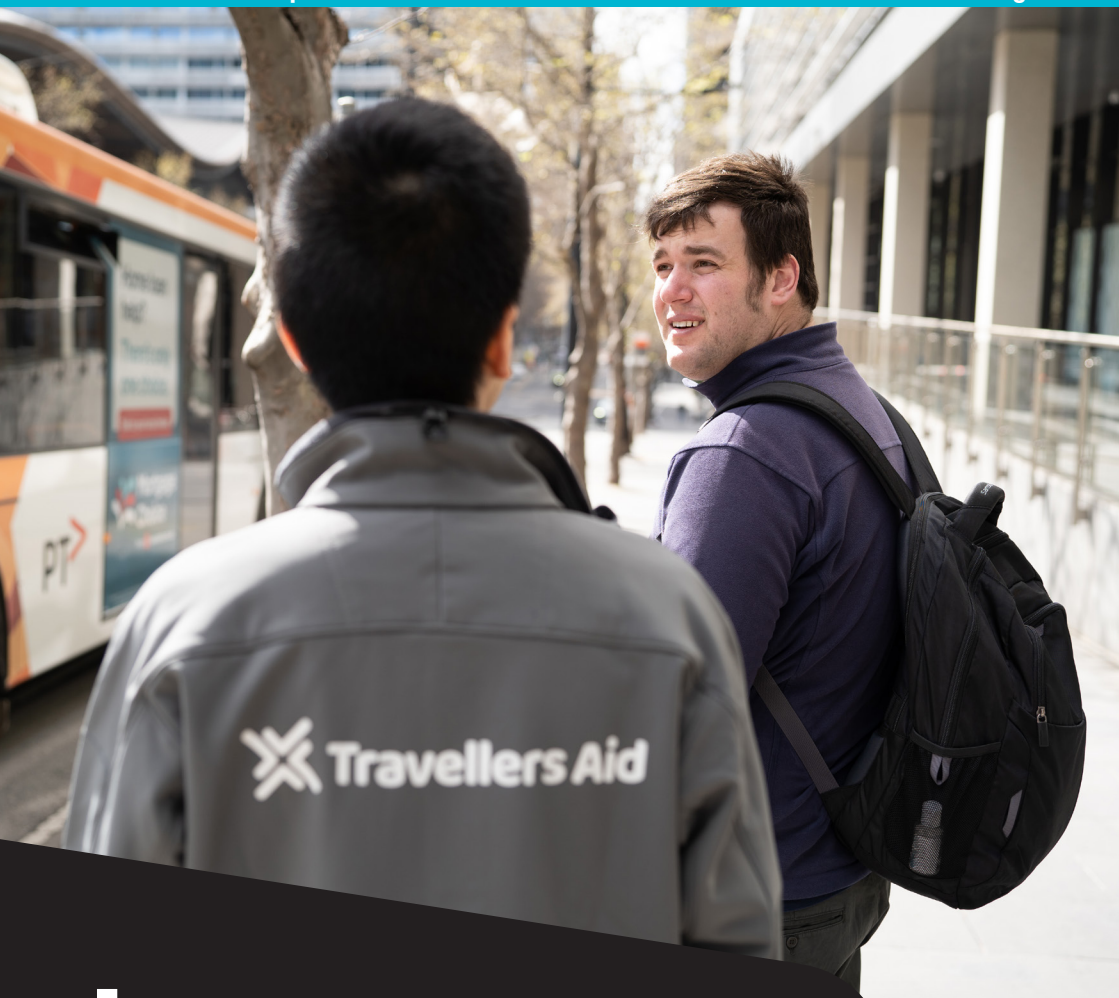
Travellers Voice

November 2023 – April 2024 travellersaid.org.au



Journeys made possible

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Travellers Aid

CEO Welcome

It is gratifying to see a blossoming awareness of accessibility and inclusion. The past year has brought so many examples of the power of collaboration, and we are grateful to have like-minded partners who share our vision of an inclusive society.

As leaders in our field, we are proud to be a 'go-to' organisation for others wanting to improve their own inclusion practices.

With the support of paid co-facilitators with lived experience of disability, Travellers Aid is now delivering a range of disability awareness training programs. These sessions give non-disabled participants a sense of what it's like to navigate public transport, streetscapes and events with a mobility impairment or invisible disability.

Our Summer Appeal aims to raise funds to expand the program with more resources and facilitators to achieve even greater impact.

