



**CCS**  
**disability action**  
Including all people

TE HUNGA HAUĀ MAURI MŌ NGĀ TĀNGATA KATOA

**Briefing to**  
**Hon Phil Twyford**  
**Minister for Transport**

**31 January 2018**

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## Executive summary

- A lack of accessible transport plays a role in isolating people from their community and preventing them from accessing work, social and education opportunities.
- The Labour Party, the New Zealand First Party and the Green Party have all committed to a new Access Law with enforceable mandatory standards, including in transport.
- There is currently a lack of quality data about disabled people and how they access the transport system.
- Disabled people typically have less access to private vehicles than non-disabled people. This is mainly because of affordability issues.
- Disabled people are twice as likely to not find footpaths easy to use. Disabled people are almost three times as likely to not find buses easy to use. Disabled people are far less likely to use a bus or train at least once a week.
- Our population is ageing and this will increase the number of people with impairments. The effects of the ageing population will impact more on provincial and rural New Zealand.
- Recent changes to transport due to technology have offered both risks and opportunities for disabled people. Internationally the evidence so far is mixed with both positive impacts and negative impacts.
- While the Requirements for Urban Buses has had positive effects on accessibility, in some cases councils have stuck with the bare minimum for access or even downgraded to the minimum.
- With the ageing population, especially in provincial and rural New Zealand, the current accessibility exemption for rural buses is a mistake. Likewise, the need for accessible intercity and tourist coach services is only going to grow.
- The Requirements for Urban Buses do not include standards or guidelines on bus infrastructure. The New Zealand Transport Agency planned to produce separate guidelines on public transport infrastructure. Despite a draft being put out for consultation in 2014, these guidelines have not been finalised.
- It is vital that disabled people are involved in policy changes and reviews of public transport, small passenger services, parking and pedestrian infrastructure. The available data on disabled people and their use of transport is limited, which means without representation they will be largely invisible.

## Recommendations

That as the Minister of Transport you:

- work together with the Minister for Disability Issues, the Access Alliance, the disability community, relevant businesses and government departments to develop a new Access Law.
- direct the Ministry of Transport, the New Zealand Transport Agency, and local government to collect high-quality regular data on how disabled people use transport systems, including pedestrians.
- direct the Ministry of Transport, the New Zealand Transport Agency, and local government to proactively ensure that new technology is as accessible as possible.
- direct the Ministry of Transport, the New Zealand Transport Agency, and local government to investigate ways to improve the enforcement of private mobility parks.
- direct the Ministry of Transport, the New Zealand Transport Agency, and local government to look at ways to standardise the use of parking sensors.
- direct the New Zealand Transport Agency to encourage councils to exceed the minimum requirements for bus accessibility.
- direct the New Zealand Transport Agency to make it easier for variations to the Requirements for Urban Buses that improve bus accessibility to be approved.
- direct the New Zealand Transport Agency to work with transport operators to expand the Requirements for Urban Buses to other types of bus services.
- direct the New Zealand Transport Agency to develop standards for public transport infrastructure. In the interim, guidelines should be finalised.
- direct the Ministry of Transport and the New Zealand Transport Agency to improve driver training on how to help people with access needs board and use public transport
- direct the Ministry of Transport and the New Zealand Transport Agency to ensure disabled people are involved in any policy change or review of public transport, small passenger services, parking and pedestrian infrastructure.

## **Introduction**

CCS Disability Action congratulates you on being appointed Minister of Transport. This is an extremely important portfolio that affects the lives of all New Zealanders.

Transport is the glue that holds our communities together. It is how we get to work, see friends, meet new people, buy groceries, and generally live our lives. Whether we use cars, buses, walking, cycling, ferries, trains and/or planes, transport is a vital part of people's lives. For people who do not drive or have independent access to a private motor vehicle, access to safe walking or cycling routes and public transport is essential.

Article 9 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires the Government to ensure disabled people access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment. This includes transportation.

## **About us**

CCS Disability Action is a community organisation that has since 1935, supported disabled people and advocated for their inclusion in the community. As of May 31 2017, we were providing support to around 4,000 children, young people and adults through our 17 branches, which operate from Northland to Invercargill. Our support focuses on breaking down barriers to participation. We receive a mixture of government and private funding.

