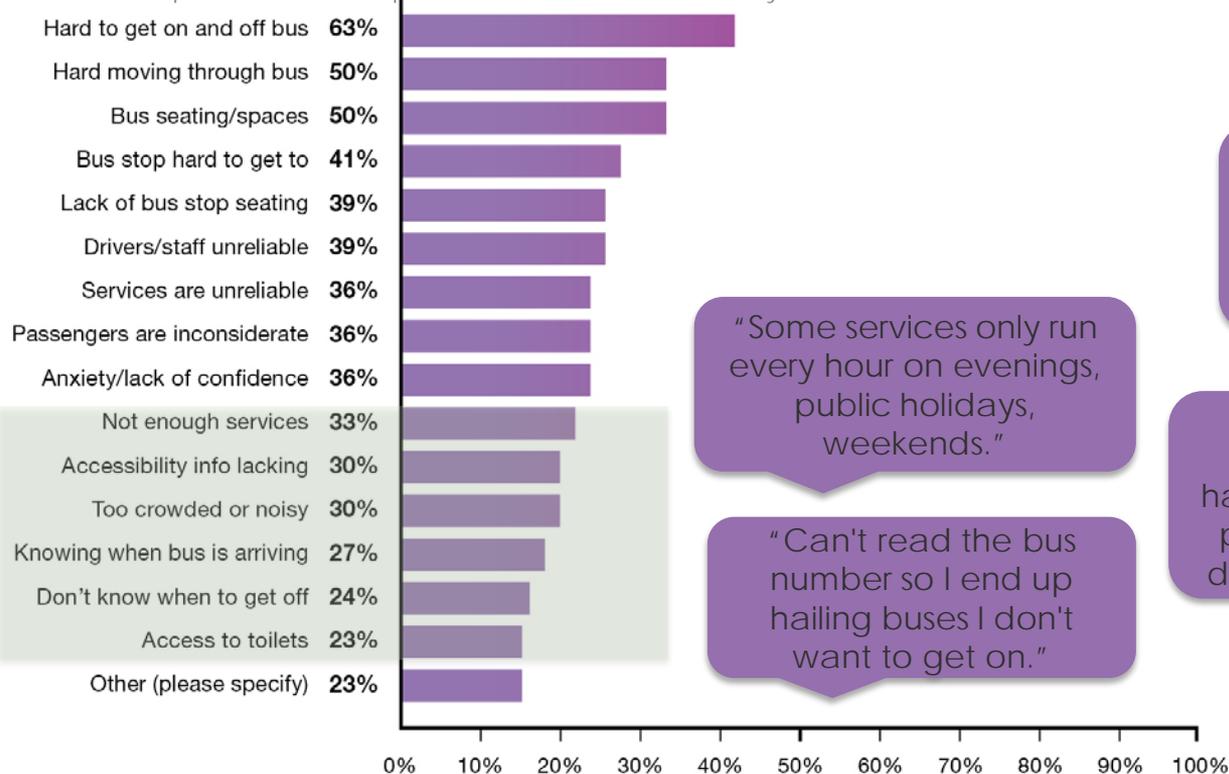
"Hard to know if bus will be on time, and then to know if I will be able to get on it safely."

Additional difficulties using buses related to lack of services, crowding / noise, accessibility of information and access to toilets



Difficulties Using Buses

Number of respondents = 70; Responses shown where selected by at least 20%



"Some services only run every hour on evenings, public holidays, weekends."

"Can't read the bus number so I end up hailing buses I don't want to get on."

"The other issue is the sensory overload on the bus - the movement, sudden braking and stopping, sounds, people, rapid visual movements around me."

"I find it difficult to stand on the bus... Sometimes I can't get a seat so I have to stand and end up holding on to a pole for dear life so I do not fall over. It is difficult because I do not 'look' disabled."