In recent months, we've been honoured to contribute to important conversations locally and overseas. This has included speaking at the 105th Travelers Aid International annual conference in Philadelphia USA, the Public Transport Association of Australia and New Zealand, Better Transport - Better Future conference, and most recently at the Breaking Barriers accessibility seminar, hosted by the Victoria Tourism Industry Council and City of Melbourne.

Our strong partnership with Yarra Trams has drawn combined recognition with awards including 'Highly Commended' in this year's Australasian Rail Industry Awards Customer Service Excellence category, as well as finalist in the Social Traders National Game Changer Awards for Victoria and Tasmania.

We are also grateful for the continued support of Kinetic in getting our access and inclusion message in front of more people with the donation of billboard space. I hope you'll enjoy reading about our impact-driven collaborations that demonstrate how inclusion is within everyone's ability.

Elias Lebbos
Chief Executive Officer

Summer Appeal to grow awareness training

Travellers Aid's disability awareness training programs are helping make public transport, workplaces, events, and streetscapes more accessible. And with almost one in five Australians living with disability, organisations are becoming increasingly aware of the need to improve their accessibility and inclusion practices.

That means demand for quality training is growing. By supporting our 2023 Summer Appeal you can help us take these valuable programs to even more people.

Your donation will help fund better training resources, more lived experience facilitators, and additional simulation equipment. This includes vision impairment goggles, white canes, and another age-related impairment suit.

Co-facilitator Isabella Fantasia says while disability awareness training can only ever show a fraction of what it's like to navigate public transport and streetscapes with disability, it remains an important experience.

"It is a really great opportunity for people to ask questions, learn more, and reframe their thinking," Isabella says.

"They will get to not only hear about, but also experience some of the challenges we encounter in terms of trying to access the world and be included."

Travellers Aid also offers online training options, in partnership with the William Angliss Institute, for people unable to attend live sessions.

Please donate to our Summer Appeal today. You can also learn more about the disability awareness training programs on our website.

Campaign promotes inclusion for all

As an independent young disability advocate, Peta Hooke knows the challenges of weighing up transport links, venue accessibility and fatigue levels before committing to social plans.

Now fronting Travellers Aid's new ad campaign, Peta's message is that you don't need to face these concerns alone.

Peta agreed to front the campaign because she loves Melbourne and wants people with disability to be able to access all the great venues and events it offers knowing support is available.

Peta first discovered Travellers Aid when she heard about the accessible bathroom being installed in their services hub at Southern Cross Station. Even then she wasn't sure Travellers Aid's services were for someone like her.

"At the time I didn't realise that they were for someone my age," the 33-year-old says.

"Now I think it's great knowing there is a support base there if I do need it."

Peta talks about her experience of cerebral palsy and interviews others with disability for her weekly *I Can't Stand* Podcast. She also provides disability advocacy and consulting services to private organisations.

With qualifications in travel and tourism, combined with her experience of navigating public transport in a wheelchair, Peta has plenty of ideas for making travel more accessible.

While it's great to have support available through services such as Travellers Aid, she says prioritising the timeline for accessible tram stops, closing legal loopholes allowing businesses to avoid making their premises accessible, and improving safety and security for public transport would make a huge difference for the one in 5 people who have disability.

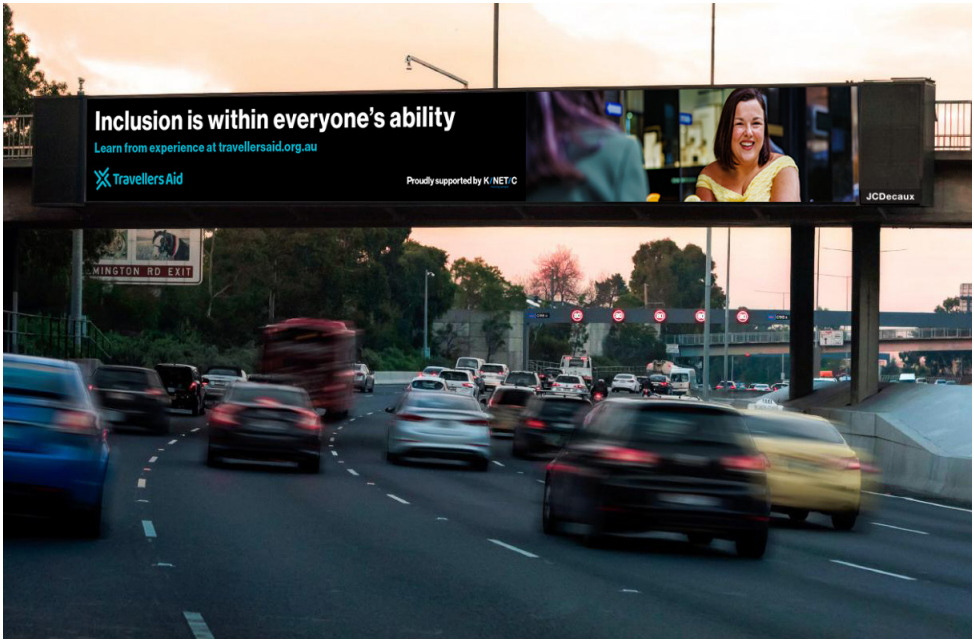
Peta hopes young people with disability will see the Kinetic-backed campaign as encouragement to seize every opportunity to live life on their terms.

