

## **Transport Link or Missing Link?**

An overview of Community Transport and its potential for increasing Community Participation and Food Access

A report prepared for VicHealth

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# 1 Introduction

It has become apparent, through feedback from projects funded by VicHealth, that a major barrier to participation is lack of transport. VicHealth took note of this feedback and embarked on an investigation of community transport (CT) in Victoria. CT was seen as an area of potential development to improve access to activities for potential participants. The investigation looked at what CT services were currently supplied, interviewed a range of people involved in this area, and identified issues pertinent to CT provision across Victoria. VicHealth also has an interest in food access and food insecurity and people contacted were asked about this aspect of CT as well.

This project took a four stage approach:

- Review of relevant literature: a selection of reports were consulted, this does not however represent a comprehensive review of CT literature. Similarly a selection of international literature was consulted.
- Interviews: a semi-structured interview was conducted with 26 individuals - a broad range of constituents from within and outside the CT sector - providing perspectives on CT from health, environment, state government, local government and various non-government organisation's perspectives, as well as those of CT providers (see appendix 1 for full list).
- Synthesis and evaluation of comments collected from interviewees and literature reviewed to give an overview of current thinking and recommendations for the future.
- Case studies: compilation of a variety of case studies from both Victoria and beyond.

This report has drawn significantly on the comments and thoughts of the interviewees, as they represented current thinking and experience in Victoria and there appear to be few statewide documents available addressing CT issues in this state. The project was undertaken between March and May 2003.

There are various dimensions of investigation that were excluded from this particular project but which are worthy of consideration in relation to CT:

- Women's safety and transport
- The influence of poverty on transport choices
- CT links to human rights and equity

This report is an overview of the current context, issues and considerations that relate to CT in Victoria. A number of recommendations are made about how it may be possible to improve participation levels through addressing CT provision. It is hoped that this report clarifies current perceptions about where work is needed and where potential for leverage exists.

## 2 Context of Community Transport (CT) in Victoria

The context within which CT sits is not clear. There are numerous definitions of CT in use, different levels of awareness about who it should serve, a variety of services in operation, and a number of contributing policies that support the provision of CT services indirectly.

There are numerous transport options available to members of the community in order to get between locations, access services and shops, and make visits to neighbours, friends and entertainment. They include cars, public transport (PT), walking, cycling, car use, and CT services. Some of these options are more visible than others. Car parking tends to have high visibility on our streetscapes, community bus stops very low visibility. Awareness is also variable. Different transport options have different levels of community awareness - public transport options may be available to a particular community but general knowledge of the services available, destinations and timing may not be common knowledge. CT services are generally even less well known to the community it serves.

The dominant transport system in Victoria is road and car based, yet many people have no access to a car and many more do not drive. 'People without cars are around twice as likely as those with cars to identify transport as a barrier to participation in a range of social and cultural activities' (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003 p.16). The options left to these people are various but generally include:

- dependence on someone else who can drive and does own a car,
- dependence on public transport systems that operate in the vicinity of their home (if indeed there is any public transport service available) and
- CT services - if the person concerned fits into an appropriate qualifying category for the CT service offered in their area, and if indeed they know that such a service exists.

It is the latter option that is examined in this report.

### 2.1 Definitions of Community Transport

The definition of community transport appears to vary according to the organisation offering the service and where their funding comes from, and also depending on the perspective of the person being asked to define it. Indeed three interviewees were of the view that there was no definition of CT as *'it means different things to different people: flexible transportation, community orientated transportation...'* (interviewee)

However there is a strong constituency who define it in terms of the Health and Community Care (HACC) funding criteria, as the majority of CT in Victoria is funded through this funding mechanism. This definition describes a CT service as one that offers transport to frail elderly and disabled people and their carers who would not otherwise find it easy to navigate around their community. It generally means the provision of vehicular transport such as minibuses, maxicabs or volunteer driven cars. These services predominantly offer transport to medical and health related appointments as well as HACC funded services (Hind et al, 2000 p.17,).

However HACC does not identify itself as a CT funder. It maintains that it enables clients to get to HACC services, as opposed to being per se a means of funding CT. Hence isolating the amount of funds spent by HACC on CT is not easy to decipher (Harris, 2000 p.ii,). Thus CT is defined heavily by its primary funding source, as opposed to reflecting the true nature and range of those with unmet transport needs.

