

Disability Discrimination Act Inquiry

Submission

From the Richmond Valley Access Committee

In response to Access to public transport by people with disabilities, the Richmond Valley Access Committee would like to submit the following.

The Richmond Valley Local Government Area is located on the Far North Coast of NSW. It is located approximately 800 km north of Sydney and 260km south of Brisbane. The LGA covers approximately 2610 square kilometres and stretches 85km inland from the coast of Evans Head, to the foothills of the Great Dividing Range.

Access to transport services within this area for people with disabilities is non-existent, as there is no public transport. Private transport operators who have extended time lines until full access is required, ie the year 2020 provide all bus services within this region. To date, no transport access is available to people with disabilities in this region.

Further to this, the Richmond Valley LGA has 530kms of unsealed roads which are unsuitable for low floor buses which provide access for people with disabilities.

Due to inequities between metropolitan and rural transport provision and infrastructure, access to transport for people with disabilities has not improved within the rural setting. Nor does it have the ability to improve until equity is actively promoted and support offered for people with disabilities living in rural areas throughout Australia.

The terms 'unjustifiable hardship' and 'reasonable adjustments' need to be clarified to ensure a sound understanding rather than leaving them open for interpretation by individuals and service providers. The terms also need to be expanded to include transport users as well as operators.