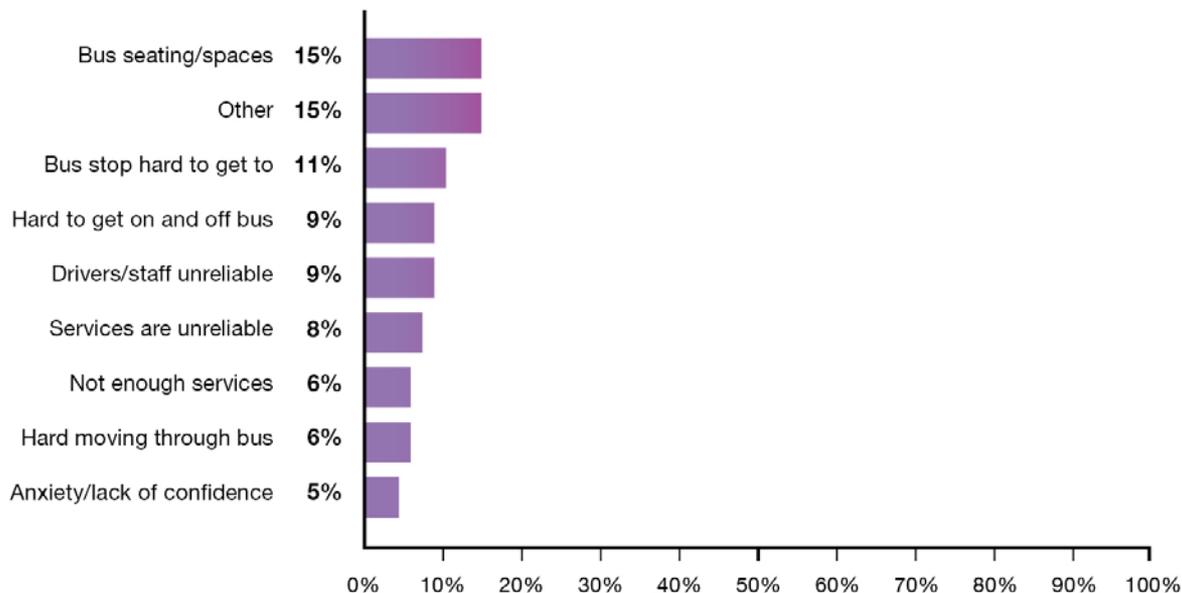
"Travel times so long toileting becomes a big issue."

The biggest difficulty using buses related to bus seating, followed by getting to the bus stop, getting on and off the bus and driver reliability



Biggest Difficulty Using Buses

Number of respondents = 65; Responses shown where selected by at least 5%



To address fleet barriers, respondents proposed better restraints, more wheelchair spaces, 100% accessible vehicles and consistent ramp angles



Solutions to address fleet barriers

Wheelchair locks and tie-downs

"Wheel locks for manual chairs, tie downs for power chairs."

"There must be a higher quantity and stronger quality of strap clasps."

More wheelchair spaces

"Maybe extra spaces for more wheelchairs, which when not in use people can stand or sit in the spot."

"More disabled spaces."

"Most buses have ramps now but only 1 or 2 wheelchairs can access."

Make 100% of buses wheelchair accessible

"Make more metro buses wheelchair accessible."

Consistency in ramp angles / bus stop kerb heights

"Automation of ramps on correct angles is necessary to make it safer."

To address inconsiderate behaviour barriers, respondents proposed reminder signs, better policing of wheelchair spaces and better training



Solutions to address inconsiderate behaviour barriers

Reminder signs in buses

"There could be signs up reminding people to be considerate."

Ensure wheelchair users can access wheelchair spaces

"Actually enforce people getting out of disabled spaces."

"Changing the wheelchair seat so it's ONLY for wheelchair/pram and can't be sat in."

Driver disability awareness training

"Drivers more considerate for people who have a disability."

"Smoother driving by bus drivers (including them reliably waiting for us to be in position before driving)."

"If drivers were trained in assisting wheelchair users it would be of great benefit."

To address information barriers, respondents proposed a fully accessible app and audio-visual announcements in buses



*This was also mentioned in relation to trains and trams. It relates both to the app being accessible and the app providing information about transport accessibility.

Solutions to address information barriers

Fully accessible app*

"If I can't read and write I can't work out how to get somewhere...I want to be more independent so would need some kind of simple to use app."