Accessibility is a major focus for our organisation. CCS Disability Action runs the Mobility Parking Scheme. We have a nationwide network of access coordinators who work with local governments as well as the building and transport industries. We are rolling out a new accessibility app called Access Aware. We are a member of the Access Alliance, which is pushing for a new Access Law. We founded Lifemark, which is helping to increase the number of accessible houses. We have developed ways to collect data on accessibility, including the Measuring Accessible Journeys project and the Street Accessibility Audits.

## **Key facts about disability and access needs**

In 2013 there were an estimated 1.1 million disabled New Zealanders, almost one in four of the population. There are an estimated 632,000 people with a physical impairment (14% of the total population). There are an estimated 484,000 people with a sensory impairment

(11% of the total population). An estimated 89,000 people have a learning disability (2% of the total population) and 122,000 people have a psychological/psychiatric condition (5% of the total population). Further, 53% of disabled people have more than one impairment type (Statistics New Zealand, 2014).

All these types of impairments can create access needs, from physical access needs to communication and signage access needs. Disabled people are also not a static group. The line between being 'able-bodied' and having an impairment is thin. All people can gain impairments, including temporary ones, which in turn give them access needs. Access needs are no problem if the built environment and transport is accessible. If not, people can be forced out of the workforce, their community and even their home.



**Even parliamentarians can gain access needs**

### **Disabled New Zealanders do not get a fair go**

Too often disabled people do not get a fair go. They do not get the same opportunities as non-disabled people.

In the 2013 Disability Survey, disabled people compared to non-disabled people:

- were more likely to have no qualification and less likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher;

- had higher unemployment and lower labour force participation;
- were more likely to have lower incomes and live in lower-income households.
- were less likely to report a high level of life satisfaction;
- were less likely to feel safe at home or in their neighbourhood;
- were twice as likely to be the victim of violent crime;
- were more likely to report being discriminated against and more likely to be discriminated against more than three times over a twelve-month period;

A lack of accessible transport plays a role in isolating people from their community and preventing them from accessing work, social, and educational opportunities.

### **New Access Law**

The Labour Party, the New Zealand First Party and the Green Party have all committed to a new Access Law with enforceable mandatory standards, including in transport. This Coalition Government now has the mandate, but what is needed is action. This new Law and supporting regulations will set New Zealand on the path to becoming a world leader in access for all.

In addition to allowing over a million citizens to participate more fully in society, this new Access Law will provide increased benefits for the economy and government finances. The New Zealand Institute of Economic Research has estimated that if we can improve access and lower the unemployment rate for disabled people we can expect to see:

1. A \$300 million a year reduction in Jobseeker Health Condition or Disability benefit costs.
2. Increased tax revenues of \$387 million.
3. An extra \$1.45 Billion increase in GDP (New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, 2017).

### **Recommendation**

- That, as the Minister of Transport, you work together with the Minister for Disability Issues, the Access Alliance, the disability community, relevant businesses and government departments to develop a new Access Law.

## **Collecting quality data on disabled people and transport**

Despite the disadvantage and barriers disabled people face, there is currently a lack of quality data about disabled people's experiences with transport and transport infrastructure. We need data down to a local level, preferably meshblock level, on the number of people with access needs.

We have been working with traffic researchers to develop a tool that counts the number of people using visible mobility aids in public places (Traffic Design Group, 2013). We have also been working on developing economic models to show the costs and benefits of access upgrades (Burdett, Locke, & Scrimgeour, 2016). The Ministry of Transport and the New Zealand Transport Agency, alongside local government, should be more proactive in gathering data on disabled people.

