



## Customer Experience Plan

### Introduction

*'Building good customer experience doesn't happen by accident – it happens by design' – Clare Muscutt*

Customer experience is defined by the interactions and experiences your customer has with your business throughout the entire customer journey, from first contact to becoming a happy and loyal customer.

Globally, the design of public transport systems is evolving to become more encompassing. Customers are desiring more control about how and when they travel, and this impacts the entire customer journey, from research and planning their trip to when customers arrive at their end destination.

As transport operators Premier Charters are becoming increasingly aware of the value of customer experience and are constantly reviewing our transport systems and networks and taking a human-centred design approach to create a holistic and multi-modal journey for our customers.

By collaborating and co-creating with TfNSW, along with the local community and our customers, we can create public transport systems that drive higher customer satisfaction, increased efficiency and patronage growth.

Not all customers have the same expectations. It's crucial to remember that cleanliness and comfort on-board public transport for some customers is just as important as arriving on time. For others, it is the perception of safety while waiting at a stop. Considering the entire journey and deeply understanding customer needs and expectations is critical to ensure investment and priority in the delivery of services is allocated to provide the most return on investment.



The above eight guidelines (when executed well), provide a foundational model that enables growth, innovation and continuous improvement. Operators that change their focus from moving vehicles to moving customers have already begun the journey, but it doesn't stop there. Embedding customer-centricity in organisational culture is critical – delivery of public transport services that are customer focused is the responsibility of the entire organisation, from the executive to the front line (and all in-between).

Additional information can be found in our Passenger Relations Plan which details our customer service standards and our processes in relation to timetable information, enquiries, feedback and complaints, as well as our ongoing research and development.

The overall condition of our fleet of vehicles is a top priority and Premier Charters is committed to ensuring our vehicles meet or exceed the standards set under our Asset Management Plan. Our commitment to providing a high standard of vehicles adds to our commitment to the overall customer experience.

Another important part of the overall customer experience is the Transit stop signage and infrastructure available across our transit routes. As part of our ongoing commitment to our customers we conduct regular checks of all

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stops within our service routes to ensure they are in good working order. If any issues are found then our maintenance team will arrange to have them repaired as soon as possible or alternatively notify the relevant authority for transit stop infrastructure not in our scope of responsibility. Full details are listed in our Transit stop maintenance and servicing procedure.

Our destination signage displayed on the front, rear and side of our vehicles clearly identifies the route service for our customers.



### Staff Competencies, roles, deployment and responsibilities

As part of our overall commitment to the customer experience it is important to have experienced and qualified staff as part of our team.

All staff are provided with a job description which clearly outlines the duties and responsibilities of their position and any relevant competencies required for the role as well as a copy of the company policies and procedures which provide clear guidelines on the standards set by our company and the processes that need to be followed.

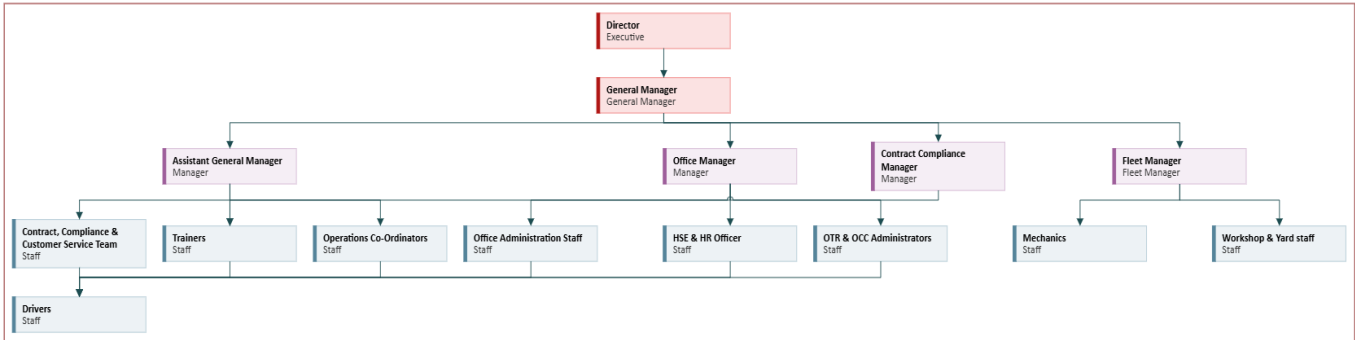
All of our drivers are required to hold a current heavy vehicle licence and NSW Bus Authority (which includes a medical clearance), and these are checked daily to ensure that they remain current.

We also have an experienced and qualified driver trainer on staff, who not only conduct a pre-employment assessment of any new drivers but also offer ongoing driver training and assessments to all drivers on a regular basis to ensure that they meet the high standards required of a professional driver.