"Accurate and reliable technology on accessibility."

"Update the Adelaide Metro app."

"Make the planning app simpler."

Audio-visual announcements in buses

"We believe that there should be an audio system installed in buses to tell people when they're stop is coming up and when their stop is arrived. There should be very big visual digital signs for people who are hearing impaired as well."

Around a third of respondents could identify **train** improvements in recent years, relating to platform upgrades, train features and better info



Improvements in recent years to trains

Platform upgrades

"Some of the platforms have been upgraded to make it easier to get on and off trains. Whereas some of the older platforms, the height between train and platform can be very large."

"Platforms are more inline and easier to step on and off."

Better features on newer trains

"New train with access throughout is fabulous for wheelchair users."

"More wheelchair spaces, better buttons to alert drivers."

"At last we have 2 properly sized and marked out allocated spaces for wheelchair users on trains."

Better signage and announcements

"More emphasis on priority seating! The signs are helpful which state not all disabilities are visible which is really great!"

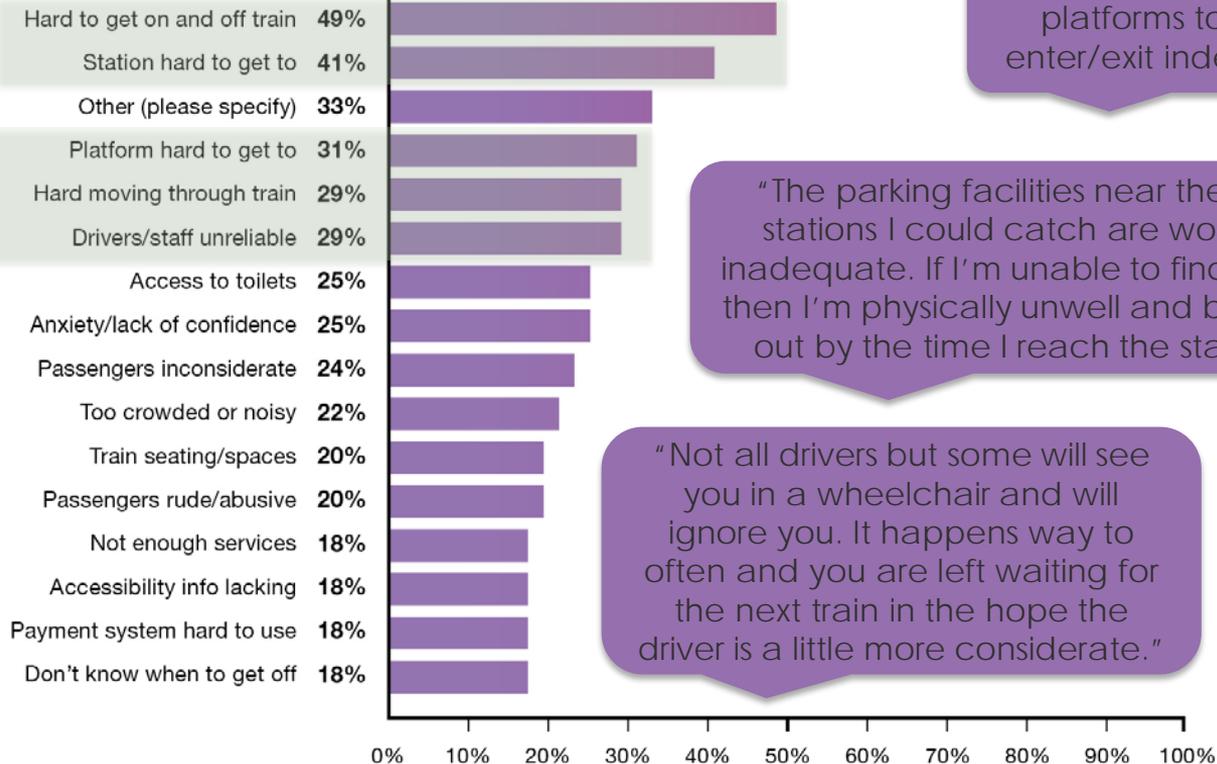
"Voice announcements...and digital signage have all made trains easier for me."

