



V/Line Accessibility Action Plan

2022 to 2025



A message from Matt Carrick



V/Line is committed to delivering a modern, high performing railway and coach service as part of an inclusive, integrated and sustainable Victorian transport system. The accessibility of the network continues to be a key focus of that vision. Our Accessibility Action Plan 2022 to 2025 outlines how we will continue to improve the accessibility of our network and the four key priority areas that will guide our efforts.

Our customers

V/Line strives to provide excellence in customer service across the network. We recognise the importance of access to timely information through appropriate channels and the role our staff play in supporting customers when using our stations and services.

Our people

V/Line will continue to develop a workplace, workforce and environment that is inclusive for all customers and staff. Delivering on V/Line's Equality, Inclusion and Respect strategy, and associated action plans, will help foster a workplace that is diverse, inclusive, respectful to and reflective of the communities we serve.

Our network

V/Line will continue to support major public transport projects and upgrades across the state, champion universal design principals and work within the Disability Standards of Accessible Public Transport (DSAPT) to further improve access for customers using V/Line stations, trains and coach services. V/Line will continue to identify opportunities for improvements on the network to ensure we are providing public transport spaces that are inclusive and accessible to all.

Our community

V/Line plays an important role in regional communities, and we are committed to supporting initiatives and projects to further build strong working partnerships with our customers across regional Victoria. V/Line will continue to work closely with the Department of Transport as well as our Accessibility Reference Group, partner organisations, advocacy groups and service providers to seek opportunities to deliver improvements to the network that have positive accessibility outcomes.

V/Line's Accessibility Action Plan 2022 to 2025 was developed in consultation with our staff and Accessibility Reference Group, along with community feedback.

I look forward to driving further improvements across our network as we continue our focus on providing an accessible public transport service for all.

Matt Carrick
Chief Executive Officer



Background and Context

Who we are

V/Line is an operating agency as part of the Department of Transport, delivering services under an agreement with The Head, Transport for Victoria (Head, TfV). V/Line has provided public transport services to regional Victoria for more than 30 years. Each week, V/Line schedules more than 2200 train services between Melbourne and:

- Geelong and Warrnambool
- Ballarat, Maryborough and Ararat
- Bendigo, Swan Hill and Echuca
- Seymour, Shepparton and Albury
- Traralgon, Sale and Bairnsdale.

More than 1,500 V/Line coach services connect with the rail network and serve regional Victorian communities. Some of our coach services also link Victoria with South Australia, New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. Private sector operators provide all V/Line-branded coach services under the management of V/Line.

As well as being a public transport operator, V/Line also leases, provides access to and maintains more than 3,520 kilometres of rail track used by passengers and freight rail operators.

V/Line is a major employer with a workforce of more than 2,400 staff, including many who live and work in regional Victoria.

Our legal requirements

V/Line acknowledges its statutory obligations to provide safe and accessible public transport. These obligations are broadly set out in:

- *The Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (DDA).*
- *The Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002 (Cth) (DSAPT).*
- The Australian Standards as referenced by DSAPT and AS1428 Design for Access and Mobility.
- *The Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic).*

How we made this plan

To develop our Accessibility Action Plan 2022 to 2025, we have:

- reviewed our feedback cases to understand the improvements requested by our customers to allow for better access to V/Line services.
- developed an Accessibility Strategy to set our strategic direction and focus our efforts.
- consulted with our staff across the organisation to gather insights and initiatives.
- consulted with our Accessibility Reference Group to ensure the plan meets the needs of our customers.