All staff are provided with on job training and support to ensure that they are able to meet the requirements of the job and additional training is provided as required. Training is recorded on our Maus system and any relevant certificates are uploaded into the system as well.

Our office staff including customer service officer and on time running clerks are all provided with customer service training and ongoing support to ensure that they provide a high standard of customer service at all times.

### Organisational Chart



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Note: All Key roles and responsibilities are outlined in our Asset Management Plan under Table 5

## **Customer Communication – during normal, degraded and planned service disruption operations**

We provide timetable and service information online, by phone or in person to ensure that our customers are able to access this information easily. Access via the TfNSW Trip Planner also provides customers a solution for integrated network solutions.

In the event of a service disruption, we will notify TfNSW immediately and seek approval for a service variation. When making changes to our services due to disruptions such as road closures, accidents etc, we will consider all options available and aim to minimise the impact on our customers.

Where possible our team will notify customers of any changes or disruptions as soon as possible to minimise any potential inconvenience. Phone calls will be provided to schools and notices will be placed on buses, and our website/social media will also be updated.

Our drivers are in constant contact with our call centre so that up-to-date information is available at all times and they will keep passengers informed throughout the journey of any disruptions or delays.

## **Disruption Management**

As listed above, our drivers are in constant contact with our call centre staff regarding any events, traffic delays, road works etc that may cause a disruption to our services. Any information received is relayed to the relevant manager for investigation and action to minimise any service disruptions.

The Operational Call Centre (OCC) personnel use various systems to maintain the network and ensure effective communication during periods of disruption due to road incidents, accidents or acts of nature. The PTIP's system, along with internal systems designed by Premier, provides real-time information to our operational staff, enabling them to make informed, safe, quick and effective decisions to minimise delays and disruptions, whenever possible. The real-time information allows us to see our entire network in operation and the location of each service at all times. This assists us to inform our drivers of approaching hazards, detours or simply remind them about operational requirements.

Passengers can keep up to date by using the real-time tracking Apps available, by calling our office or contacting 131 500.

Further details regarding service disruption management can be found in our Business Continuity Plan.

## **Customer and Staff Safety and Security**

The safety and security of all persons employed within the company, contractors, those visiting the organisation and members of the general public are considered to be of the utmost importance.

Premier Charters is committed to creating a culture around safety within our work environment for all staff and customers. This is achieved through ongoing education of staff and our risk-based approach to hazards and safety within the workplace.

All staff are provided with detailed training and information in relation to Emergency situations as part of their induction process (as well as refresher training), to ensure that they are prepared if presented with an emergency situation. This training includes how to assist passengers with mobility issues or who may need extra support, such as elderly passengers, people with a disability or school children. Emergency situations could involve a vehicle accident, vehicle breakdown, passenger medical incident, act of violence, or a bus fire. As part of our commitment to passenger and staff safety, we have developed clear processes to ensure that staff have the support needed in the event of an emergency situation. It's important that our staff are able to stay calm and feel confident if presented with an emergency situation and the key to this is being prepared.

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**Responses to situations such as accidents, passenger issues (sick, lost, aggressive), vehicle issues, or others that may cause issues for customers. Especially for passengers who are high-risk groups like school children.**

**Immediate Response:**

- The driver checks the situation and makes sure everyone is safe.
- If needed, emergency services are called right away.
- The driver informs the control centre and follows the proper steps to report the issue.
- Passengers are updated about the situation and given alternative transport if needed.

**After the Incident:**

- A report is completed and reviewed by management.
- The bus is checked, and any needed repairs are arranged.
- Passengers affected by the incident are contacted for follow-up.

**Sick passenger:**

- The driver makes sure the passenger is okay and calls emergency services if needed.
- For minor illnesses, the passenger is moved to a safe place (like the next bus stop)

**Lost passengers:**

- If a child is lost or left behind, the control centre is contacted immediately.
- Parents, guardians, or schools are informed, and steps are taken to safely reunite the child.
- Drivers ensure unaccompanied children are only handed over to approved guardians or police.

**Aggressive passengers:**

- The driver stays calm and tries to calm the passenger down.
- If things get worse, the driver calls the control centre
- Other passengers are moved to a safe place if needed.
- If the passenger is a danger, the bus may stop safely until help arrives.
- A report is made, and the passenger may be banned from using the service in the future if necessary.

All buses are fitted with a 2-way radio for drivers to contact base for support if they have any concerns, and they also have a duress alarm fitted which will alert base immediately. Our control centre has support available during our normal service hours, as well as after hours support for any charters or services operating outside of these hours.

CCTV cameras are operational on all of our buses which also assists in deterring people from certain behaviours and provides security to our drivers and customers.

Our drivers are trained to check all exit and entry points regularly and to ensure that passengers are seated safely where possible prior to departing.