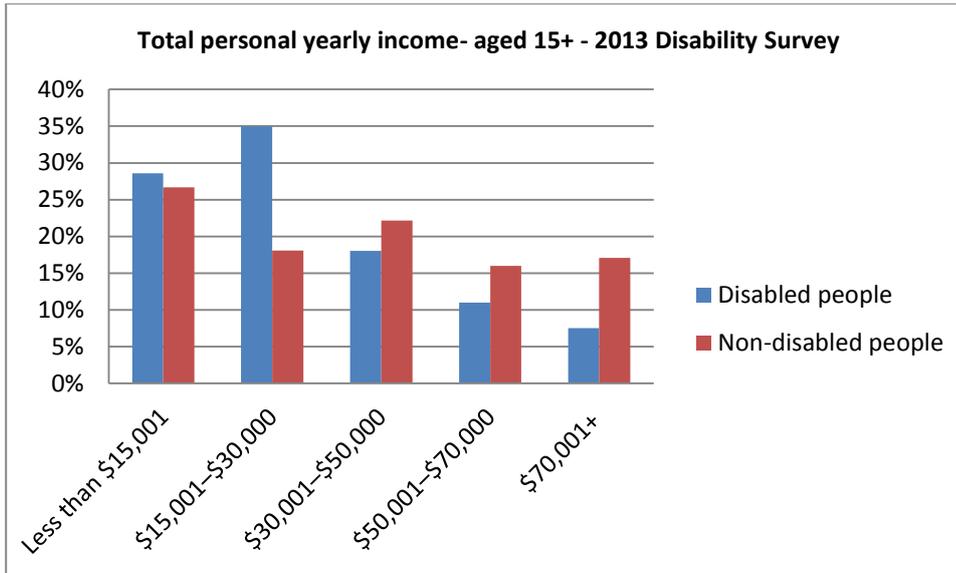
The government need to anticipate and respond now to future demand for accessible transport. In some provincial and rural areas, the available rates-base is likely to decline as the proportion of people over 65 increases. This will leave local government having to meet increasing demand for access improvements from declining funding. The solution is to invest now, while funding is higher.

## **Recommendation**

- That, as the Minister of Transport, you direct the Ministry of Transport, the New Zealand Transport Agency, and local government to collect high-quality regular data on how disabled people use transport systems, including pedestrians.

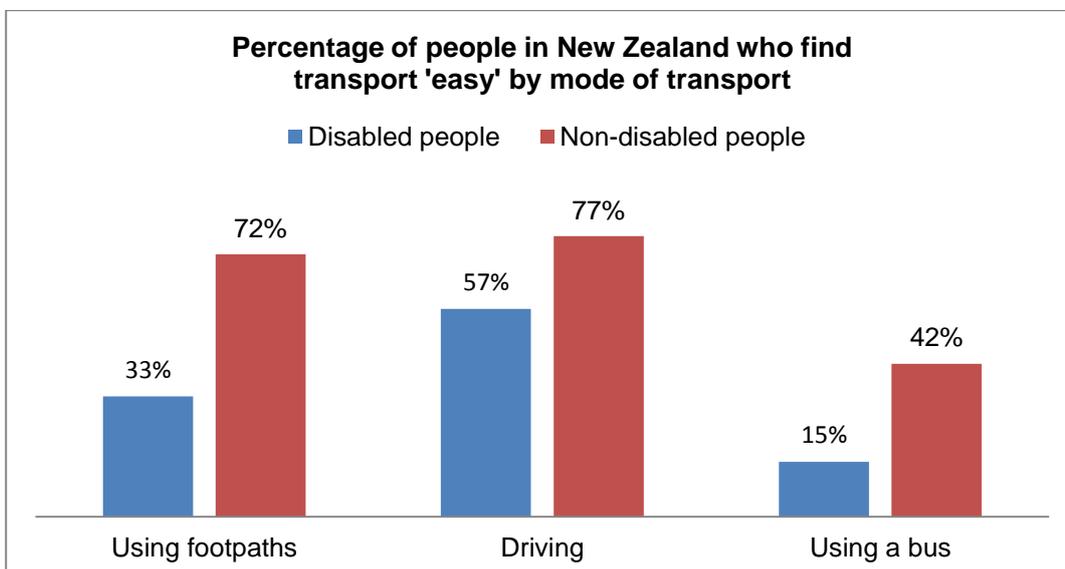
## **Public transport and disability**

Disabled people typically have less access to private vehicles than non-disabled people. This is mainly because of affordability issues (Office of Disability Issues and Statistics New Zealand, 2009, p. 11). Disabled people typically have lower incomes and some require expensive modifications to vehicles.