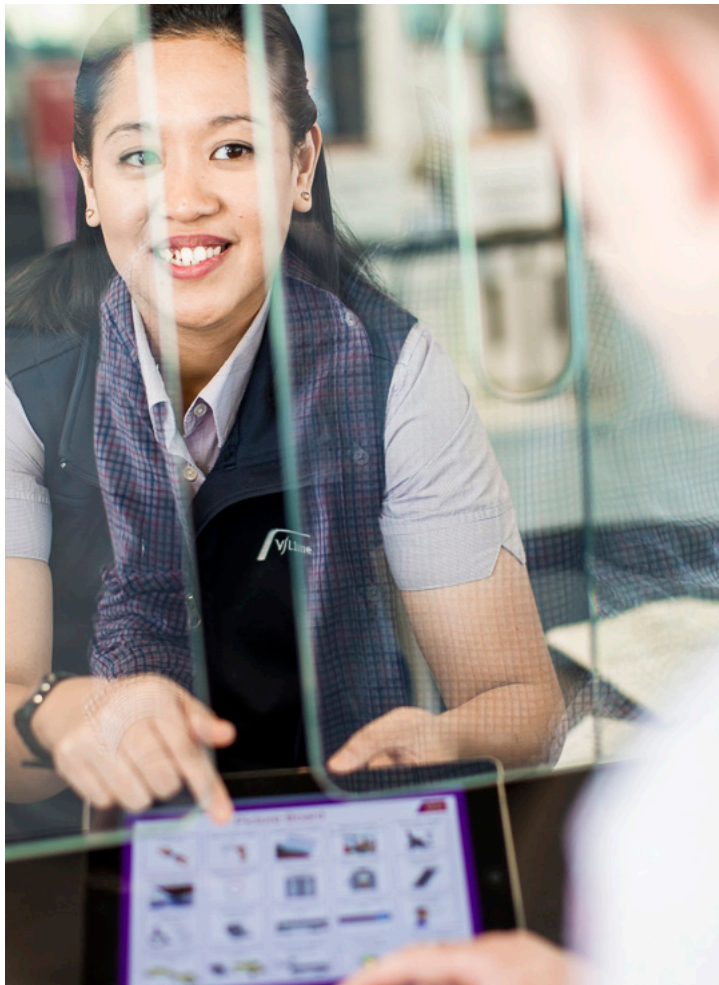


Past achievements

V/Line's Accessibility Action Plan 2019 to 2022 saw the delivery of many positive outcomes, including:

- Maintenance of accreditation of the Communication Access Symbol with Scope Australia. This included audits to ensure staff were able to effectively communicate with customers who have communication difficulties, and an update of the communication tools and training provided to guarantee staff continue to receive relevant training for their role.
- Review and improvement of internal staff documents to provide clear and direct instruction to staff on how to assist customers with accessibility needs.
- Consultation with the Accessibility Reference Group on several key project designs and upgrades to the V/Line digital suite. Additionally, the inaugural Cross-Operator Accessibility Reference Group was held in partnership with Metro Trains Melbourne and Yarra Trams.
- Funding of improved accessibility on the classic fleet by increasing the capacity for customers using mobility aids from one to two per accessible carriage.
- DSAPT audits for all stations on the V/Line network to support the identification of future upgrade works.

- Provision of key information to projects to ensure that designs of new infrastructure were built to DSAPT compliance.
- Review of all website content to reflect accessibility changes across the network and the development of virtual tours for our stations and fleet.
- Formation of V/Line's Diversity Council with the purpose of increasing the awareness, inclusion and employment of people with a disability at V/Line.
- Engagement with SBS to provide diversity training including a module related to accessibility within the workplace.
- Launch of the Accessibility Champions network, consisting of 25 staff, who are passionate about accessibility and making the V/Line network a more accessible place.
- Provision of training for interested staff members in AUSLAN to improve support for customers who use Australian Sign Language to communicate.
- Launch of the Staff Accessibility newsletter to continue to raise awareness about accessibility and the role our staff play in providing customers with an accessible journey.
- Annual celebration of International Day of People with Disability, including presentations from Guide Dogs Victoria on how guide dogs are trained, as well as guest speakers including, Daniel Giles on living and working as a person with Autism, and Martin Stuart on his experience of using public transport as a person who is blind and life as an accessibility advocate.



Priorities and actions

V/Line's 2022 to 2025 Accessibility Action Plan aims to support the Victorian Government's Accessible Public Transport in Victoria Action Plan 2020 to 2024. To achieve this, V/Line developed a framework of Key Priority Areas and Accessibility Pillars to determine our objectives for the next three years.

