



This process has provided the opportunity for extensive group consultation and collaboration with key stakeholders from the disability and disability carers sector (spinal injuries, Multiple Sclerosis, and physical disabilities), Local Government Association Queensland, Australian Medical Association Queensland, other agencies such as Disability Services Queensland, Queensland Health and Queensland Police Service and relevant interest groups.

The policy review includes:

- completing a system review to identify and remove expired and no longer needed permits from the register and reduce the opportunities for misusing expired permits
- establishing working groups to review the eligibility criteria for the scheme and the enforcement process
- ensuring the proposed recommendations address the issues facing the scheme and deliver the objectives of the policy review.

Action 4: Finalise and implement recommendations of the Disability Parking Permit Scheme Review.

3.2.2 The Taxi Subsidy Scheme

The Taxi Subsidy Scheme (TSS) was introduced in Queensland in 1987. It provides affordable travel by taxi for people with disabilities who are unable to use other forms of public transport, which improves the mobility, independence and quality of life for scheme members.

QT is responsible for the budget and administration of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme. The legislative and policy framework for the scheme is within the Transport Operations (Passenger Transport) legislation.

To qualify for the scheme, an applicant obtains and provides medical information demonstrating that they meet the eligibility criteria.

Queensland Health assesses each application to determine whether the applicant's condition/s qualifies them for the scheme.

Action 5: Continue the management of the Taxi Subsidy Scheme.





3.2.3 School Transport

QT contracts operators throughout Queensland for a number of dedicated school bus services.

The Department of Education, Training and the Arts (DETA) is responsible for ensuring school children with disabilities are able to access the school most suitable for their needs.

On request from the DETA, QT then arranges for the child to be transported to and from school in the mode most suitable to the student's needs.

Action 6: Continue the operational management of the School Transport Assistance Program for Students with Disabilities.

3.2.4 Driver licences

The current Medical Condition Reporting Phase 2 is consulting widely with medical professionals and community groups in reviewing health professionals' roles and obligations in determining the "fitness to drive" of all drivers, including those with a disability.

This is to ensure health professionals and their representative associations are fully consulted in the development of procedures to improve the medical condition reporting process in the medical assessment of all drivers, including those with a disability.

Action 7: Continue the consultation with people with disabilities as part of the Medical Condition Reporting Project.





4.1 Planning

4.1.1 TransLink Network Plan

In February 2005, QT published the draft TransLink Network Plan incorporating TransLink's strategic priorities and policies.

Strategic Priority 4 of the plan is about making the network easy, comfortable and safe. This is being achieved in part through the provision of quality stations and stops (Policy 4.3) that are compliant with the *Disability Discrimination Act*.

The policy covers the provision of guidance in relation to path surfaces, tactile pavers, wheelchair access, lifts and the level and layout of information. Public consultation on the draft plan occurred in early to mid 2005.

Work is currently underway to develop the 2008 TransLink Network Plan. The next plan will incorporate further policy development encompassing the entire journey for passengers from decision to destination.

Consultation with Queensland Government agencies and local governments is currently being finalised on a series of access policies incorporating *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* compliance requirements and support for best practice design and development of stations. Public consultation on the next TransLink Network Plan (reflecting these policies) will occur during 2008.

Action 8: Continue to ensure compliance with the Transport Standards and support best practice design in transport network planning.

4.1.2 Integrated regional transport plans

QT has a significant interest in the development of high level plans for the transport system. Plans such as regionally specific integrated regional transport plans provide guidance on considering accessibility to major activity generators such as universities, hospitals etc by a range of transport modes. This ensures proposals address disability requirements.

Good practice requires that the development of these documents include a level of awareness of the requirements and implications of the Transport Standards.

Action 9: Continue to ensure consideration of the requirements of people with a disability in high-level planning processes to ensure best practice.

4.1.3 Smart Travel Centre – Queensland

Smart Travel Centre – Queensland is currently developing the *Action Plan for Walking 2008 – 2010* which follows on from the *Action Plan for Pedestrians 2004 – 2006*.

