**PUBLIC TRANSPORT ACCESS ADVISORY GROUP**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**Background**

The Secretary of the Department of State Growth procures public transport bus services. This includes both public and school bus services. Ferry services also operate on the River Derwent.

Public transport serves a range of purposes. This includes connecting people to employment, education, and services, and providing an alternative travel mode to help reduce congestion.

State Growth aims to make public transport an attractive and viable travel option. It designs routes and manages service contracts to meet public needs as broadly as possible. State Growth is committed to reducing barriers and providing safe, accessible services for all.

**Purpose**

The aim of the Public Transport Access Advisory Group (the Group) is to help improve the public transport user experience. It provides advice, feedback, and recommendations on public transport accessibility. This ongoing engagement will better ensure that public transport products and services meet the needs of customers.

**Scope of work**

Specifically, the Group:

* shares lived experience of whole-of-journey access barriers, including when planning, booking, boarding, riding, and disembarking a service\*
* identifies current or emerging issues likely to affect people with access barriers
* considers the impact of new technologies, delivery models, policies, programs, and projects on people with access barriers\*\*
* advises on key priorities and opportunities for improvement.

\* Where possible, Group input on bus stop infrastructure will be used as part of this process, acknowledging State Growth has limited funding capacity, and partners with local government to upgrade stops.

\*\* For example, the *Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002* are expected to change in 2025. Group insights will be invaluable when considering how the revised Standards are implemented in Tasmania.

The scope is limited to public transport. In this context public transport means government contracted general access and school bus services and River Derwent ferry services.

The Premier's Disability Advisory Council (PDAC) addresses broader regulatory, monitoring and enforcement matters. The PDAC assists the Tasmanian Government to enable the full participation of people with disability in all aspects of community life.

The Group role will be considered when these Terms of Reference are reviewed.

**Roles and responsibilities**

***Secretariat***

The Group is supported with a Secretariat provided by State Growth.

The Secretariat is responsible for:

* scheduling meetings
* distributing agendas and papers
* preparing minutes
* completing other administrative duties associated with the Group.

***Chair***

The Group is chaired by the General Manager Road User Services. The General Manager Road User Services has responsibility for the Passenger Transport Branch which administers public transport contracts.

In the absence of the General Manager Road User Services, the Director Passenger Transport will act as Chair.

The Chair is responsible for:

* providing effective leadership of the group and meetings
* ensuring adherence with these Terms of Reference and reporting any departures to the Secretary of State Growth
* deciding on and inviting observers and presenters to meetings.

***Members***

Group members have lived experience of disability or experience barriers to accessing public transport. The lived experience may be drawn from the following population groups:

* people with disability
* older people
* parents or carers
* young people

Group members should also:

* be able to represent the perspectives of people facing accessibility issues using public transport in Tasmania
* have no conflict of interest with the work of the Group
* be interested in improving public transport accessibility
* be able to work constructively with State Growth to improve public transport accessibility
* support a safe environment in which all members to have the opportunity to raise discussion points.

Members are responsible for:

* attending meetings for the term of their appointment
* participating in discussions openly and respectfully
* reviewing any documents and papers as required before meetings
* referring any media contact to State Growth for response
* adhering to these Terms of Reference.

Members of will be appointed as individuals, not as representatives of organisations.

The size and scope of the Group does not allow for representation from transport service providers, local government, or planning and engineering representatives. Changing membership will be considered when these Terms of Reference are reviewed.

**Terms of appointment**

***Periodic recruitment of members***

The Secretary will publicly call for expressions of interest for membership of the Group. Expressions of interest may be sought via established advocacy or representative organisations.

The Secretary may appoint up to 10 members to the Group.

***Resignation***

A member may resign by providing notice in writing to the Secretary via the Chair should they not be able, or not wish, to continue in their role.

***Removal***

The Secretary may remove a member from the Group for non-adherence to these Terms of Reference.

***Vacancies***

During the term, the Secretary may fill any vacancy by:

* considering previous expressions of interest received
* calling for fresh expressions of interest.

A member who joins the Group through the filling of a vacancy will be appointed for a term to align with the other members of the Group.

The Secretary may determine that a vacancy will not be filled.

***Term of appointment***

Appointment to the Group will be for a period of up to three years. Members cannot serve multiple consecutive terms.

***Expenses***

Members will receive reimbursement for costs relating to:

* transport to and from face-to-face meetings
* accommodation if required to attend face-to-face meetings
* support carers required to assist members to attend meetings.

Catering will be provided if meetings occur across mealtimes.

***Conflicts of interest***

Members must take all reasonable measures to fulfil their role under these Terms of Reference objectively and in good faith. This includes avoiding any activity which may result in a conflict of interest. Members must immediately inform the chair in writing of any actual or perceived conflicts of interest with their role on the Group.

When aware of a conflict of interest, the Chair may direct the member as to how to manage or mitigate the conflict of interest. The member must comply with any reasonable direction given by the Chair. Alternatively, the Chair may escalate the matter to the Secretary, who may remove the member from the Group.

***Confidentiality***

Confidentiality is key for full and frank discussion and meaningful engagement.

All material discussed or received during or in relation to a Group meeting is confidential unless it is:

* already in the public domain
* being communicated as part of community consultation
* communicated with stakeholders as approved by the Chair.

Members must:

* not publicly share these confidential materials or information, either directly or via channels such as social media
* continue to keep any such material and information confidential even after ceasing to be a member of the Group.

Members who do not observe confidentiality may be referred by the Chair to the Secretary for removal.

**Meetings**

***Attendance***

Members are expected to attend all meetings, either in person (where this is provided for) or online. A member who does not attend three consecutive meetings may be referred by the Chair to the Secretary for removal.

***Proxies***

Members of the Group are appointed as individuals, not as representatives of organisations. Therefore, proxies are not required. If a member is unable to attend a particular meeting and desires to nominate a proxy for a specific reason, prior approval must be sought from the Chair.

***Frequency***

There will be a minimum of three meetings and a maximum of five meetings annually. This allows for additional ad hoc meetings to discuss specific projects or initiatives. All meetings will be scheduled with at least four weeks’ notice.

***Meeting format***

All meetings will initially be arranged virtually, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. If a member needs support to access via Microsoft Teams, the Secretariat will assist them however possible.

Face-to-face meetings may be introduced later, subject to a reassessment of the risks and practicalities.

***Quorum***

A quorum is required for a meeting to proceed.

A quorum is achieved provided not more than three members are absent.

***Agenda items***

The Secretariat will call for agenda items at least three weeks before a meeting. Members must submit any papers required to the Chair at least two weeks before the meeting. The Secretariat will electronically share an agenda and any papers one week before the meeting.

Each agenda will have a set amount of time reserved for Member's input. Members can advise the Secretariat of any items that do not require papers that they intend to raise in advance, or raise these items during meetings. If time is limited, the Chair will prioritise items advised in advance.

***Minutes***

The Secretariat will share draft meeting minutes electronically to members not more than three weeks after a meeting.

***Attendance of non-members***

Guests may attend meetings at the invitation of the Chair. Guests will only participate in discussions for relevant agenda items.

**Governance**

The Group will provide advice, feedback and recommendations on public transport policy, programs, and projects on issues of public transport accessibility.

The Chair will report to the Secretary on this work, including issues Members have identified as priorities for their term.

**Terms of reference review**

The Group will review these Terms of Reference not more than annually and at least once before the end of the three-year membership term. The Group can submit proposed amendments to the Secretary through the Chair. The Secretary may also propose amendments.

Any amendment proposed to take effect during the current membership term will be an agenda item at the next meeting.

The Secretary will have the final approval of any amendments.