ACCESSIBILITY PILLARS			
Safety and transparency	Experience	Engagement and integration	Innovation

Key Priority Areas	OBJECTIVES			
	Our customers	Maintain safety and accessibility during daily operations and disruptions	Deliver excellent service that is empathetic, considered and informed	Provide timely, appropriate and accessible information
Our people	Foster a workplace that is diverse, inclusive, respectful and reflects the communities it serves	Empower our staff to provide empathetic and informed service to passengers	Engage with staff across the organisation to promote accessibility	Develop and improve resources for staff to support excellent customer service
Our network	Improve the DSAPT compliance and accessibility of our assets	Continue to develop operational procedures that support access for customers	Embed accessibility in project systems and processes	Develop innovative solutions to improve the accessibility of our assets
Our community	Be accountable for our accessibility commitments	Provide community facing events and programs	Strengthen our community consultation	Collaborate with the Department of Transport and other operators on accessibility improvements

Priority 1: Our customers

V/Line strives to provide excellence in customer service across the network. We recognise the importance of access to timely information through appropriate channels and the role our staff play in supporting continual improvement and innovation to deliver positive travel experiences for our customers, both via our frontline staff and V/Line's communication channels.



Objective 1: Maintain safety and accessibility during daily operations and disruptions

We strive to provide a safe, reliable, comfortable and accessible journey, including during disruptions.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Provide visual disruption information on Passenger Information Displays	Customers will be provided with the necessary information to make decisions during times of disruption	Service cancellations and platform changes to be presented on Passenger Information Displays	Q1 2023
Improve coach replacement destination information	Customers will have improved wayfinding information to navigate replacement coaches	Coach replacement destination signage is updated and rolled out	Q1 2023
Review accessibility booking procedure for planned disruptions	Improved service continuity for customers with accessibility requirements during disruptions	Procedure reviewed and required updates made	Q4 2022
Review and update procedure for de-training during a disruption	Safety assurance for customers with accessibility requirements during disruptions	Review the procedure and update, if appropriate	Q4 2022
Review the disruptions procedure for unstaffed stations	Improved service continuity for customers with accessibility requirements during disruptions	Review the procedure and update, if appropriate	Q4 2022
Planned disruption communications and staff briefings reviewed	Staff are informed and prepared to assist customers with accessibility requirements during disruptions	Planned disruption communications and staff briefings reviewed and updated as appropriate	Q1 2023
Maintain partnership with Travellers Aid and expand service to Ballarat Station	Customers are provided with additional accessibility support at key locations	Travellers Aid services will be maintained at Southern Cross Station and Seymour Station, and introduced at Ballarat Station	Ongoing

Objective 2: Deliver excellent service that is empathetic, considerate and informed

We deliver an experience where staff are respectful, approachable, helpful and knowledgeable.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Consider customers with accessibility requirements in plans to bring customers back to the network post-COVID	The needs of customers with accessibility requirements are considered in planning	Consult with people with lived experience of disability and embed insights into returning customer strategies	Q3 2022
Frontline staff communications to support customers in orienting to onboard facilities	Staff provide excellent customer service to customers with accessibility requirements	Development and delivery of communications	Q4 2022
Implement the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower programme	Customers with hidden disabilities are provided with excellent customer service	Program is completed and rolled out across the organisation	Q1 2023
Maintain Communication Access Symbol accreditation	Customers with communication difficulties are provided with excellent customer service	Communication Access Symbol accreditation is maintained	Ongoing