We have young children travelling on our school services and there may be times where they are distracted or confused and miss getting off at their bus stop or get on the wrong service. This can be very scary for both the student and the parents. If a child misses their stop and remains on the bus or boards the wrong bus, the driver will contact our control centre as soon as they are alerted by the student. The driver will keep the child on board and the control centre will contact the parent, guardian or school to arrange the safe collection of the child. If a parent calls looking for a child who has not arrived home, the control centre will contact the driver via two-way radio to check if the student is still on board and will also make a call out to all buses looking for the child in case they are on the wrong bus. Drivers will make every effort to ensure that unaccompanied children are only handed over to approved guardians or police.

Additional information can be found in our WHS Policy and our Safety Management System documents.

## **Event Services Support**

Throughout the service term of the contract, there will be a number of major events which occur annually, known as planned events. Premier will prepare for these events and provide a plan to TfNSW in accordance with Schedule 2B (planned Services) & Schedule 1D (special services) of our contract.

All event service information will be updated on our website and 131500 so that customers have access to any relevant information.

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There may also be events that are not included as Planned events in our contract and we will prepare and plan these as required and liaise with TfNSW to ensure that we meet the required service outcome and customer expectations. These will also be included on our website.

## **Ticketing, Revenue Protection and Mitigation of Fare Evasion**

Premier Charters derives the major part of its revenue from OPAL/CTP products, which includes contactless payment by credit card through the OPAL/CTP system.

Drivers ensure that ticket machines are working prior to commencing shift and any problems are reported immediately to minimise any disruption.

OPAL/CTP products are used on our services and drivers ensure that passengers utilise these with tap on and off and monitor for the validation sound as passengers board the bus.

Due to a shift in customer ticketing preferences and considerations for driver health and safety, Premier Charters operates a cashless ticket system.

Refer to our Revenue Protection Plan for further details.

## **Operational Integration with other Public Transport Services**

Premier Charters is committed to delivering highly integrated bus services, including integration with other bus service operators and other transport modes, to enable passengers to easily and efficiently transfer to and from other transport modes.

Our operational planning team consider connecting services when reviewing and updating our timetables, with many of our services connecting with rail services across the Illawarra area enabling our passengers to utilise the option of multi modal travel.

## **Customer Feedback and Lost Property Maintenance**

Providing a great overall customer experience is key to our business and customer feedback is an important part of our ongoing review and improvement strategy.

All customer feedback is received via TfNSW and relayed to our Customer Service Officer on a daily basis. Once received, the feedback is investigated and the customer is contacted within 2 business days to discuss further and advise of any findings or outcome. Investigations may involve obtaining a statement from a driver or witness, contacting interested parties such as schools, or checking CCTV footage for verification.

Any concerns raised regarding staff behaviour that are substantiated will be referred to our HR department for further action.

Lost Property is managed through the TfNSW lost and found portal which enables customers to look in one place for any items they may have lost during their daily journey which may have been with multiple providers.

Our staff check the bus at the end of each shift and any lost property found is labelled with the following information:

- Date and time found
- Bus route and number
- Vehicle Registration
- Driver name and any relevant notes

The driver will either place the labelled items into the secure storage cabinet in the driver area or in the event of high-priority items (such as medicines, wallets or phones), the staff will provide them directly to the office when they return to the depot. If the driver finds an item prior to returning to the depot then they will contact the control centre as soon as possible.

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Our office staff collect any lost property from the storage cabinet in the driver area daily, and then record all information, including a description of the items, into the TfNSW portal. The items are then placed in the secure lost property storage area awaiting collection.

Passengers are able to collect any items located once we are able to match them with their lost item. Identification is required when collecting lost property and the TfNSW portal is updated once the item has been collected.

Collection of lost property can be organised with our office and passengers can attend the office at Investigator Drive, Unanderra, either by private car, on foot or using public transport services. The Unanderra train station is located within a 10 minute walk from the depot. We also have regular services attending the depot throughout the day and our office staff will assist passengers to locate a service if required. Our depot and office are wheelchair accessible and our office hours for collection of lost property is 9am till 5pm, Monday to Friday.

All lost property is kept in our secure storage area for 28 days and if not claimed then it is updated in the portal ([transportnsw.info/lost-property](https://transportnsw.info/lost-property)) and then disposed of appropriately.

## **Customer Service Training and Staff Development**

Premier have an experienced and qualified staff trainer, who provides ongoing training and support to all staff and all training provided is recorded in our Maus system.

Customer service and engagement are an important part of our regular driver assessments and our trainer ensures that our drivers understand the importance of not only providing the best service possible but also engaging with our customers to better understand their needs. Additional customer service training is provided to staff as required, with an emphasis on communication, safety and professionalism.

As listed above in the Customer and staff safety section of this plan, all drivers are provided with internal training in relation to Emergency situations, including evacuation of passengers if necessary. This training has been developed to ensure that all drivers are prepared and confident in the event of an emergency situation and we offer additional tailored training for all staff as required.