Walking is an integral part of the transport system and day-to-day mobility. Walking provides an important role in bringing people into the community for a variety of reasons. These include going to work, to school, visiting local facilities, getting to public transport or walking for fitness and recreation. Walking is one of our most social, accessible and sustainable modes of transport.

The draft Action Plan for Walking sets out actions for the next three years to build a culture of walking within Queensland.



This will be achieved through providing environments and amenities which encourage and support walking, promoting walking and its benefits, and addressing safety issues.

QT is committed to ensuring the needs of people with disabilities are addressed in the design of pedestrian facilities.

Action 10: Ensure the inclusion of the needs of people with disabilities in the development and implementation of the *Action Plan for Walking 2008 – 2010*.

4.2 Consultation

4.2.1 Consultation processes

QT is committed to ensuring that the way in which its staff approach engaging with community members is inclusive of people with a disability.

This means that when the community is being consulted as part of the development and review of legislation, planning, policies and procedures, the processes followed are non-discriminatory and barrier free for people with a disability.

To achieve this, QT adopts and promotes internally a standard for community engagement processes. The approach followed is the Community Engagement Framework developed by the state Department of Communities.

This includes *Engaging Queenslanders: A guide to engaging people with a disability*. All members of staff in the department involved in community

engagement practices now follow the preferred approach in their everyday work.

Action 11: Continue to promote and follow consultation processes based on *Engaging Queenslanders: A guide to engaging people with a disability*.

4.2.2 Disability Action Plan for Wheelchair Accessible Taxis

By the end of 2007, the taxi industry throughout Australia will be required by legislation to provide the same service to people with disabilities as it does to the general community. In preparing for this milestone, QT undertook to gain a better understanding of its role in terms of ensuring the delivery of accessible taxi services in Queensland. In particular, QT has considered:

- the methodology it uses to determine the number of Wheelchair Accessible Taxi service licences that are required in a declared Taxi Service Area
- the terms and conditions that it attaches to taxi service licences
- the legislative framework in which taxi services in Queensland are provided, in particular focusing on the interaction between the obligations of *Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992* legislation and the operating environment created by the governing Queensland Transport legislation
- the availability of service licences across Queensland



- specific driver and owner (or operator) actions that undermine the delivery of services
- the way that it monitors the performance of Taxi Service Contract holders, taxi owners and operators and taxi drivers
- the terms and conditions that it attaches to taxi service licences.

QT chairs the Taxi Industry *Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)* Reference Group that considers issues specific to the delivery of services. The DDA Reference Group is comprised of a range of stakeholders, including:

- the Spinal Injuries Association
- the Cerebral Palsy League
- Carers Queensland
- National Disability Services
- Endeavour Foundation
- Queensland Blind Association
- Taxi Council of Queensland
- Black and White Cabs
- Yellow Cabs.

Following feedback from the Taxi Industry DDA Reference Group, QT has developed an '*Action Plan to Improve Accessibility in the Queensland Taxi Industry*'.

In developing the action plan, QT identified six areas where improvement was necessary if compliance with the Transport Standards was to be achieved by Queensland's taxi industry.

The areas are:

- improving the regulation framework for the industry
- wheelchair accessible taxi licence availability
- service delivery, including a focus on suitable vehicles
- incentives for provision of wheelchair accessible taxi services
- provision of accessible taxi services in rural and regional Queensland
- performance monitoring and compliance.

It is envisaged that the plan will be publicly released and made available on the HREOC website for public reference.

By implementing the finalised taxi industry Action Plan, QT considers the Queensland taxi industry will have the necessary support to meet the objectives set out in the Transport Standards.

Action 12: Continue to liaise with the Taxi Industry DDA Reference Group to implement identified actions in its *Action Plan to Improve Accessibility in the Queensland Taxi Industry*.



4.3 Complaint handling

QT is committed to providing customers with a high quality of service delivery, products, services and operations.

Customer feedback is highly valued as a means of gauging and improving our efficiency and effectiveness.

Procedural fairness and natural justice are key elements throughout the complaint management process of the department. QT ensures all customer complaints are heard promptly and effectively.