Objective 3: Provide timely, appropriate and accessible information

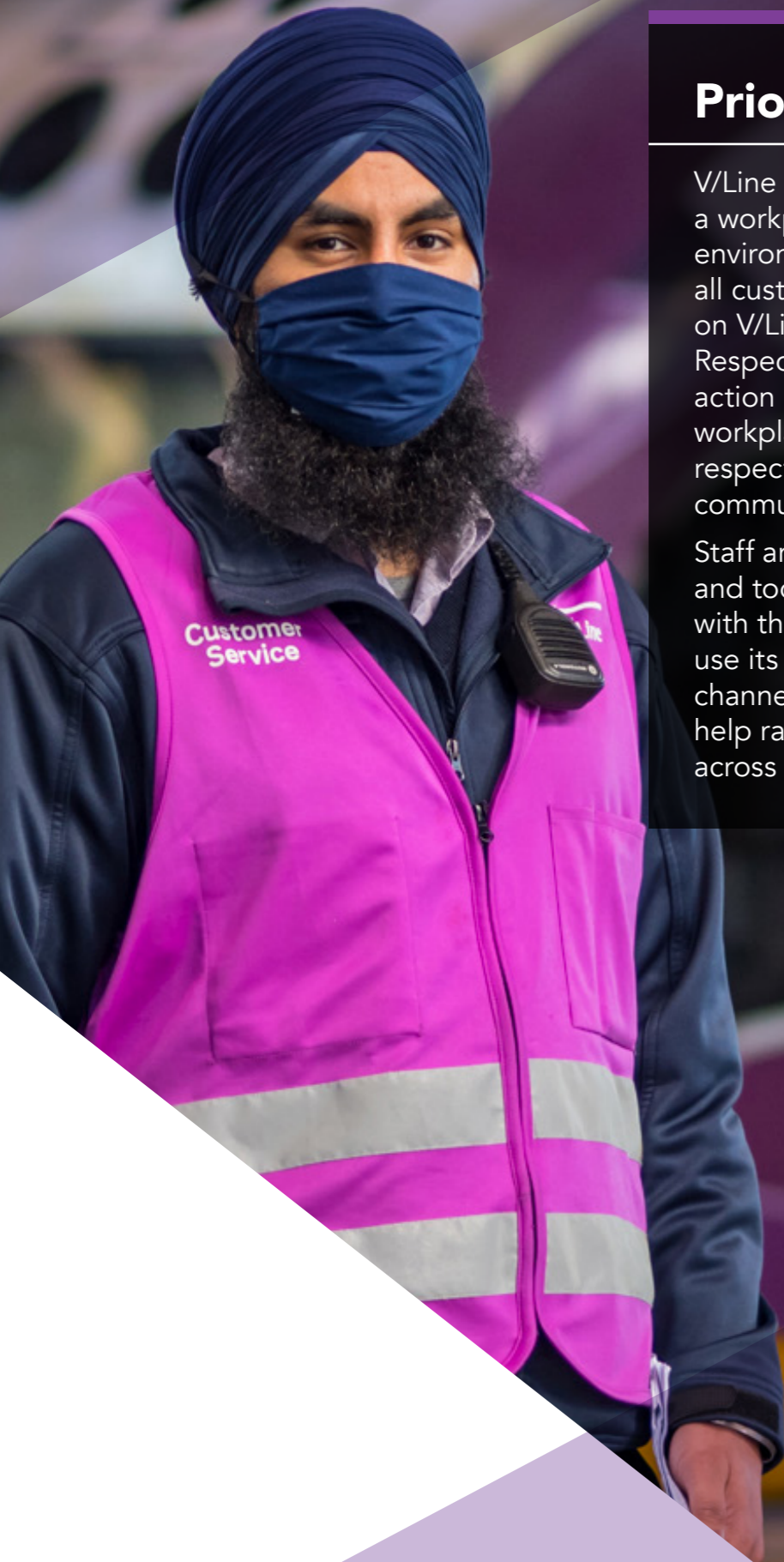
We provide service and journey planning information to customers in an accessible way.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Maintain WCAG 2.1 AA compliance of the V/Line website	The V/Line website is easy to use and accessible	Website remains at 90 per cent compliance or higher	Ongoing
Continue to produce virtual station tours	Customers are able to prepare adequately for their journey	Virtual station tours are uploaded to the V/Line website	Ongoing
Translate relevant documents into 'Easy English'	Customers experience improved access to information	'Easy English' documents published	Q4 2022
Improve communication to customers regarding the availability of accessible carriages	Customers are able to prepare adequately for their journey	Staff are informed of service changes that impact accessibility and notify customers	Q1 2023