The most common difficulties using trains related to getting on/off, getting to the station and platform, moving through the train and staff reliability



Difficulties Using Trains

Number of respondents = 51; Responses shown where selected by at least 18%



"Gap between train and platforms too great to enter/exit independently."

"Always require a ramp to get on and off."

"Nowhere near train route."

"The parking facilities near the train stations I could catch are woefully inadequate. If I'm unable to find a park then I'm physically unwell and blacking out by the time I reach the station."

"The platforms are extremely steep for people trying to push themselves up the ramps."

"Impossible to get to wheelchair seating when train is packed!!"

"Not all drivers but some will see you in a wheelchair and will ignore you. It happens way too often and you are left waiting for the next train in the hope the driver is a little more considerate."

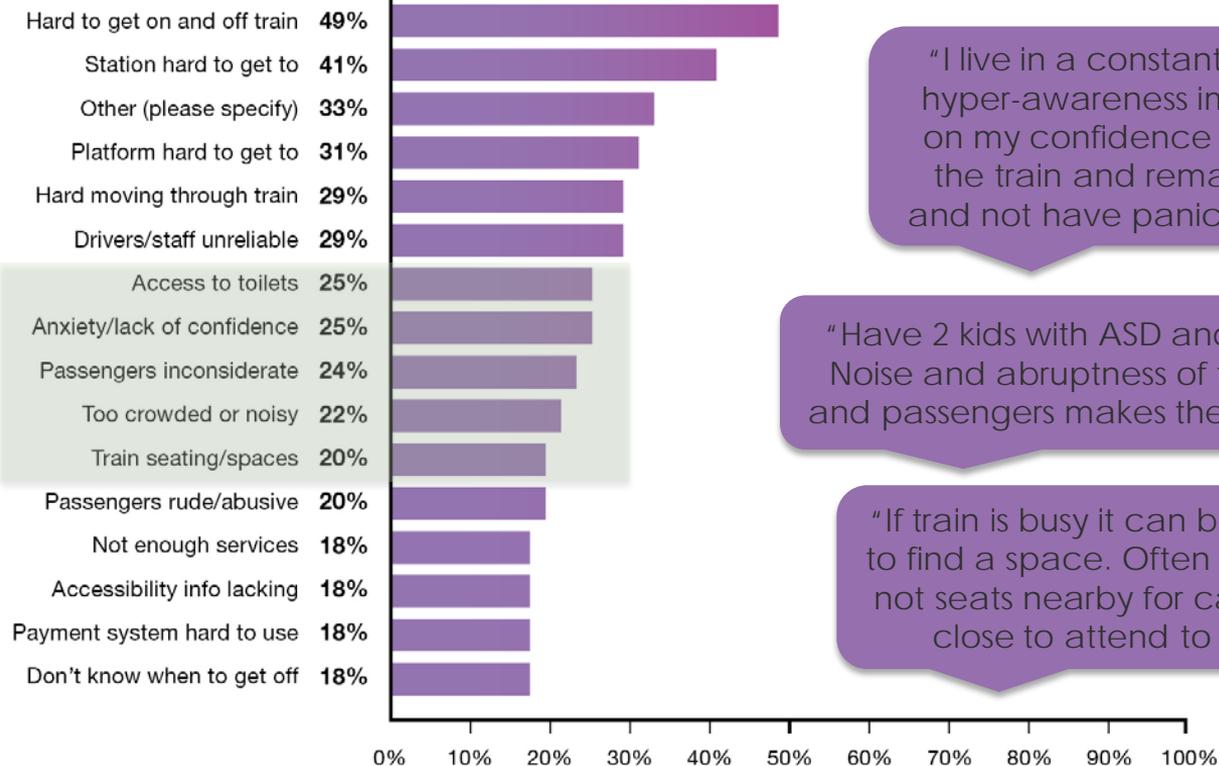
"Drivers have routinely forgot to wheelchair ramp assist off the train, adding hours to a journey to have to do a round trip to the end of the line."

