# Suspended ceiling access

The Problem/Challenge
A major transport infrastructure client recognises that high and deep ceilings voids could be problematic to inspect and maintain. They found that it was too often impractical to close off buildings to facilitate scaffold access. Ceiling access panels were traditionally too small to allow for safe access and deep beams and large ducts and other services running in the ceiling void prevented access platforms reaching up to the space.

The Risks
Falls from height associated with unsuitable access
equipment. The unavailability of suitable access for tools, equipment and replacement parts.

The Solution
• The selection of 600 x 600 panel size was challenged and large ceiling panels were substituted. These enable access by systems such as mobile elevated work platforms (MEWPs)
• Panels were hinged or had sliding mechanisms so that they could be safely opened.
• The openings in the ceiling and the services running in the voids were designed to provide adequate space for a working platform to be raised between them, giving access to the full height of the void.
• No services were placed in any remaining inaccessible areas.

The Benefits
• There was a significantly reduced level of risk associated with work at heights during maintenance
• The improved access arrangements meant that the impact on the operational building from maintenance activities was reduced.

Key Points
• The design team planned ahead to improve access for maintenance
• There was coordination across design disciplines to produce the final design
• There was willingness and commitment to challenge the norm