Objective 4: Continuously improve customer experience

We continue to make improvements wherever customers interface with our organisation.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Upgrade of booking system to allow for reservation of accessible spaces	Customers who use mobility aids can book accessible spaces on select services and have certainty of travel	Booking system upgraded and released	Q4 2022
Develop a process for free travel voucher bookings to be made via the call centre	Customers can make bookings through a wider range of channels	Process developed and released	Q4 2022
Implementation of free travel voucher digitisation to grant redemption of concession and pension vouchers online	Customers can make bookings through a wider range of channels	Booking system upgraded and released	Q4 2023
Upgrade the V/Line app to include accessibility features	Improved accessibility of the V/Line app	V/Line app updated	Q2 2023



Priority 2: Our people

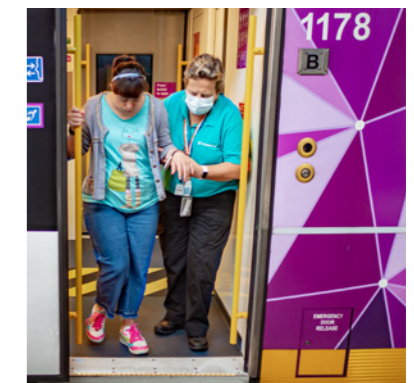
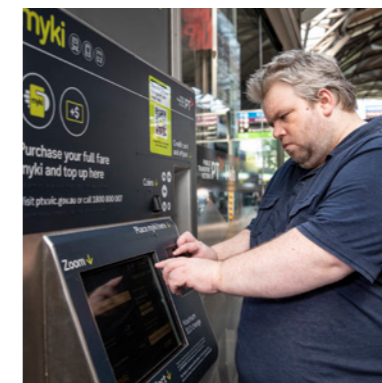
V/Line will continue to develop a workplace, workforce and environment that is inclusive for all customers and staff. Delivering on V/Line’s Equality, Inclusion and Respect strategy, and associated action plans, will help foster a workplace that is diverse, inclusive, respectful to and reflective of the communities we serve.

Staff are provided the training and tools to support customers with their travel needs. V/Line will use its internal communication channels and organise events that help raise the profile of accessibility across the business.

Objective 1: Foster a workplace that is diverse, inclusive, respectful and reflects the communities it serves

We deliver on V/Line’s Equality, Inclusion and Respect strategy.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Embed leadership commitment and accountability	Diversity and inclusion are embedded in all levels of V/Line	Disability initiatives are championed by senior leaders	Q1 2023
Build our talent pipeline by attracting, recruiting and retaining people with disability	Improved access to employment at V/Line for people with disability	Finalisation of workplace adjustment procedure and increased percentage of employees who identify as having a disability	Q4 2023
Build an equitable and inclusive culture where people with disability feel welcome, included and supported	V/Line’s culture of diversity and inclusion is strengthened across the organisation	Employees develop shared understanding of inclusive practices in the workplace and undertake diversity and inclusion training at induction	Q4 2023
Review and update work instructions to ensure inclusive language is used	Internal communications use inclusive language to model best practice	Review the work instructions and update, if appropriate	Q2 2023

