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Tuesday 30th September 2025

The Hon Emily Bourke MP
Minister for Infrastructure and Transport
Government of South Australia

RE: SA Access Cabs

Dear Minister Bourke,

Physical Disability Australia (PDA) is a national peak Disability Peoples Organisation (DPO) run by people with physical disability for people with physical disability. PDA exists for its members, who fuel our mission to “enable every Australian living with a physical disability to realise their full potential”.

Physical Disability Australia is deeply concerned with the recent changes made by *Access Cabs* and their new policy to remove customers’ abilities to request specific drivers.¹

Our understanding behind this policy change is related to a lack of *Access Cab* drivers on the road when needed and a desire to share the load to ensure drivers have more reason to be working. However, we believe that this approach removes the choice and control of the person utilising the taxi service. It is an understandable fact that people utilise regular drivers because of a built rapport, trust and feelings of safety.

We believe that this situation reached a critical point when 11-year-old Oliver Sandy and his mum Jodie were left stranded and subsequently missed an important medical appointment at an Adelaide Hospital due to a lack of *Access Cabs* on the road, despite booking in advance.²

We have heard concerning feedback from within our community about how these changes have negatively impacted the lives of people with disabilities. Many disabled people feel less safe using taxi services due to the lack of choice and uncertainty about drivers. This apprehension has led to reduced willingness to access the community, attend events, or go to medical appointments. These reforms have contributed to increasing social isolation among disabled individuals, as the new system does not adequately account for their need for reliable and familiar transportation support.

To our knowledge, there was no consultation process offered to the users of *Access Cabs* or their drivers preceding this policy change. It is our understanding that many *Access Cabs* drivers are also unhappy with this policy change as decent drivers who have regular customers are now losing work. Additionally, non-verbal participants and their families are no longer comfortable with not knowing who their driver will be or the quality of service they or their loved ones will receive. They feel as though they must take support workers

¹ [Changes to 'broken' access cab system amid claims of 'rorting', 'fraud' and 'corruption' - ABC News](#)

² [Mum of boy with disability told no access taxis available for Adelaide hospital trip - ABC News](#)

with them when using *Access Cabs* as a safeguarding mechanism. We believe that if this approach is widely utilised, it will result in increased cost to the NDIS which is not a viable outcome.

We are calling for stronger training and upskilling requirements for all drivers on disability awareness and safety practices to ensure a consistent standard of service delivery.

Further recommendations from PDA:

- Investigate the impact of eliminating direct driver bookings on wait times for *Access Cabs*, specifically for people with disabilities.
- Assess whether this change has led to any improvements in service quality for these users.
- Explore alternative methods to expand and improve transport options for people with physical disabilities in South Australia.
- Undertake a review to improve the current experience of users of *Access Cabs*.
- Consider conducting a co-design development process involving people with disabilities who use these services daily, ensuring their feedback shapes service improvements.
- Improve the knowledge base of accessible taxi drivers and increase safeguarding measures so all members of the Community can feel confident in any drivers ability.
- Integrate these suggestions into the State Authority's Disability Access and Inclusion Plan, aligning with reporting requirements to the Department of Human Services.
- Ensure that all actions contribute to broader efforts in improving social inclusion for South Australians with disabilities.

I and our members look forward to your response. I would be very happy to meet with you and your office to further discuss.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Your sincerely



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