QT is committed to ensuring people have the same level of opportunity to make a complaint regardless of their preferred communication format/mode. QT will assist customers to ensure the complaint process is flexible and no one is excluded from making a complaint.

QT appreciates that inflexible complaints management systems are those that are available only in written format, only allow for complaints to be lodged in writing or are only investigated if they are received in writing. Such inflexible systems prevent a number of people from making a complaint.

QT is currently reviewing its complaints management processes. This includes actions enhancing accessibility for people with a disability.

Action 13: Ensure that the complaints management policy and processes facilitate accessibility for people with a disability.





5.1 TransLink

TransLink provides one single public transport network covering south east Queensland from Gympie North/Noosa to Coolangatta and west to Helidon.

TransLink brings together state and local governments, industry and community groups in a joint effort to improve public transport services in south east Queensland.

It has been recently announced that the Queensland Government has approved in principle the establishment of a statutory authority that is intended to commence operations in July 2008. This initiative aims to build on and take further the success of TransLink which has seen patronage grow by over 30 percent in its first three years of operation. The transit authority will have increased powers to coordinate scheduling and integrate services, present a single, seamless system to users and introduce new technology for all contracted service operators.

TransLink is responsible for delivering on the following key result areas:

- service delivery – integrated public transport services
- infrastructure improvements – improved public transport infrastructure
- ticketing and fares – effective ticketing and fare collection system
- customer services – effective marketing and customer information
- system sustainability – a sustainable public transport system
- business capability – a capable public transport organisation.

TransLink also provides an integrated ticketing system for south east Queensland. This system was first introduced in July 2004.

TransLink is in the process of implementing an automated fare collection system using smart card technology. The technology will make it easier to use public transport and reduce waiting times.





5.2 *qconnect*

The Queensland Government has invested heavily in the regional public transport system. Over the last three years, increases in funding have been provided to:

- increase frequency and introduce new services for urban bus services in major regional cities
- introduce new long distance bus services
- increase frequency on some air routes
- support critical ferry services
- fund infrastructure and rollingstock upgrades for *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* compliance on the long distance passenger rail network and airport upgrades
- introduce innovative flexible transport services.

QT will use the ***qconnect*** brand to describe the regional passenger transport system in Queensland. The branding enables QT to:

- raise the profile of public transport in regional Queensland
- allow passenger transport services in regional Queensland to be coordinated under one banner ensuring a consistent and connected approach
- ensure recognition for government investment in regional passenger transport services.

As TransLink does for south east Queensland, ***qconnect*** will package and brand all existing and new passenger transport services in regional Queensland including:

- bus services (fare changes, service changes/improvements, new and existing buses)
- taxis (secure ranks)
- ferry services
- long distance buses
- regulated air services.

qconnect will also be used to identify Queensland Government funded infrastructure and information services (such as website and timetables).

qconnect
SMART WAYS TO MOVE ABOUT



6.1 Information regarding transport services

Easy access to information regarding transport services is an essential part of public transport travel. The TransLink website is the main portal for people in south east Queensland to access, via the internet, information regarding travel options and timetables. The following projects are in progress or completed to improve accessibility for people with a disability:

- Action is underway to ensure the TransLink website follows QT standards on accessibility for users with screen readers (95 percent complete).
- There is a section on the TransLink website about accessible services and accessing up-to-date information (100 percent complete).
- The National Relay Service (teletypewriter (TTY) and modem) users can access public transport info on 13 36 77 or directly on 61 7 3369 3377 (100 percent complete).
- A public transport guide to be printed late in 2007 will include information on accessibility for people with a disability.
- A passenger information strategy will be complete by the end of 2007 which will include accessibility considerations.

TransLink has developed an information brochure “TransLink Travel for Seniors” which is in larger print. TransLink is developing another brochure containing information of specific interest to people with disabilities.

TransLink staff members regularly attend community events where staff distribute transport information and provide face-to-face contact with people. This includes accessibility focused events such as the “Guide Dogs Mobility Expo” and the “Brisbane Post School Options Expo”, as well as events which attract the wider community.

Action 14: Continue to enhance the provision of accessible transport information through the web, print, call centres, events and other appropriate channels.