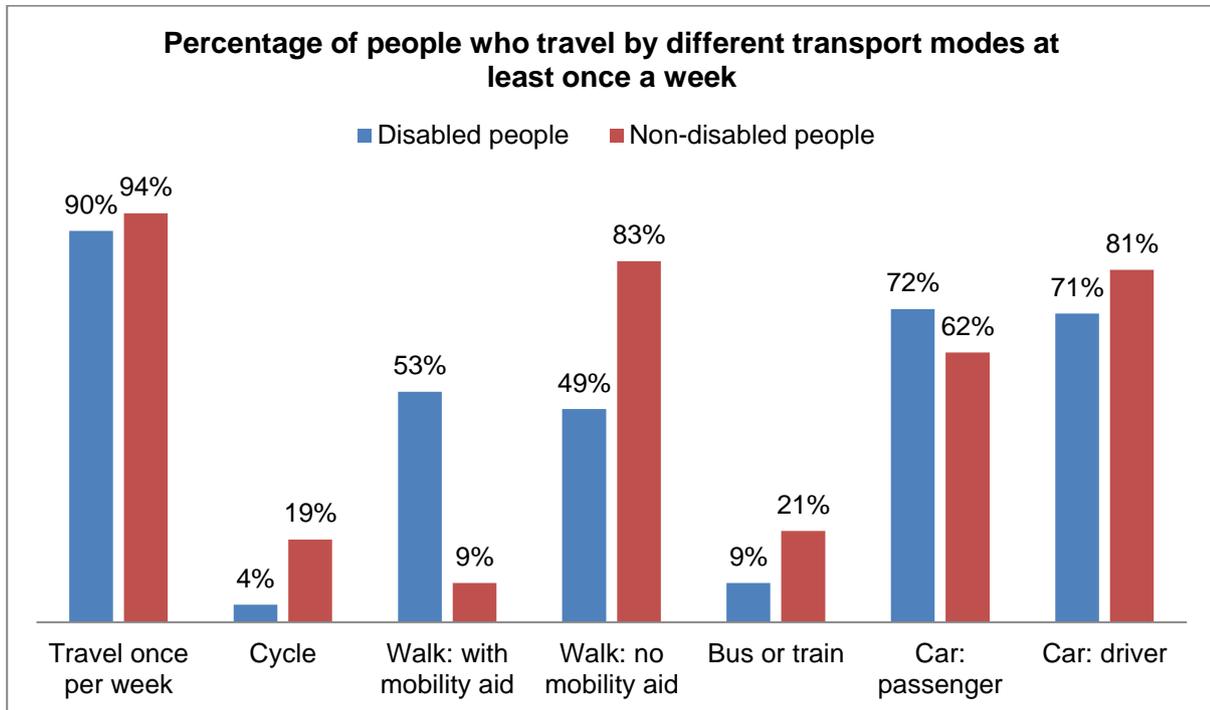


Disabled people who do not have access to a private vehicle, and cannot afford to use the Total Mobility taxi service to meet all their transport requirements are particularly reliant on accessible public transport. They require well maintained and accessible pedestrian routes and public transport services to safely and independently move around their communities.

In 2015, CCS Disability Action funded a survey of 2,952 people on accessible transport and infrastructure. The sample was intentionally biased towards people aged over 65 years (1,562 people) and people identifying as having a disability (2,256 people). Disabled people reported finding all major modes of transport less easy to use. Disabled people were twice as likely to not find footpaths easy to use. Disabled people were almost three times as likely to not find buses easy to use.



