The Spirit of Queensland Overhaul Project

**What is the Spirit of Queensland?**

The Spirit of Queensland (SoQ) is a regional rail service providing five return services a week between Brisbane and Cairns. Three Diesel Tilt Trains service the weekly timetable, with each train comprising of six customer carriages: two RailBed carriages, three economy seating carriages and a cafe carriage. The journey takes 24 hours and 45 minutes one way and stops at 28 stations throughout Queensland.



Figure 1 Spirit of Queensland train configuration

**Spirit of Queensland – Accessibility engagement**

Queensland Rail is committed to improving the accessibility of the Spirit of Queensland train stock to ensure all users have a safe, enjoyable and comfortable travel experience.

A key focus of the accessibility engagement is to collaborate and consult with Spirit of Queensland customers and potential to identify practicable and successful solutions to accessibility barriers on the service.

As a long-haul regional service, there are unique aspects of the Spirit of Queensland, which are not often found on short-journey commuter train services.

The Spirit of Queensland is seeking feedback and input on potential improvements to the following areas on the train carriages:

* Boarding, access paths to seating and egress (excluding platform ramps)
* Allocated seating and sleeping berths on train carriages
* Access to on-board food, beverages, and club car
* Access to on-board toilet and amenities
* Communication and information (including signage).

**Who are we looking for?**

We are looking for a wide range of participants including:

* People who use motorised wheelchairs, manual wheelchairs, motorized scooters, walking frames, canes, etc.
* People with physical impairment due to illness and/or age (e.g., arthritis)
* People with low vision or who are blind, including those who have an assistance animal or guide dog
* People who have hearing loss, are hard of hearing or are deaf
* People who are neurodiverse (e.g., autism, aphasia, dementia, down syndrome, traumatic brain injury).
* Parents of children/young adults or carers of adults with a lived experience of disability
* People and/or carers from regional areas serviced by the Spirit of Queensland
* Advocates and professionals from the disability support service and/or advocacy sector.

**Participant Commitment:**

Interested participant will be asked to participate in five key activities and one optional activity between July 2022 and February 2023. All travel and accommodation costs and supports service required for participation in any of the activities will be provided by and/or reimbursed by the Project.

Activities will be held in Brisbane, Cairns and one regional location. Exact dates and locations will be confirmed following the recruitment process.

Participants will be invited to the sessions closest to their home address, unless a compelling reason exists to support attendance in an alternative location.

The five key activities are:

1. Pre-engagement briefing to introduce the project. These briefing will be held online in individual or small group sessions in early July 2022.
2. Train familiarisation session (one 4-hour session) on a stationary train in either Brisbane or Cairns to identify access barries and challenges. The Brisbane session will be held on 16 August 2022, and the Cairns session will be held on 22 August 2022.
3. Co-design workshops (two 4-hour sessions), over the two days immediately following the familiarisation session, to explore potential designs solutions to the access barriers and challenges identified. The Brisbane sessions will be held on the 17 and 18 August, and the Cairns sessions will be held on the 23 and 24 August.
4. Solutions refinement workshop (two 4-hour sessions), in which mock-ups of the design solutions recommend by participants will be presented for further feedback in October 2022.
5. Final detailed mock-up and review workshop (one 4-hour session) to confirm that the solutions developed help to meet the needs of our customers in February 2023.

As an optional activity all participants will be offered a free return journey on the Spirit of Queensland service between stations of their choosing to experience the service firsthand throughout July and August.

**Participant benefits:**

In addition to providing valuable feedback and input which will help enhance the Spirit of Queensland experience for all our customers by removing or reducing access barriers and optimising the functionality of onboard services, participants will receive the following compensation:

* Participant’s (and a carer’s if required) travel and accommodation expenses for the project will be fully paid.
* Participants will receive in-kind payments of $75 per hour for their participation.
* A $400 in-kind bonus payment at the end of the Project for participants who have attended all five of the key activities.