

# Fact Sheet

## Accessible Buses

It is easy to get on an accessible bus. They are sometimes called 'easy access' or 'low floor' buses. Accessible buses have no stairs, a low floor and a ramp. Sometimes they can also 'kneel' when the driver makes the front corner of the bus come down to kerb level. Getting on a bus at a stop where there is kerb and gutter is easier. Where there is no kerb and gutter, the ramp onto the floor of the bus might be too steep.

To hail a bus, place yourself somewhere the driver can see you. Let them know you want to get on by holding out your arm. If you have a mobility aid the driver will put the ramp down for you.

In some Northern Rivers towns you will be able to ride on most town buses; in others they are scheduled throughout the day. Getting from one town to another may be more difficult, with fewer accessible buses doing this. However, you will find some routes well covered. School buses are not usually accessible.



You will know that a bus is accessible by the blue access symbol displayed on the front of the bus and by the door.

When on board you will see a space behind the driver also marked with the access symbol. This is the priority seating area. Park here, with your back against the board and put your brakes on straight away. Use the grab rail to steady yourself.

### **Important!**

When the bus is moving it will accelerate, brake and turn corners. To ride on the bus you must be able to hold on to the rail and balance yourself to keep steady.

### **How do I know which buses I can catch?**

Check your timetable to see when an accessible bus is going on your route. They will also be marked with an access symbol.

If you need a timetable call the bus company and ask them to send you one. If you have access to the internet, you can also download them. Bus timetables for the Northern Rivers as well as other transport information can be found at [www.goingplaces.org.au](http://www.goingplaces.org.au).

Sometimes a bus company has not yet marked which buses are accessible on their timetable. In this case call and ask them which ones you can catch.

You can also ask for a large print timetable if you need one.

Sometimes a bus will be in repair, so it's a good idea to call the bus company before you leave to double check that an accessible bus will be on.

### **Can I get help with bus fares?**

If you have a Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Card or NSW Senior's Card you can buy a RED ticket from the bus driver. The RED ticket costs \$2.50. You can use it all day on buses within the region (but not school or coach services). You can even use it on different bus companies.

Do you have a lifelong, profound disability and need assistance with mobility, communication or self care? If so, you might be eligible for a Companion Card. This card gives your assistant free travel on buses when they accompany you. For more information phone 1800 893 044.

### **Other tips**

Although they don't have to, most drivers are happy to help you onto the bus. Ask if you would like assistance.

Try and have the correct bus fare available.

Being able to use public transport will make it easier for you to get about, but you may feel nervous about it at first. You might like to take a friend or carer with you for a while until you gain confidence.

### **More Information**

Spinal Cord Injuries Australia (SCIA) made a DVD called Access it! Using Wheelchairs on Buses. It takes you through how to board a bus and position yourself. It also shows you what it's like to ride. You can watch it on this website [www.scia.org.au/publications/access-it](http://www.scia.org.au/publications/access-it) or order a copy by emailing [information@scia.org.au](mailto:information@scia.org.au).

If you have any questions or concerns about your trip contact the bus company in your area. They can tell you about timetables, bus fares, good places to get on and off the bus and answer any other questions you might have.



If you would like a copy of **Accessible Transport in the Northern Rivers: a guide for people with a mobility impairment and their carers** contact Kate Geary at Northern Rivers Social Development Council on 6620 1820 or email [kate.geary@nrsrc.org.au](mailto:kate.geary@nrsrc.org.au).