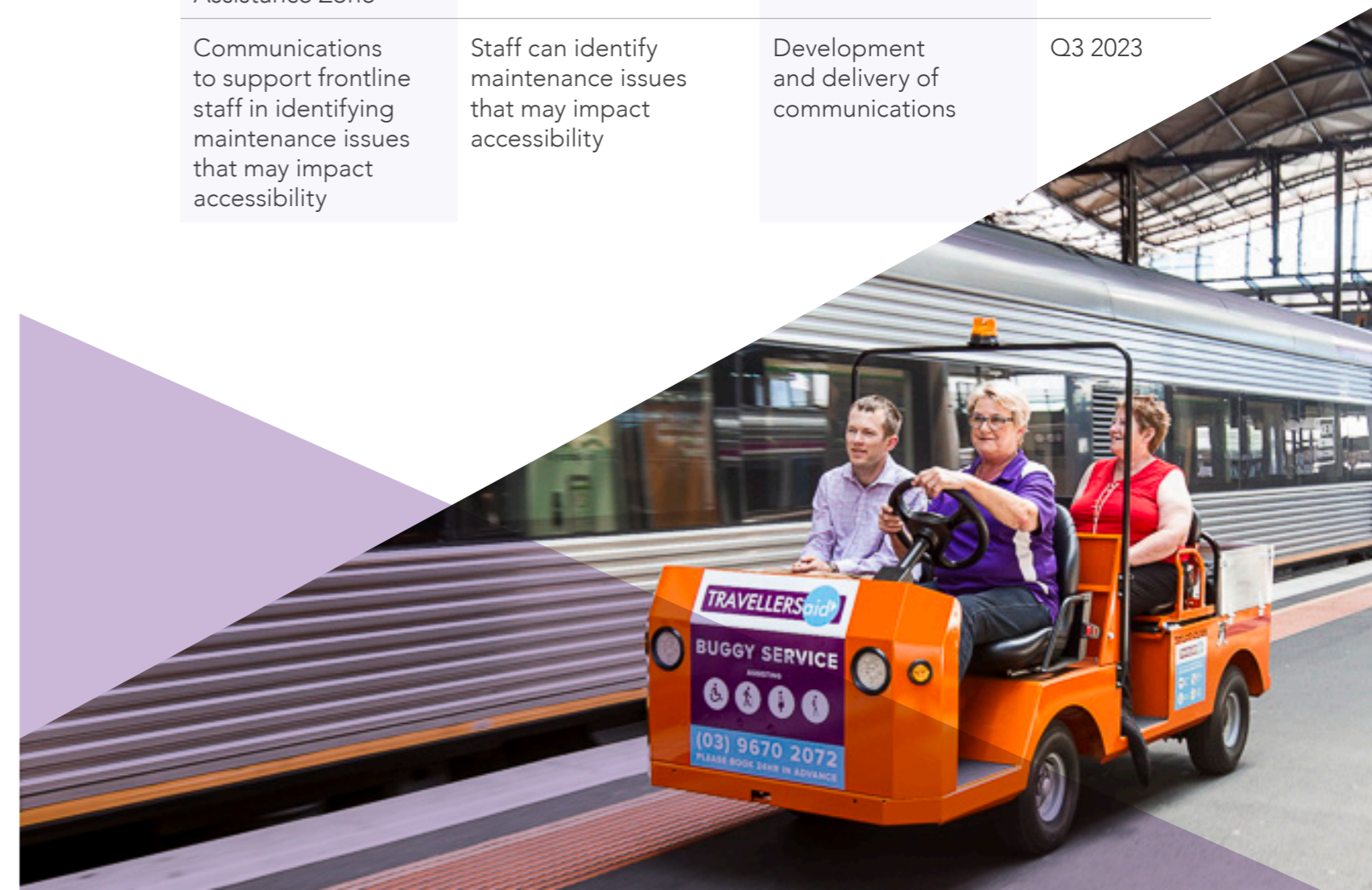


Objective 2: Empower our staff to provide empathetic and informed service to passengers

We provide appropriate training and clear processes so staff can deliver excellent customer service.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Develop and deliver an internal Inclusive Language Guide	Staff have access to inclusive language and are able to improve their own communications	Guide delivered and communicated	Q4 2023
All frontline staff receive disability awareness and communication access training upon induction	Staff are empowered to provide empathetic and informed customer service to customers with accessibility requirements	All new frontline staff receive training upon induction	Ongoing
Provide education to frontline staff in supporting passengers with hidden disabilities	Staff can provide appropriate customer service to customers with hidden disabilities	Hidden disabilities training provided to all frontline staff	Q3 2022
All frontline staff receive annual accessibility training	Staff are empowered to provide empathetic and informed customer service to customers with accessibility requirements	All frontline staff receive training annually	Ongoing
Support scheduled coach operators to provide disability awareness and communication access training to their staff	Scheduled coach staff are empowered to provide empathetic and informed customer service to customers with accessibility requirements	All scheduled coach operators commence rollout of training modules to frontline staff	Q4 2024
Engage with supplementary coach panel operators on key accessibility topics	Scheduled coach staff are informed on key accessibility issues	Communication channel is established and accessibility information is provided quarterly	Q3 2023