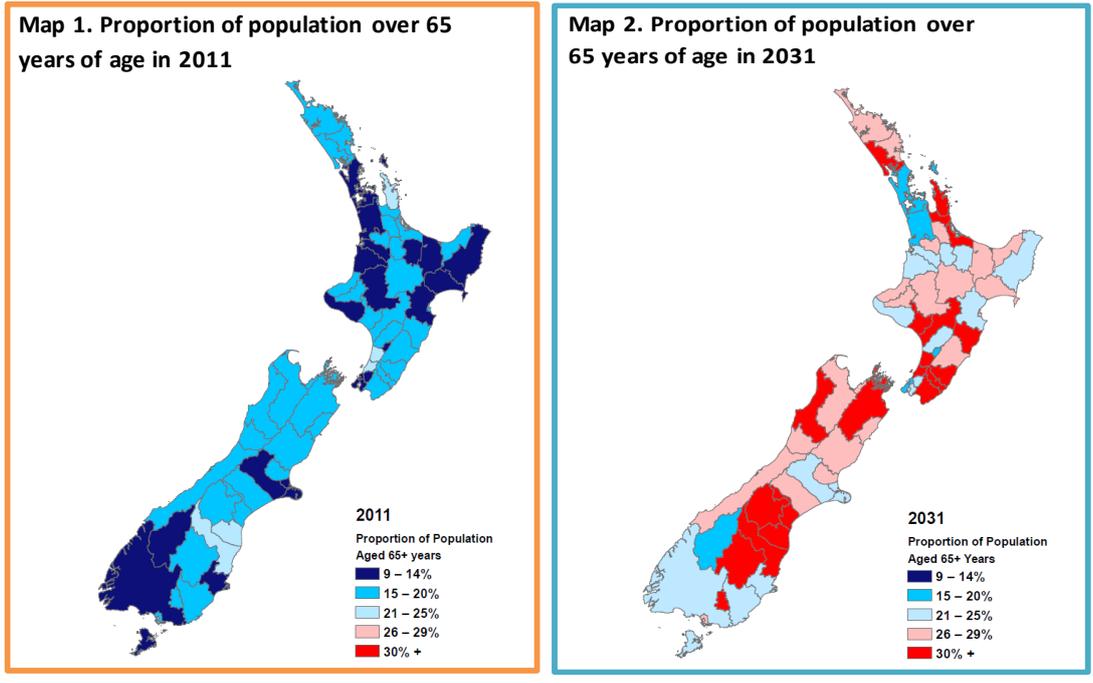
Unsurprisingly, disabled people were far less likely to use a bus or train at least once a week.



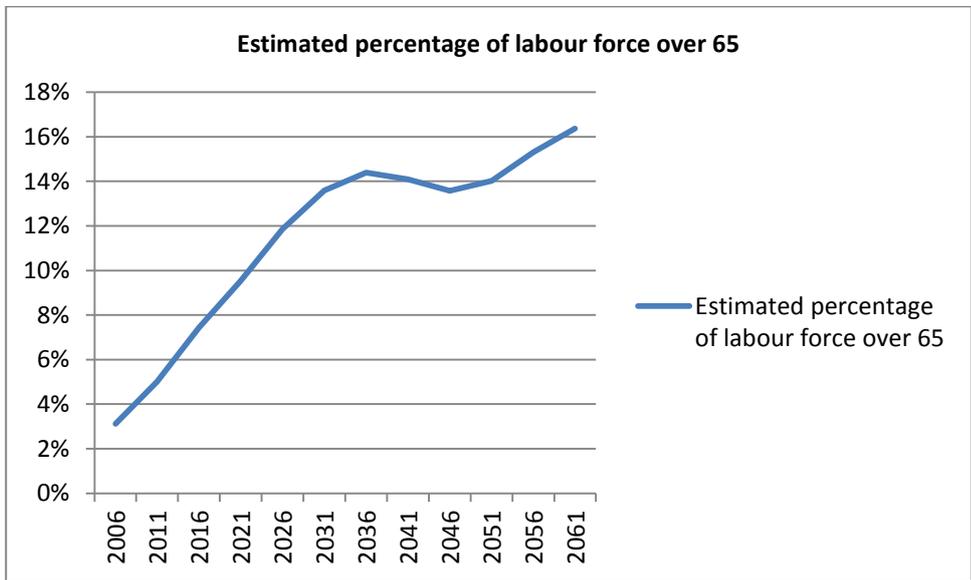
### **We need to future-proof transport**

Our population is ageing and this will increase the number of people with impairments. The number of people over 65 has a 90 percent probability of increasing to 1.28–1.37 million in 2041 and to 1.58–1.81 million in 2068 (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Disability rates increase with age. In the 2013 Disability Survey people over 65 had an estimated disability rate of 59%, compared to 21% of people aged 15 to 64 (Statistics New Zealand, 2014, p. 3).