Other fairly common difficulties using trains related to toilet access, anxiety, inconsiderate/abusive passengers, crowding and seating



Difficulties Using Trains

Number of respondents = 51; Responses shown where selected by at least 18%



"I live in a constant state of hyper-awareness impacting on my confidence to be on the train and remain calm and not have panic attacks."

"Don't feel safe waiting for a train when they're so far apart and often late."

"Have 2 kids with ASD and anxiety. Noise and abruptness of train staff and passengers makes them worse."

"As a woman who uses a power wheelchair I have been assaulted twice while waiting for / using the train system."

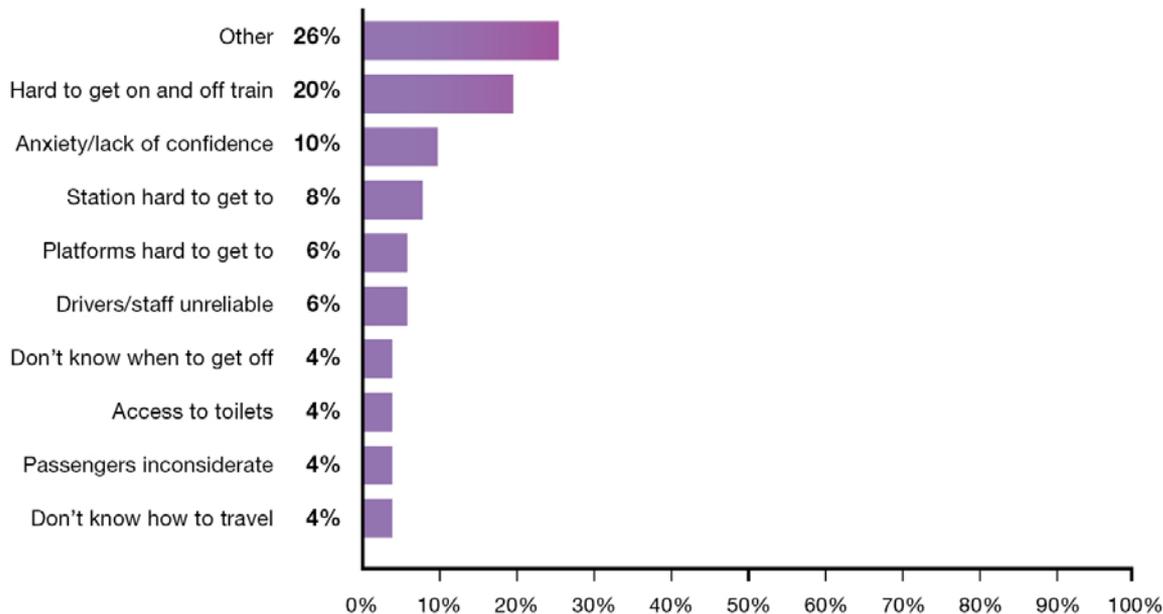
"If train is busy it can be difficult to find a space. Often there are not seats nearby for carer to sit close to attend to me."

The biggest difficulty using trains related to getting on and off, followed by anxiety, getting to the station and platform, and unreliable staff



Biggest Difficulty Using Trains

Number of respondents = 50; Responses shown where selected by at least 4%



To address train barriers, respondents proposed upgrading platforms, more accessible parking bays, quiet carriages and passenger/driver training



Solutions
to
address
train
barriers

Upgrade platforms to reduce gap / incline

"Some platforms could be made to independently align though it doesn't appear to be invested in (Adelaide Railway Station platform 1 has a rubber strip to make getting on/off train safe and independent but only a tiny part of the platform)."

"Less step or gap on and off trains"

More accessible parking bays at stations

"The parking facilities near the train stations I could catch are woefully inadequate."

Quiet carriages and come and try days

"Have area dedicated only to wheelchairs that does not become overcrowded."

"I grew up in the country and live in east where there are no trains, so exposure and use very limited. Perhaps a few come and try days...or offer disability mentors to show you the ropes."

Better driver disability awareness training

"Better training and consistency in stopping at raised portion of platform and offering ramp."