“I really hope that people can simply say ‘yes’ to living their life the way they want to and not be restricted because of access barriers that many of us face every day,” she says.

Peta encourages business owners and event organisers to become more educated on what it means to be disability inclusive.

“I’m really excited that organisations like Travellers Aid exist and that they’re helping us be able to access the community just like everybody else,” she says.

Read more about the campaign and Peta’s full story in the news section of our website.



Corporate supporter thanks

Our partners make it possible for Travellers Aid to have the impact that we do. We are grateful for the support of our many corporate friends.

As mentioned, Kinetic is backing our latest outdoor ad campaign with a donation of $125,000 in digital and bus advertising space to use in 2023.

Thanks to event sponsorship by Metro Trains we offered our services at Queensberry Cup billycart race for the first time. This enabled us to hire a wheelchair-accessible vehicle and offer eventgoers a round trip from North Melbourne Station to the event in Errol St.

Travellers Aid has two new buggies and 25 wheelchairs thanks to the incredible support of NHP. The electrical engineering company has also promoted our volunteer opportunities to staff who continue to support our events.

KINETIC moving people

METRO

NHP

Upcoming accessible events

Get out your social diary and start adding the summer season's accessible events. We're pleased to confirm that Travellers Aid will be offering its access and inclusion services at the following major Melbourne events.

- Australian Open 14 to 28 January
- Moomba 7 to 11 March
- MIFGS 20 to 24 March
- Australian Grand Prix 21 to 24 March

Scan the QR code to find more information about available services on our website. We look forward to seeing you there.

Need extra support getting to events?

Travellers Aid's Companion Service is ideal if you need some extra support to attend an event.

Whether you have a mobility impairment, an invisible disability, or are just unsure about using public transport, we can lend a hand.

Our trained volunteer companions can meet you at a public transport hub in Melbourne or Seymour and get you where you need to be.

Scan the QR code to book a Companion Service for your next outing.

This service is supported by V/Line and City of Melbourne.

V/Line

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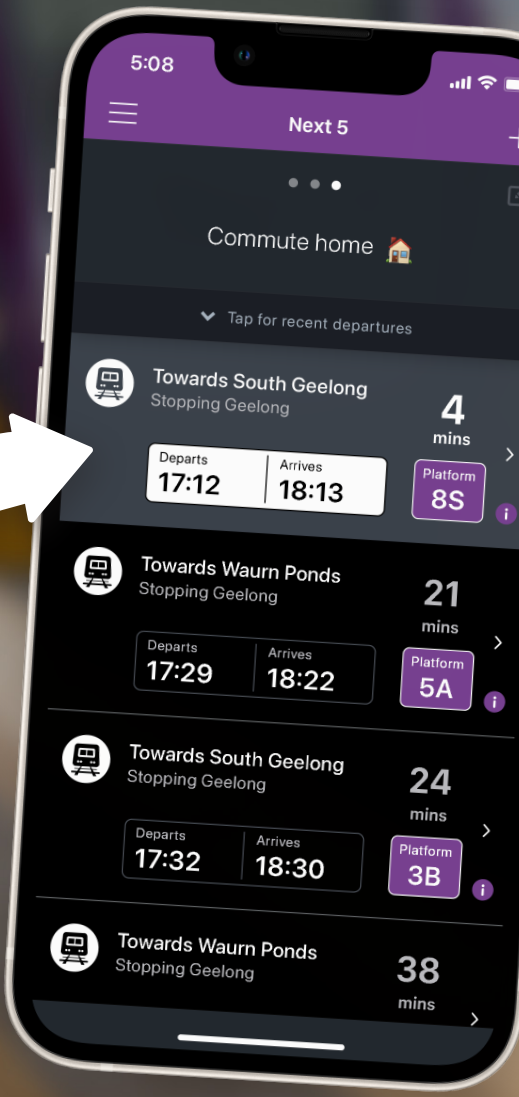

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