The effects of the ageing population will impact more on provincial and rural New Zealand (Bascand, 2012, pp. 15-16). In provincial and rural areas public transport is often less available and is often not covered by accessibility requirements for urban buses.



Statistics New Zealand’s median labour force projections predict that people over 65 will make up 14% of the labour force by 2036. The future prosperity of New Zealand depends on our ability to ensure people with access needs can still stay in employment.



Designing transport systems to accommodate the access requirements of people with disabilities assists in future proofing the transport system. Accessible transport also provides easier access for older people, people with temporary impairments and caregivers with children in buggies and strollers.

## **Technology and transport**

New technology does not always consider people with access needs. This is because accessible transport is a public good that creates benefits above and beyond what transport operators receive in direct payment. As such, in general, accessible transport options, including those modified or created through new technology, are likely to be undersupplied without government intervention. There will often be a need for government intervention and regulation to ensure everyone can benefit from new technology and that adequate levels of accessible transport are provided.

Recent changes to transport due to technology have offered both risks and opportunities for disabled people (Lapowsky, 2015). Internationally the evidence so far is mixed with both positive impacts and negative impacts. For example, transport-related apps have driven down the price of accessible transport and have resulted in better service, such as in Toronto where Uber teamed up with a local company to provide wheelchair accessible transport (CBC News, 2016).

In other areas, transport-related apps appear to have led to fewer wheelchair accessible vehicles. In San Francisco, the introduction of transport-related apps coincided with the number of wheelchair friendly cabs dropping from 100 in 2013 to just 64 in 2015 (Willingham, 2016). Transport app companies have also not always taken responsibility for their drivers discriminating or abusing disabled customers. In some cases, Uber drivers have refused to accept passengers with service dogs (Strochlic, 2015).

The government needs to think about how accessible transport options will be affected by new technology, such as the impact of transport-related apps on the Total Mobility Scheme. Also with new and/or disruptive technology, we can set the standard that it is as accessible as possible from the beginning. Then accessibility features will simply become an accepted part of that technology, rather than an add-on or optional extra. This is likely to be more cost-effective than trying to make technology accessible once it has become established. Once the infrastructure is in place it is often costly to change.

Several areas of technology have the potential to improve the quality of life of disabled people, particularly those that do not drive. Driverless and autonomous vehicles may make it easier for people who do not drive to access their community. They will only be of benefit

to people with access needs, however, if they are accessible. We need proactive regulation and government policy that shapes new technology to be beneficial to all. If the Government takes a laissez-faire attitude to the impact of new technology on accessible transport options, we could see new access barriers created for disabled people.

### **Recommendation**

- That, as the Minister of Transport, you direct the Ministry of Transport, the New Zealand Transport Agency, and local government to proactively ensure that new technology is as accessible as possible.

### **Mobility Parking and private car parks**

We are the main operators of the Mobility Parking Scheme with over 130,000 permit holders. We are continually seeking ways to improve the availability and number of parks. We also try to reduce the misuse of parks by educating the public and promoting the enforcement of mobility parking rules. In 2016, we carried out an observational study and a survey of the public on people's knowledge and use of mobility parks.

Unfortunately, around 31% of people using a mobility park had no current mobility parking permit. Effective enforcement is rare. In the observational study only between 3 to 6% of people in public mobility parks without a current permit were ticketed. No people in private car parks were ticketed, despite people without a current permit spending longer in a mobility park on average (Kalafatelis & McKay-Valentine, 2016, p. 20).

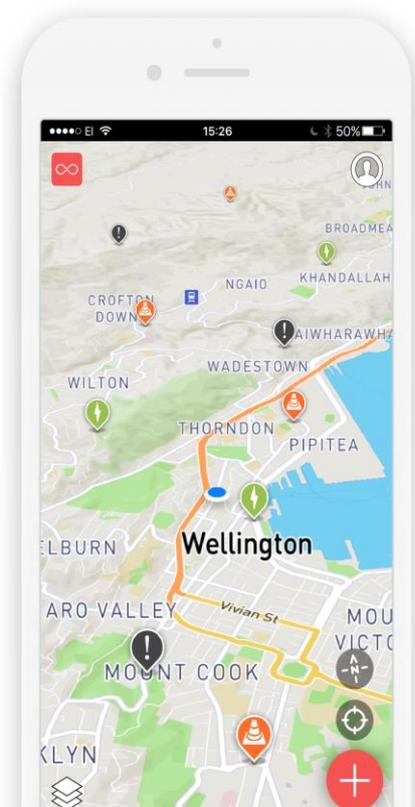
The current law only covers enforcement in public mobility parks. The enforcement of private mobility parks is currently at the discretion of the park's owners. The enforcement of private mobility parks should be reviewed. The Government should look at either allowing councils to ticket people misusing private mobility parks or require the park's owners to enforce the current rules.

