



NORTH BURNETT
REGIONAL COUNCIL



North Burnett Transport Service Disability Action Plan 2021-2022 and 2022/2023 (DRAFT)

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INTRODUCTION

The North Burnett Regional Council provides the North Burnett Transport Service for the region and surrounds. The service provides comfortable, convenient, and affordable transport options to all residents and visitors wishing to travel to Bundaberg and Maryborough, with convenient stops encompassing hospitals, train stations, transit stations and local shopping centres.

The purpose of this plan is to ensure that the Service continues to provide safe, accessible, and equitable transport to all passengers.

MISSION STATEMENT

The North Burnett Regional Council is committed to the implementation of the Disability Action Plan for the North Burnett Transport Service.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Achievements since commencement of Service

- All long distance transport buses have wheelchair access.
- Funding received to install 7 DDA Compliant Bus Shelters in our Region.
- Received the 2015 State Champion Award from Spinal Injuries Australia. Nomination received from a local resident who uses the service regularly and requires wheelchair access.

OBJECTIVES

Council's Disability Action Plan for the North Burnett Transport Service intends to outline how the service will meet the reasonable needs of any passengers who require assistance while using the service.

Council has identified the following 7 priorities needed to provide an inclusive service for all members of the community:

- Passenger Comfort
- Ease of Access and safe boarding on buses
- Driver and Staff Training
- Policies and Procedures
- Timetables and Fare Schedules
- Communication
- Review Process

PRIORITIES:

PRIORITY 1 - PASSENGER COMFORT

The North Burnett Transport Service vehicles are deluxe models which have high backed seating and wider seating for passenger comfort. The vehicles also have an automatic safety step, hand supports, and wheelchair lifts. Our On-demand Service catering to the Monto region uses a North Burnett Regional Council fleet vehicle. In the event disability services are required, a bus will be utilised.

The drivers are trained to assist passengers with disabilities to board and disembark the bus and also help with luggage, if required.

The service provides priority seating for the elderly and people with a disability. Drivers will ensure that carers and assistance animals are seated next to those in their care at all times.

Disability aids or additional required luggage will be carried by the service at no extra charge to the passenger. The retrieval of these aids that are stored in the trailer will be done by the driver.

Target Year	Target Outcomes	Target Timeframe
2021/2022 and 2022/2023	Review of the current procedures	Yearly
2021/2022 and 2022/2023	New vehicles will be purchased for the service and buses with passenger comfort a priority.	2022/2023
2021/2022 and 2022/2023	Investigate options for the provision of information on-board buses to enable passengers to identify when they need to disembark	2022/2023

PRIORITY 2 – EASE OF ACCESS

The North Burnett Transport Service provides various options to assist customers to have 'Ease of Access' to our service, whether that relates to booking tickets, location stops or the vehicles themselves.

Council provides three (3) options when booking tickets for the service; a) Online; b) via Phone; and c) in person at Council's Customer Service Centres. Customers requiring assistance when booking can easily make direct contact with Council via phone or at the Customer Service Centres where trained staff can assist with bookings, making payments and any special requests they may have.

Council has installed DDA Compliant Bus Shelters at 6 stop locations in our region to assist passengers with accessing our Service. These Shelters provide protection from the elements and there is also provision for one (1) wheelchair to fit within the Shelter. The Shelter slab is specially designed to assist with the safe loading of passengers using wheelchairs.

As mentioned above in Priority 1, our vehicles are deluxe models with high backed seating and wider seats for passenger comfort. The vehicles each have an automatic safety step, handrails, and a wheelchair lift.

Target Year	Target Outcomes	Target Timeframe
2021/2022 and 2022/2023	Continue to review and maintain Bus Shelters across the region	Yearly, or when needed
2021/2022 and 2022/2023	Review of current procedures in relation to passenger bookings with special requests	Yearly, or when needed

2021/2022 and 2022/2023	New vehicles will be purchased for the service and buses fitted to ensure passenger comfort and accessibility	2022/2023
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PRIORITY 3 - DRIVER TRAINING

Driver Training is essential for providing a great service. North Burnett Transport Service drivers have been trained in various areas including Defensive Driving, Customer Service and First Aid.

Council will complete an interactive online Disability Awareness Program, which is designed to give staff (Drivers and Administration Officer (NBTS)) the confidence to communicate with anyone who has a disability. This training will be delivered by www.dat.org.au or if unavailable when required, a suitable alternative will be sourced.

