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MEDIA RELEASE

secure anchoring points for wheel chair users

QAI has deep concern about the lack of anchoring points for wheelchairs on Queensland buses, and on some other forms of public transport. We understand that that an absence of anchoring points is not unlawful, and that anchors are not required under the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002.

We are also aware that it is not uncommon for people who use wheel chairs to avoid city buses because they are concerned about their safety vis-à-vis lack of anchoring points.

This is an opportunity for Queensland to set an example for other Australian jurisdictions.

Lack of accessible public transport has adverse flow-on effects on the quality of life of people with disability. As you know, the taxi subsidy (TSS) is not sufficient to support a person to travel to and from a full time job without substantial contribution from the users own pocket. Public transport is the better option for most people with mobility impairments, and ultimately for taxpayers too. It is in everyone's interest that people with disability participate in every aspect of community life.

Accessible public transport is a right pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. On the fundamental issue of accessibility (Article 9), the Convention requires countries to identify and eliminate obstacles and barriers and ensure that persons with disabilities can access their environment, transportation, public facilities and services, and information and communications technologies. Personal mobility and independence are to be fostered by facilitating (among other things) affordable personal mobility, training in mobility skills and access to mobility aids, devices, assistive technologies and live assistance (Article 20).

We are aware that some people with disability would not want to be forced to use restraints upon their wheelchairs, preferring instead to avail themselves of the allocated wheelchair space over the wheel hub. However, for many people who use electric scooters and wheelchairs may not have the manoeuvrability for this space and will use the standing area in the middle of the bus.

We believe that inclusive communities that respond well to accommodating the support needs of people with disability have benefits to the wider community population. In this instance it clearly applies to people who use a range of mobility aids, children in prams and strollers, and other able bodied passengers, and the safety of all passengers is paramount.

QAI is by no means the expert in this field but having consulted with some people with disability it is clear that there are several possible solutions ranging from retractable wall and floor restraints to possible pressure sensitive flooring area that, at the touch of a button,

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QAI endorses the objectives, and promotes the principles, of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Patron: His Excellency The Honorable Paul de Jersey AC

activates hydraulic wheel locking devices to secure the wheelchair, scooter or pram to the floor.

Furthermore training for drivers driving, safe embarking and disembarking, application and use of restraints and duty of care for all passengers is necessary. We are aware of several cases of personal injury in buses and taxis that were preventable.

All new measures to improve safety standards for all people have immense value to everyone, and while it may mean some minor delays, it is something to which people become accustomed. These types of endeavours enriches a community, teaches tolerance, acceptance and appreciation for the common aspects of our shared humanity.

QAI calls upon the State Government to take urgent action to address this situation and I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss your plans.

Michelle O'Flynn

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