

# Accessibility Reference Group Terms of Reference

## Background

V/Line established the Accessibility Reference Group (ARG) in 2016 to foster close collaboration with the community and ensure continuous improvement to the V/Line network for all passengers. V/Line is committed to amplifying the voices of people with a disability through the ARG, and to support the objectives outlined in the V/Line Accessibility Action Plan 2025-2028 (AAP).

## Group Purpose

The ARG was created to provide customers with a platform to share their voices and opinions on how accessibility can be improved across the V/Line network.

The ARG provides V/Line with ideas, thoughts and constructive feedback on:

- Accessibility concerns with customer service
- Accessibility concerns with trains and train stations
- V/Line's major projects, including but not limited to:
  - Station upgrades
  - New station builds
  - Level crossing removals
  - Temporary relocation works
- The progress of the V/Line AAP
- V/Line customer service plans

The V/Line ARG may also be invited to participate in field work such as:

- User testing days for V/Line fleet, new technology and station openings
- Mystery shopping activities
- Website user testing
- Collaborative cross operator meetings

## ARG Members

The V/Line ARG will be made up of twelve (12) community members who use regional public transport on a regular basis.

Members of V/Line's ARG will be supported by the V/Line Accessibility team to meet and share opinions, feedback and concerns in a safe and comfortable environment.

V/Line encourages community members with various abilities to apply for appointment

to the ARG. This may also include parents or support workers of people who have lived experience of disability. Members of the ARG must have knowledge of or lived experience with accessibility on public transport.

In appointment members, V/Line will give preference to:

- people with disability
- people with communication difficulty
- people with mobility issues
- people at risk
- seniors, and/or
- any subgroups of the above.

### **Selection Criteria**

- 1.1. Interested individuals are encouraged to send V/Line an application to be considered for membership of the ARG.
- 1.2. Existing members of the ARG must re-apply to continue to be a member of the ARG:
  - every three (3) years,
  - for returning members, when an existing member leaves and a space has become available.
- 1.3. Members are to represent customers in general and are not to represent organisations.
- 1.4. Members must be able commit to being an ARG member for a minimum of two (2) years.
- 1.5. Members must be able to attend at least a minimum of four (4) meetings/engagement events per calendar year.
- 1.6. V/Line requires at least one (1) representative from each region of its network to participate in the ARG. The V/Line network includes regions in Northern, Western, Eastern, North-Eastern, South-Western and Metropolitan Victoria
- 1.7. A person must meet six (6) of the following criteria to be considered for appointment to the ARG, including:
  - Use V/Line services at least six (6) times a year
  - Have knowledge of or have lived experience with public transport accessibility faced by:
    - people with disability
    - people with communication difficulty
    - people with mobility issues
    - people at risk
    - seniors, and/or

- any subgroups of the above
- Be able to talk to current and future accessibility issues
- Be able to work collaboratively as part of a team
- Give useful advice to V/Line on matters related to the ARG and accessibility
- Have knowledge of V/Line accessibility issues in their region of Victoria.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

V/Line will hold six (6) meetings per year.

V/Line passengers who are members of the ARG will:

- Represent customers with accessibility requirements
- Prepare for and attend ARG meetings every two (2) months
- Provide useful advice on known accessibility concerns in their regions and more broadly
- Provide advice and guidance on the basis of their lived experience
- Give useful comments on public transport projects that V/Line is involved in or has undertaken previously
- Provide a customer perspective about the improvements to accessibility on the V/Line network
- Share their individual ideas during meetings
- Engage with people about V/Line outside of the ARG
- Engage with and influence stakeholders and others in a constructive and positive manner
- Contribute to decisions on what the ARG hopes to achieve
- Maintain confidentiality of information shared during their time with the ARG, and
- Follow the terms set out in these Terms of Reference.

## **2. ARG Administration**

- 2.1. Meetings will be held every two (2) months and will run for approximately two and a half hours.
- 2.2. Members may choose to attend in person at the V/Line head office, 452 Flinders Street, Melbourne, or digitally via Microsoft TEAMS. V/Line will inform members if there is any change to the meeting format one (1) week prior to the scheduled meeting date. All members will be required to attend two (2) in person meetings each year, including one (1) collaborative meeting with other transport operators' ARG members.
- 2.3. Members requiring additional supports to join the meetings must communicate this to V/Line ahead of time. V/Line will endeavour to provide

any additional supports required where possible including but not limited to interpreters, attending meetings exclusively in person, and/or support workers attendance at meetings.

- 2.4. The Chairperson will be a V/Line staff member. The Chairperson will run the meetings and ensure that all members perform the role described in the 'Roles and Responsibilities' section appropriately.
- 2.5. V/Line will endeavour to provide an agenda and all relevant materials one (1) week prior to the meeting. It will take minutes during the meeting and distribute these minutes and any outcomes in a reasonable time after the meeting is complete.
- 2.6. Where members wish to include additional topics for discussion at meetings, information on those discussions is required to be provided to V/Line at least five (5) business days prior to the scheduled meeting.
- 2.7. The Chairperson, in consultation with the ARG, will set the agenda for each meeting.
- 2.8. Any topics that cannot be discussed during the meeting will be investigated by a member of the V/Line Accessibility Team and responded to in email format following the meeting.
- 2.9. Members are required to provide clear and mindful feedback on the topics of each meeting.
- 2.10. Members are required to treat each other with a level of respect and understanding.
- 2.11. Members represent V/Line in a professional capacity and are not to use any inappropriate language or gestures during the meetings.

### **3. Compensation and expenses**

ARG members will be compensated an amount of \$100 per session for their consultation at each meeting.

Any additional consultation requested by V/Line will be compensated at this rate.

V/Line will compensate members for use of public transport to and from meetings.

Members who travel long distances to Melbourne are encouraged to talk to V/Line about additional travel expenses.

### **4. Agreement to abide by and commit to the Terms of Reference**

Member's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_