New parking technology, including the use of sensors, has the potential to affect the mobility parking scheme in positive and negative ways (Scally-Irvine & Louisson, 2016, p. 26). Smart parking may help the enforcement of mobility parking. If applied without thought about the impact of mobility parking, however, it may make private mobility parks harder to access as sensors restrict entry to car parks. We can potentially adapt permits to be read

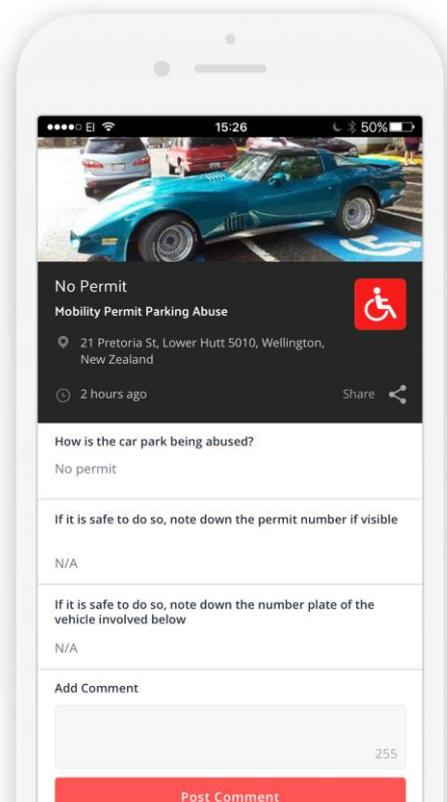
by sensors, but this requires some sort of standardisation of sensors and approaches. This, in turn, may rely on the government setting a standard.

Where possible we are keen to adopt technology to improve the Mobility Parking Scheme. For example, to help people find mobility parks as well as report abuse, we are currently trialling a phone application called Access Aware. We intend to roll out this application later this year.

Mobility park locations  
at your fingertips



Report mobility parking misuse in  
real time for action from nearby  
traffic wardens



## Recommendations

- That, as the Minister of Transport, you direct the Ministry of Transport, the New Zealand Transport Agency, and local government to investigate ways to improve the enforcement of private mobility parks.
- That, as the Minister of Transport, you direct the Ministry of Transport, the New Zealand Transport Agency, and local government to look at ways to standardise the use of parking sensors.

### **Making the Requirements for Urban Buses more flexible**

To access New Zealand Transport Agency funding, councils must ensure transport operators meet the Requirements for Urban Buses. Variations to the Requirements must go through an approval process (New Zealand Transport Agency, 2014, p. 13). In practice, the Requirements have reduced the amount of regional variation in buses. While this has had positive effects on accessibility, in some cases councils have stuck with the bare minimum for access or even downgraded to the minimum.

The New Zealand Transport Agency should do more to encourage councils to exceed the minimum standards for accessibility and make it easier for positive variations to be approved. Currently, any variations must meet value for money criteria. While these criteria could be met by showing a potential increase in the number of disabled passengers, in practice, as mentioned, there is a lack of quality data on disabled passengers. It would be difficult for many councils to collect this data on their own, especially for smaller councils.

To overcome this the New Zealand Transport Agency should collect quality data on disabled passengers itself and provide it to councils. Alternatively, the New Zealand Transport Agency could change how these criteria are assessed to make it easier for variations that improve access to be approved. With an ageing population, we desperately need to progressively improve the accessibility of public transport.