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Frontline staff communications and training to support communication with customers in a post-COVID environment	Staff are empowered to provide COVIDSafe customer service to customers with accessibility requirements	Development and delivery of communications	Q4 2022
Frontline staff communications to support customers travelling with Assistance Animals	Staff can provide appropriate customer service to customers travelling with Assistance Animals	Development and delivery of communications	Q1 2023
Frontline staff communications to support customers to access the Boarding Assistance Zone	Staff can support customers who use the Boarding Assistance Zone appropriately	Development and delivery of communications	Q2 2023
Communications to support frontline staff in identifying maintenance issues that may impact accessibility	Staff can identify maintenance issues that may impact accessibility	Development and delivery of communications	Q3 2023



Objective 3: Engage with staff across the organisation to promote accessibility

We celebrate and increase awareness of accessibility across all areas of the organisation.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Continue to foster awareness and engagement through the staff Accessibility Champions network	Staff awareness of and engagement with accessibility issues are increased across the organisation	Accessibility Champions meetings held quarterly	Ongoing
Continue to foster awareness and engagement through the Accessibility Newsletter	Staff are regularly provided with pertinent information regarding accessibility issues and improvements	Newsletter published quarterly	Ongoing
Deliver an accessibility education session to staff on International Day of People with Disability	Staff hear from people with lived experience of disability and develop a greater understanding of accessibility issues	Session delivered annually	Annually
Develop 'Voice of Customer' internal communication to highlight customer experiences, including those with accessibility requirements	Accessibility issues raised through customer feedback are included in internal communications	Release first 'Voice of Customer'	Q1 2023

Objective 4: Develop and improve resources for staff to support excellent customer service

We support staff with resources to improve customer experience.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Upgrade the frontline staff app to support improved customer experience for customers with accessibility requirements	Conductors are provided with notifications to remind them of support customers may require when boarding and alighting	TallyApp updated and released	Q4 2022
Develop resources to further assist staff in supporting customers with accessibility requirements	Staff will be empowered to support customers with accessibility requirements	Resources and tools provided to staff	Q4 2022



Priority 3: Our network

V/Line will continue to support major public transport projects and upgrades across the state, champion universal design principals and work within the DSAPT to further improve access for customers using V/Line stations, trains and coach services. V/Line will continue to identify opportunities for improvements on the network to ensure we are providing public transport spaces that are inclusive and accessible to all. We are working hard to ensure customers have access to safe, reliable and comfortable services.



Objective 1: Improve the DSAPT compliance and accessibility of our assets

We will support projects and submit proposals to improve our network's accessibility.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Collaborate with the Department of Transport, and other transport agencies, throughout project design and implementation to ensure functional access is considered and compliance to DSAPT is met	Accessibility and compliance are embedded and considered throughout the project lifecycle	Increased compliance with DSAPT across V/Line infrastructure and rolling stock	Ongoing
All new coach orders are DSAPT compliant	Greater availability of accessible coaches is offered to customers	DSAPT compliance is a requirement of all new coach orders	Ongoing
All new train orders are DSAPT compliant	Greater availability of accessible trains is offered to customers	DSAPT compliance is a requirement of all new train orders	Ongoing
Installation of Tactile Ground Surface Indicators (TGSIs) as part of renewal works	Safety and accessibility are maintained at station platforms and precincts	TGSIs installed at station platforms or precincts	Ongoing
Improve the safety and accessibility of level and pedestrian crossings through the installation or renewal of TGSIs	Improve the safety and accessibility of level and pedestrian crossings through the installation or renewal of TGSIs	TGSIs installed or renewed at level or pedestrian crossings	Ongoing
Upgrade of accessible bathroom facilities	Safety and accessibility of bathrooms is improved	Accessible bathrooms upgraded	Ongoing
Rectify the platform height at Little River Station to address the boarding ramp gradient	The boarding ramp gradient at Little River Station is made accessible for all types of V/Line trains	Project delivered	Q2 2023

Objective 2: Continue to develop operational procedures that support access for customers

We support customers' access to services with procedures to provide a consistent experience.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Review procedure for service of oversized mobility aids	Staff can provide clear and consistent information to customers on mobility aid specifications that are safe for travel on the V/Line network	Procedure reviewed and updated as appropriate	Q4 2022
Operational procedures reviewed	Accessibility is considered as part of any operational procedures that have a customer passenger impact	Operational procedures reviewed and updated as appropriate	Ongoing