Target Year	Target Outcomes	Target Timeframe
2021/2022 and 2022/2023	Implement disability awareness training for our drivers and administration staff to ensure provision of high quality customer service	August 2022, then yearly, or as required
2022/23	Completion of training on safe use of WheelChair Lift	2022/2023
2022/23	Increase operator knowledge and awareness of people with disability travelling on passenger transport services with an approved assistance animal.	2022/23

PRIORITY 4 - POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The North Burnett Regional Council has made the commitment to review and update the Disability Action Plan on an annual basis.

Council endeavours to make sure that all feedback from customers, changes in legislation, new initiatives or new approaches are updated into the Policy, meaning the Plan will be relevant to the expectations of all passengers travelling on our service.

This Plan forms part of the procedures required by drivers including face to face customer service training. Manuals for the use of the wheelchair lift are also kept in the vehicle.

Target Year	Target Outcomes	Target Timeframe
2021/2022 and 2022/2023	Review of current plan & procedures	Yearly, or when needed

PRIORITY 5 - TIMETABLE AND FARE SCHEDULES

North Burnett Transport Service drivers and staff are able to assist all passengers with fare information including assisting with the booking of tickets, if required.

As per the North Burnett Transport Service Terms and Conditions Policy we have asked passengers with disabilities to be at the pick-up point 10 minutes prior to departure. This allows the driver to assist the passenger getting onto the Bus and making sure they are comfortable without rushing the process.

Council has created a large print Timetable for all passengers with vision impairment. These will be available from Council's Customer Service Centres and on board all service vehicles.

Council's fare structure allows for a pensioner discount, providing a fair and reasonable price for the service delivered.

Target Year	Target Outcomes	Target Timeframe
2021/2022 and 2022/2023	Review and reproduce and distribute 'Easy Read Timetables'	Yearly, or when needed
2022/23	Complete review and redesign of timetables	2022/23
2022/23	Review website content to make accessing timetable information easier.	2022/23

PRIORITY 6 – COMMUNICATION

The Plan will be available on Council's Website and also available as a hardcopy. Feedback from the public is welcomed and should be directed to the Administration Officer (NBTS). The Plan will be lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission within a month of its review.

Council endeavours to distribute a survey specifically targeting passengers with disabilities in the hope to encourage more passengers to use our service.

Target Year	Target Outcomes	Target Timeframe
2021/2022 and 2022/2023	Make available the Plan on Council's Website	July 2022
2021/2022 and 2022/2023	Lodge revised Plan with Australian Human Rights Commission	July 2022
2021/2022 and 2022/2023	Distribute passenger survey for feedback on service and accessibility.	July 2022

PRIORITY 7 - REVIEW AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

The North Burnett Regional Council Disability Action Plan Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis. The Community Development Steam Leader will oversee the implementation of the Disability Action Plan. The Community Development Officer (NBTS) will make sure all targets within the plan are carried out prior to renewal. Community Development Steam Leader and Administration Officer (NBTS), will if required, seek advice from suitable organisations when unclear about disability issues.

During the review process the Policy will be reviewed by key Council Representatives:

- General Manager of Corporate and Community
- Customer Experience and Communities Manager
- Community Development Stream Leader
- Community Development Officer (NBTS)

Changes to the Policy will be determined by, but not limited to the following:

- Legislation Changes

- Complaints
- Non-Conformances
- Incidents
- Procedural Changes

Responsibility

Target Year	Target Outcomes	Target Timeframe
2021/2022 and 2022/2023	Annual Review of Current Plan	January 2022
2021/2022 and 2022/2023	Full Implementation	July 2022

ACCOUNTABILITY

Discrimination will not be tolerated by the North Burnett Regional Council. Employees, including drivers of the North Burnett Transport Service found engaging in discriminatory conduct will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with Council’s Code of Conduct, and in compliance with Queensland legislation *Anti-Discrimination Act 1991*.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

Complaints regarding the Action Plan will be dealt with as per Council’s Statutory Policy 116 - Administrative Action Complaints.

REFERENCES AND ASSOCIATED PLANS

- The Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992
- Australian Human Rights Commission, Disability Action Plans: A guide for business Jan 2015
- North Burnett Regional Council Statutory Policy 1116 - Administrative Action Complaints
- North Burnett Regional Council Terms and Conditions of Travel
- North Burnett Regional Council Code of Conduct
- Queensland Anti-Discrimination Act 1991
- DTMR Disability Action Plan 2018-2022