

Media Release

The Hon Ben Carroll MP
Minister for Public Transport
Minister for Roads and Road Safety



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AUSTRALIAN FIRST TRIAL IMPROVING BUS ACCESSIBILITY

Bus passengers using wheelchairs and other mobility devices will have a safer, more accessible journey with the Andrews Labor Government's roll-out of wheelchair restraints across a select number of metropolitan bus services.

The wheelchair containment systems are part a \$157.8 million package of accessibility and safety works included in the *Victorian Budget 2022/23*, giving Victorians better access to public transport.

World-class research over the past two years, led by Federation University Australia, has looked into the most appropriate and effective ways to increase safety of wheelchairs on buses. Using 3D modelling as well as real-world testing, investigations captured the experiences of mobility device users on buses across a range of routes.

Varying driving conditions were also tested to include all scenarios such as unexpected harsh braking and sharp corners. It was shown these systems reduce the risk of mobility devices sliding and tipping, improving safety and stability for passengers.

The funding in the Budget will allow the research to progress into real-life scenarios, with the first phase seeing the wheelchair containment systems installed on up to 30 metropolitan, low-floor buses across different routes to assess their effectiveness over several months.

Passengers on select buses and routes will be able to position themselves within the allocated space and utilise the newly developed containment system features – creating a more independent, comfortable and reliable journey.

This research and roll-out will help inform future use of wheelchair containment systems. The roll-out of the containment systems is expected to be delivered across 2022-23.

In addition, the Labor Government has invested \$109 million in the Budget to deliver new and upgraded bus services in key areas in Victoria, and upgrades at up to 80 bus stops across the state.

The Labor Government has invested close to \$500 million since 2015 in new, more frequent and extended bus services right across the state – improving accessibility for passengers.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Public Transport Ben Carroll

"We are creating an inclusive, accessible public transport network to ensure everyone can travel comfortably and safely."

"This innovative research and roll-out is crucial in helping us understand the real-world experiences of people who use wheelchairs and mobility devices on our bus network and will help us improve safety."

Quote attributable to Institute of Health and Wellbeing, Federation University Professor Carolyn Unsworth

"This project draws on the combined expertise of occupational therapists, engineers and people with lived experience to improve the independence, safety and comfort of mobility device users who rely on the public transport network."

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