Whilst each staff member is provided with initial training across all aspects of the role, as well as targeted specific training sessions and bulletins throughout the year, we also ensure that all drivers receive at least one driver assessment per year. As part of this annual assessment process, we offer additional training and support to assist our staff to achieve goals and to develop their skills and qualifications as required.

Premier is committed to the employment and training of all staff and actively seeks to employ and train Indigenous people. Please refer to our Indigenous Participation Plan for further details.

## **Customer Engagement and continuous Improvement of Service delivery**

Premier Charters is committed to providing the best overall customer experience possible by researching our customer needs and continuously monitoring and improving our systems and the overall services provided.

Our company objectives are to provide our customers with a pleasant and safe travel experience and to ensure they receive a professional, friendly and efficient service. This is monitored by our designated customer service officer and the on time running team who are constantly tracking and monitoring our vehicles to ensure the services are running to the scheduled times.

Some of the processes in place to ensure continuous improvement are:

- Regular cleaning and maintenance of all vehicles – we have a team of cleaners who perform daily cleaning services. Our workshop team also ensure that any defects raised by drivers are addressed as soon as possible as well as regular servicing and general maintenance. We also schedule additional (non-urgent) maintenance work or deep cleaning during school holidays.
- Ongoing driver training regarding Customer Service, including dealing with difficult situations calmly
- Staff training in relation to assisting passengers who may require additional support, such as elderly passengers, people with a disability, school students or passengers with a language or cultural barrier

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- Continued review of timetables and other information across various platforms to ensure that it is accessible and clear for all passengers
- The introduction of a Bus Driver Navigation App has provided route guidance for drivers and improves operational efficiency. Additionally, drivers are provided with assistance and training, from our driver trainer, at any time on request.

All customer feedback received is reviewed and followed up by our customer service officer to ensure that we address any relevant customer concerns or queries and improve our overall customer experience.

Having a dedicated staff member to manage all customer feedback ensures that it is prioritised and reviewed on a monthly basis to identify any common themes or areas requiring improvement. This is shared with our management team for further review or action.

Any staff related issues are addressed with the staff member involved and additional training or performance management is provided as required.

Regular cleaning schedules and routine vehicle inspections assist in maintaining high standard of cleanliness and safety standards. To assess the effectiveness of the above improvement plan, feedback is regularly gathered from drivers and depot staff, alongside tracking maintenance logs and cleaning completion rates.

Premier has undertaken a large number of community-based network alterations and special events in the past 20 years to promote and provide improved services and to meet the needs of residents in the Illawarra. Further details can be found in our Stakeholder and Community Engagement Plan.

## **Equitable Access for All Customers**

Premier Charters operate both Route services and School services. Our services are predominately school services, which provide transport services to students from Kindergarten to Year 12 from various locations to many different schools in the local area as well as students from local TAFE and Universities. The students using our services come from a diverse background and require a reliable service between home and school.

Our route services provide transport services to a variety of customers between various locations, giving customers access to essential services such as shopping, medical appointments and personal services. These customers require a reliable service that offers frequent and safe transport to meet their individual needs.

We are mindful of the following diversities within our customers and understand the importance of providing a service to meet their individual needs:

- Cultural diversity
- Disabilities – mental and physical
- Age
- Gender
- Socioeconomic Status
- Geographical location

It is important that we consider our customer needs to improve customer experience and enable communication and marketing to be improved and targeted to the needs of our customers. Additional information can be found in our Communications and Marketing Plan.

An important part of the customer experience is accessibility to public transport for all passengers including those with a disability. Premier Charters provides transport services that are DDA compliant as per our Accessible Transport Plan and our staff are provided with training to assist customers with disability.

The Accessible Transport Plan has been designed in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and related guidelines / standards.

It is the intent of this plan to ensure that our services are not discriminatory, either directly or indirectly, by ensuring compliance to the relative standards of accessibility within the time frames set.

Where compliance is unable to be achieved as a result of design restrictions or other circumstances beyond our control equivalent access will be provided with direct assistance if necessary.

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Many of the standards apply to infrastructure and premises which interlink with our services, but are not under our direct control. In these situations, management will liaise with the other companies / authorities concerned and offer assistance where possible to help those companies / authorities adhere to the required standards.

In NSW, guide dogs, with valid accreditation, can travel on public transport, including trains, buses, ferries and light rail, free of charge.

Further information can be found in our **Accessible Transport Plan** which provides a detailed overview of our commitment to accessible transport.

### Compliance and Reporting

This Customer Experience Plan will be reviewed annually and reported to TfNSW as part of the Annual Customer Experience Plan Report.

A current copy of the Customer Experience Plan will be published on our website and made available to passengers, upon request, free of charge.

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