

The Hon Roger Jaensch MP
Minister for Tourism, Hospitality, and Events
Parliament House
Hobart TAS 7000

Tasmania's Access Strategy 2040: ensuring equitable access for older Tasmanians

Dear Minister,

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Minister for Tourism, Hospitality and Events.

I write to raise an issue that sits at the intersection of tourism policy, essential services, and the everyday liveability of Tasmania.

COTA Tasmania welcomes the Tasmanian Government's *Access Strategy 2040* and, in particular, its recognition that reliable and affordable air and sea access is important not only for visitors and economic development, but also for Tasmanians' health care, education, social connection and quality of life.

For older Tasmanians, access to and from the State can be essential. Many need to travel interstate for specialist health care or to support family members; others rely on air and sea services to maintain social connection, participate in community life, or travel with carers and assistive equipment. These needs can be particularly acute for people in regional areas and the Bass Strait Islands.

The Strategy provides a welcome long-term framework for considering these issues.

However, COTA Tasmania is concerned that its implementation will need a more explicit equity, accessibility and consumer lens if its stated benefits are to be realised by all Tasmanians.

In particular, we encourage the Government to ensure that the first Action Plan includes:

- 1. An explicit older-person, disability and carer lens** in the design, procurement and evaluation of air and sea access initiatives. This should include accessible booking systems, clear information, physical access, assistance at terminals and during disruption, seating, wayfinding, toilets, boarding arrangements and appropriate treatment of mobility aids and other assistive equipment.
- 2. Clear measures of affordability and reliability**, published regularly and broken down by route and region, and passenger type where feasible. The Strategy appropriately identifies affordability as a key issue, but does not yet define what affordable access means for residents travelling for essential purposes.
- 3. A specific health and essential-travel workstream**, including consideration of people travelling for specialist treatment, accompanying carers and family members, and residents of regional and island communities with limited alternatives.

- 4. Minimum expectations for regional and island connectivity,** including service reliability, cancellation and disruption arrangements, reasonable notice, and support for passengers when services are disrupted.

This should include accessible and appropriate alternative travel arrangements for passengers who cannot reasonably be rebooked onto a late-night service, transferred to a coach, or otherwise expected to manage options that do not meet their mobility, health, care or support needs.

- 5. Consumer and community representation in implementation governance.** The proposed Access Working Group should include, or be formally advised by, consumer, disability, health, regional-community and older-person representatives. Industry and government expertise are essential, but the lived experience of people who depend on these services is equally important. Representation should be ongoing, rather than reflecting one-off consultations.

- 6. Public reporting against social as well as economic outcomes,** including affordability, accessibility, reliability, service adequacy and customer experience.

We would also appreciate advice on the proposed timetable and consultation arrangements for development of the first Action Plan, including how consumer and community organisations can contribute on an ongoing basis.

COTA Tasmania would welcome the opportunity to work with the Government, Tourism Tasmania and relevant agencies as the first Action Plan is developed. We would be pleased to help ensure that the Strategy's commendable recognition of access as a liveability issue is translated into practical outcomes for older Tasmanians.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brigid Wilkinson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brigid Wilkinson

Chief Executive Officer

6th July 2026