### **Recommendations**

- That, as the Minister of Transport, you direct the New Zealand Transport Agency to encourage councils to exceed the minimum requirements for bus accessibility.
- That, as the Minister of Transport, you direct the New Zealand Transport Agency to make it easier for variations to the Requirements for Urban Buses that improve bus accessibility to be approved.

### **Expanding the Requirements for Urban Buses**

The Requirements for Urban Buses exempt a range of other bus services, including rural, school and intercity buses.

With the ageing population, especially in provincial and rural New Zealand, the current exemption for rural buses is a mistake. Likewise, the need for accessible intercity and tourist coach services is only going to grow. The government should be planning for the future. You should direct the New Zealand Transport Agency to consider expanding the accessibility requirements to other types of bus services. This would need to be done in consultation with transport operators, councils and other government agencies, such as the Ministry of Education.

The Requirements also do not include standards or guidelines on bus infrastructure, such as bus stop design and kerb height (New Zealand Transport Agency, 2014, p. 12). Instead, the New Zealand Transport Agency planned to produce separate guidelines on public transport infrastructure and facilities. Despite a draft being put out for consultation in 2014, these guidelines have not been finalised.

The accessibility of buses as well as other forms of public transport, such as trains, is reliant on both the vehicles and infrastructure being accessible. For example, poor bus stop design as well as inconsistent kerb heights may mean buses are unable to deploy ramps. It may also make boarding buses dangerous or impractical for people with vision or mobility impairments. The accessibility of buses cannot be guaranteed unless the infrastructure meets certain requirements. We would prefer standards were used for public transport infrastructure rather than guidelines. At the very least, guidelines should be finalised.

There also needs to be adequate driver training on how to help people with access needs board and use public transport. Currently, there is only very limited training done as part of gaining a passenger endorsement. This training is done in a classroom setting and is taught by staff who may lack direct knowledge of disability. This is very different from the real-life busy and stressful situations drivers may find themselves in. It is crucial that drivers are comfortable and experienced in helping people with access needs board safely and as efficiently as possible. This will ensure that drivers never feel like they must choose between sticking to their schedule and picking up a passenger with access needs.

The Ministry of Transport and the New Zealand Transport Agency should work together to determine the best way to improve driver training. One option is to enhance the existing

training and add a follow-up module to the two-yearly driver refresher training. Whatever option is chosen, it should be enforced through contracts with transport operators.

### **Recommendations**

- That, as the Minister of Transport, you direct the New Zealand Transport Agency to work with transport operators to expand the Requirements for Urban Buses to other types of bus services.
- That, as the Minister of Transport, you direct the New Zealand Transport Agency to develop standards for public transport infrastructure. In the interim, guidelines should be finalised.
- That, as the Minister of Transport, you direct the Ministry of Transport and the New Zealand Transport Agency to improve driver training on how to help people with access needs board and use public transport

### **Involving disabled people in relevant policy reviews and changes**

The Human Rights Commission's 2005 report on accessible transport noted that:

“Even with goodwill, non-disabled planners, designers, and operators cannot deliver fully accessible journeys alone. Without direct input from disabled people, the approach can too quickly become ‘near enough is good enough’, because the consequences are not immediately obvious to non-disabled people.” (Human Rights Commission, 2005, p. 152)

We often see this in our work with councils, transport operators and government departments. In addition, without the involvement of disabled people and access experts, especially early on, planners, operators and officials often assume that access improvements will be expensive and impractical. Yet relatively small changes can often make a big difference and if changes are planned for early on, the cost can be small.

During the 2011 review of the Requirements for Urban Buses, disabled people were not included in the review committee. Both our organisation and the Human Rights Commission requested that disabled people be involved, but this was declined by the New Zealand Transport Agency. This was despite other public transport users being represented. We believe it is vital that disabled people are involved in policy changes and reviews of public transport, small passenger services, parking and pedestrian

infrastructure. This is especially important as the available data on disabled people and their use of transport is limited, which means without a voice they will be largely invisible.

### **Recommendation**

- That, as the Minister of Transport, you direct the Ministry of Transport and the New Zealand Transport Agency to ensure disabled people are involved in any policy change or review of public transport, small passenger services, parking and pedestrian infrastructure.

### **Thank you**

Thank you for taking the time to read this briefing. We hope you have found it useful. We are always happy to offer advice.

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