Around half of respondents could identify **tram** improvements in recent years, relating to the tram extension and wheelchair accessibility



Improvements in recent years to trams

Tram extension

"More stops to get on and off and stops closer to places that I need to go, which reduces the amount of walking that is required to get to my destination."

"Bit longer route down North Terrace."

"I like the improvements to the route that the trams take i.e. going up to the Festival Centre and East Terrace."

All tram stops now wheelchair accessible

"The tram was made accessible in Adelaide CBD."

"More accessible stops/stations."

"Making all tram stops accessible for wheelchairs."

More locations where a ramp is not needed

"More platforms at an accessible height. They ALL should be.."

"More tram spots where you don't need the ramp flipped out."

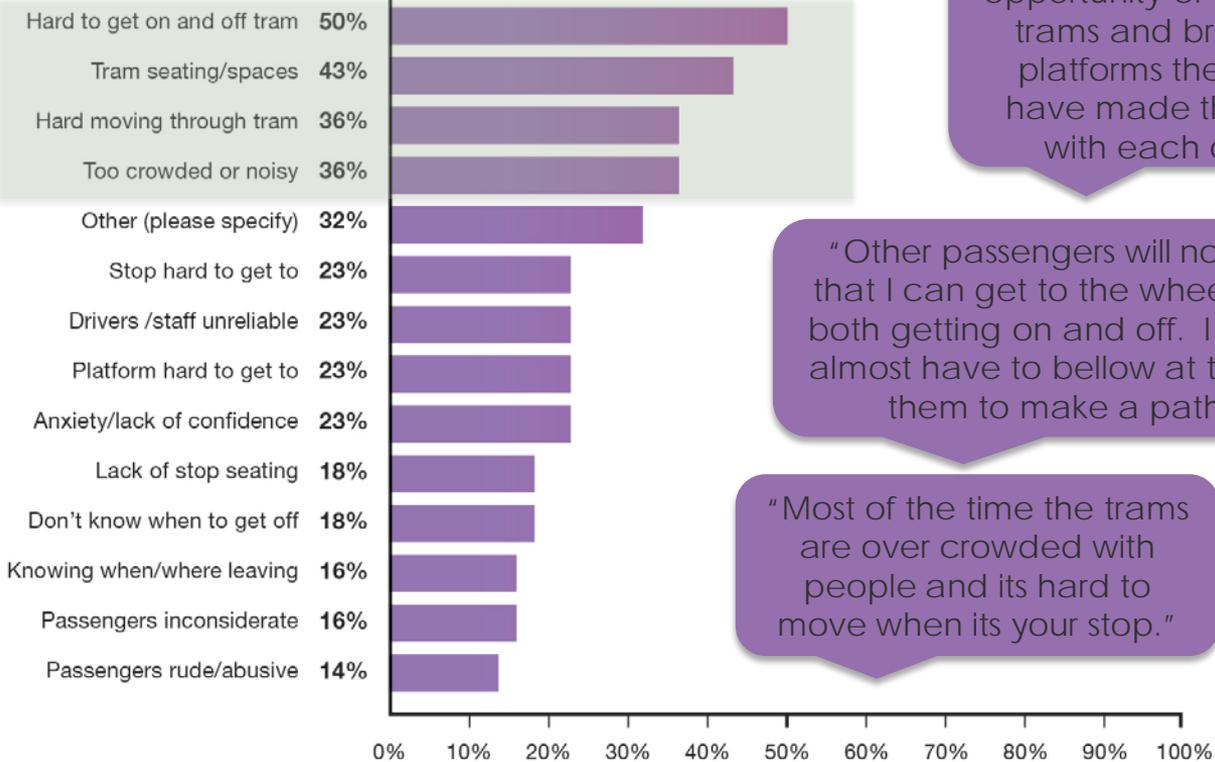
"The trams lining up with the footpath which has made it easier to get on and off without having the driver put down the ramp."

The most common difficulties using trams related to getting on/off, seating, moving through the tram and crowding



Difficulties Using Trams

Number of respondents = 44; Responses shown where selected by at least 10%



"While they had the opportunity of brand new trams and brand new platforms they should have made them level with each other."