Objective 3: Embed accessibility in project systems and processes

We embed accessibility across all areas of our business.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Review the railway station design standards and guidelines	Accessibility is ensured and embedded in V/Line's standards	Standards and guidelines reviewed and updated as appropriate	Ongoing
Review designs of proposed upgrades or procurement that will be customer facing	Accessibility is ensured and embedded in all upgrade works and procurement	Designs and project requirements are reviewed and updated as appropriate	Ongoing

Objective 4: Develop innovative solutions and equipment to improve the accessibility of our assets

We will identify opportunities and think creatively to make further improvements to accessibility.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Identify opportunities to improve DSAPT compliance and functional accessibility	Solutions to accessibility issues are developed and proposed	Business cases for funding to improve accessibility submitted to the Department of Transport	Annually
Delivery of the low-floor bus plan to improve the availability of accessible coaches	Greater availability of accessible coaches is offered to customers	Delivery of the plan	Q3 2023



Priority 4: Our community

V/Line plays an important role in regional communities, and we are committed to supporting initiatives and projects to further build strong working partnerships with our customers across regional Victoria. V/Line will continue to work closely with the Department of Transport as well as our Accessibility Reference Group, partner organisations, advocacy groups and service providers to seek opportunities to deliver improvements to the network that have positive accessibility outcomes. V/Line is committed to reporting on its accessibility actions and consulting with customers and key stakeholders to identify opportunities for improvement.



Objective 1: Be accountable for accessibility commitments

We report on our work to key stakeholders and are transparent with our community.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Complete an Annual Accessibility Report	V/Line is transparent on our progress of Accessibility Action Plan actions	Report delivered annually	Annually
Complete an Annual Accessibility Feedback Report	V/Line has an understanding of customer feedback regarding accessibility and can make changes in response to trends	Report delivered annually	Annually
Develop and maintain an Accessibility Initiatives Tracker	V/Line remains accountable to the timeframes associated with actions in the Accessibility Action Plan	Produce tracker and update quarterly	Q3 2022/ Ongoing
Ensure station accessibility data is captured appropriately and maintained in a timely manner	V/Line maintains an understanding of DSAPT compliance on the network and can scope works accordingly	Ensure accessibility audits are completed at the completion of significant works	Ongoing

Objective 2: Provide community facing events and programs

We build community confidence and knowledge of our network through events and initiatives.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Celebrate International Day of People with Disability	Customers are engaged and gain confidence in using the V/Line network	Event delivered annually	Annually
Deliver an annual Try Before You Ride event	Customers given opportunity to try using V/Line services in a low-pressure environment, fostering confidence and independence to travel	Session delivered annually	Annually

Objective 3: Strengthen our community consultation

We have strong community relationships and embed consultation early in the project lifecycle.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Continue quarterly Accessibility Reference Group meetings	V/Line is guided on issues, solutions and priorities by people with lived experience of disability	Meetings held quarterly	Ongoing
Consultation between project teams and the Accessibility Reference Group occur	Project teams have a clear understanding of when stakeholder engagement must occur with the Accessibility Reference Group	Develop guidance on when project teams must consult with the Accessibility Reference Group	Q2 2023
Identify opportunities to consult with the community on specific projects	The voices of people with lived experience of disability are heard and considered by project teams	Improved accessibility outcomes across regional transport infrastructure and rolling stock	Ongoing

Objective 4: Collaborate with the Department of Transport, other transport agencies and operators on accessibility improvements

We engage with our community to develop innovative solutions, learn from international best-practice and share the work we do.

ACTION	OUTCOME	MEASURE	TIMEFRAME
Participate in the Accessible Public Transport Operators Committee	Collaboration with the Department of Transport, other transport agencies and operators occurs on accessibility improvements	Attend all meetings and support initiatives	Ongoing
Participate in the Australasian Railway Association's Accessibility Working Group	The accessibility of Victoria's regional rail network and the needs of V/Line customers are considered in strategies and submissions	Attend all meetings and support initiatives	Ongoing

Accessibility:

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