"I have been denied access to trams, left at the tram stop being told to wait for the next one because there was no wheelchair space."

"Other passengers will not move so that I can get to the wheelchair spot both getting on and off. I and drivers almost have to bellow at them to get them to make a pathway."

"Tram starts with a jerk before I have found a seat or strap and I have fallen over."

"Most of the time the trams are over crowded with people and its hard to move when its your stop."

"Unless I get on at the first stop on the tram route, it is often too crowded to find a suitable space. Can only catch trams during non busy times."

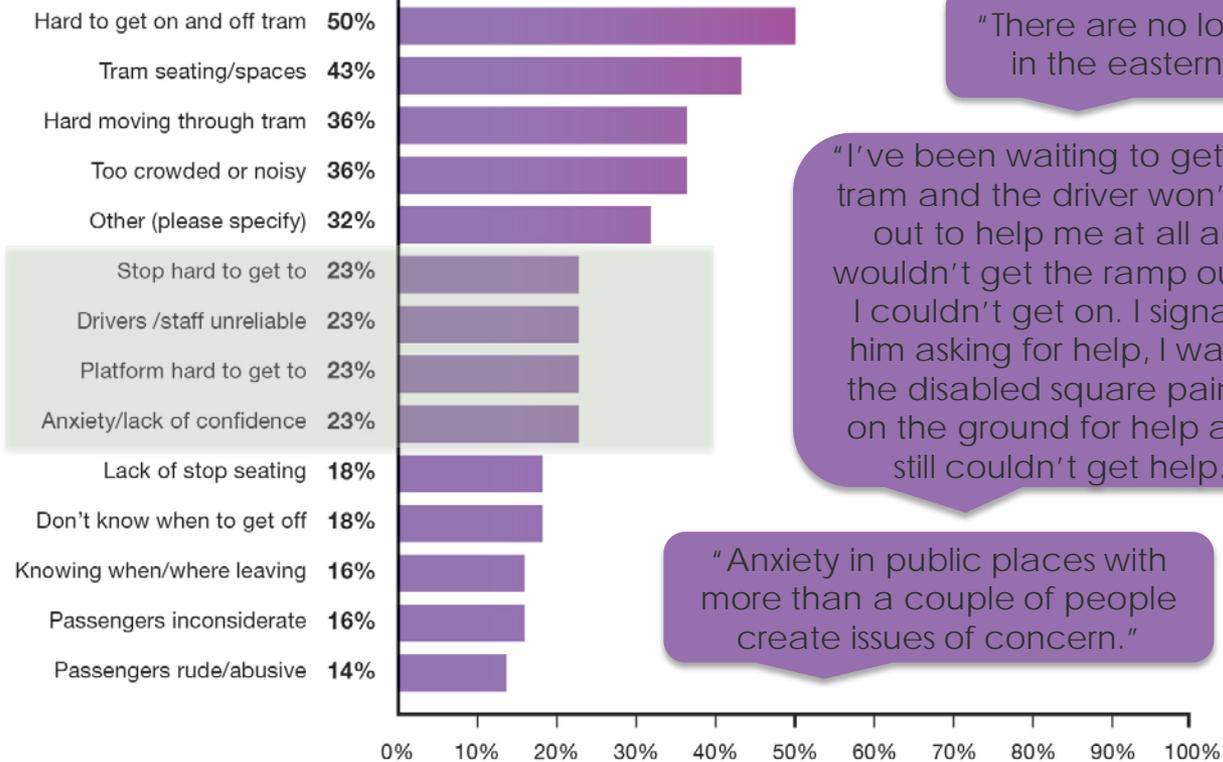


Other fairly common difficulties using trams related to getting to the stop and platform, staff reliability and anxiety



Difficulties Using Trams

Number of respondents = 44; Responses shown where selected by at least 10%



"There are no local trams in the eastern area."

"I've been waiting to get on a tram and the driver won't get out to help me at all and wouldn't get the ramp out. So I couldn't get on. I signaled him asking for help, I was on the disabled square painted on the ground for help and I still couldn't get help."

"I'm not familiar with tram services and don't generally use them because I don't know where to get on or where they are going... I can't read or write."

"Anxiety in public places with more than a couple of people create issues of concern."

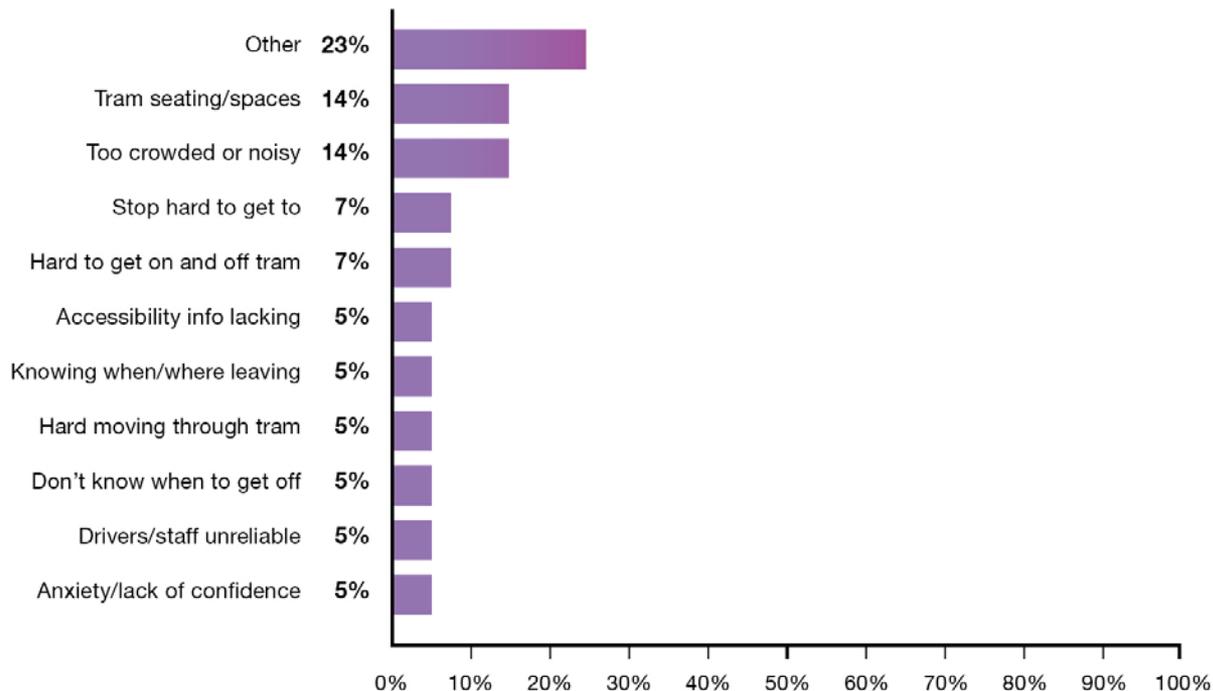
"Other passengers usually hog the disability seating and pretend not to notice my guide dog looking for a seat for me."

The biggest difficulty using trams related to seating, followed by crowding, getting to the stop and getting on and off the tram



Biggest Difficulty Using Trams

Number of respondents = 43; Responses shown where selected by at least 5%



To address tram barriers, respondents proposed upgrading platforms, better education, more time to board and measures tackling crowding



Solutions to address tram barriers

Upgrade whole or part of platforms to remove gap

"More platforms at an accessible height. they ALL should be.."

"They have bought new trams that are accessible with assistance. However the new trams should've been made accessible without assistance."

Educate others to be more considerate

"Education of the general public is needed - that wheelchair users have priority of use of the wheelchair spaces, that they will have to actually move more than 2 inches to make a path to the wheelchair spot..."

"It would be great if people that had no disability would give us more room to move on and off the tram."

Allow more time for boarding

"Wait until people are on and seated before moving."

"Potentially they could delay taking off a little until their mobility-impaired passengers are more set in place."

More space on trams or more services

"Redesign the carriages to meet access better, and not feel like I am in a broom closet."

"Need more space / to make it easier to use the spaces provided."

"More trams, larger trams to have more passengers."

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