Interviewees could commonly see the limitations of the HACC funding criteria, and that a number of transport disadvantaged groups were excluded, for instance: youth, low income, older people without special needs. There are a number of more comprehensive definitions that reflect a broader appreciation of those who may require community provided transport support to get around:

- CT can be defined as a linking system. It is '*supplemental transport*', and is there '*to fill in the gaps public and private transport can't fill*'. It is also '*affordable and accessible to people who are transport disadvantaged and those unable to access public transport*' (interviewee) *There is often some assistance given and it is frequently door to door in nature. It should be there to 'complement not substitute for PT'* (interviewee)
- 'CT aims to maintain the independence and participation in community life of residents who experience difficulty using other available transport resources.' (Ashby et al 2002, p.4).
- One interviewee saw it as encompassing all types of transport that service the community: it is '*the transport everyone uses – trains, trams, low floor buses, taxis, it offers broad access*'.

The most all encompassing definition comes from Ashby et al:

'Community transport makes the community accessible to people, deals with people's local needs, achieves an improved responsiveness when compared with conventional public transport, supplements public transport, provides specialised local transport services, meets community needs, provides diverse service types. It is also not for profit, supported by a variety of funding sources, primarily aimed at the transport disadvantaged, de-centralised, operated by local government in conjunction with other providers.' (cited in Harris, 2000 p.9)

CT can have various forms of service delivery: taxis, public transport charters, community buses and extending to other services, including couriers and Australia Post. As well as servicing a variety of community members.

The Community Transport Association (UK) went further to state that 'Community transport is concerned with those who get missed by the transport planning models: younger and older people; people with physical disabilities and learning difficulties; unemployed people; people from ethnic minorities; poor people. CT is based on analysis of need, advocacy, service response and continuous development' (CTA, 2001p5)

The current definition of the Victorian CommunityTransport Association (VCTA) is that CT provides '*cooperative, community based, flexible, affordable, accessible transport solutions, complementing gaps in the existing systems*' (VCTA cited in Cousland, 2000 p.7)

In its broadest sense CT means transport of whatever mode that allows people to move freely around their community, access services, activities and locations they wish to visit, and engage in civic, social and sustaining life activities. A broad definition is called for in order to correctly identify the need for transport that exists. Once the definition has been extended to reflect the true breadth of need, addressing that need will be done in a more realistic way and be more likely to succeed in addressing the concerning deficit of transport provision that currently exists.

A key problem appears to be that CT has come to assume a narrow definition. This is primarily due to its definition identifying strongly with its major funding source which only serves a particular clientele. However there are many other people in our community who have unmet transport needs who at present do not fit the funding criteria required by the primary CT funder and so are often left isolated and without any easy means of transporting themselves or their

families. The definition therefore needs to be addressed, and broadened to encompass and reflect all those with community transport needs. The need for a broader definition is slowly beginning to be recognised.

An area for development in all of these definitions is health promoting CT, which supports and enables walking and cycling as a means of transport for particular members of the community.

## **2.2 Who are the Transport Disadvantaged?**

There are many sectors of the population who cannot access transport. These sectors often forfeit activity because access is so difficult for them. As discussed above HACC funding only provides transport for people with confirmed need, who fall within their client specifications. There are others who could also benefit from such transport provision.

Those who are transport disadvantaged are '*people without ready access to any form of PT or private transport*' (interviewee). There are a number of groups within our communities who are at particular transport disadvantage, these include:

- ethnic groups and newly arrived migrants not used to the culture; this includes culturally and linguistically diverse groups and certain religious groups '*language is a barrier - they know about an activity, but not how to use the [transport] system*'. (interviewee)
- youth: particularly rural and outer metropolitan youth are heavily reliant on the existence of a public transport service to use, or on lifts from adults. Where neither of these are available access is compromised. In rural areas where the population is dropping youth have to travel further to access their peer group and facilities - their unmet transport needs are a growing problem (Frost, 2002 p.5.). For lower SES youth and youth at risk transport is a particularly pertinent issue, and could even be defined as a preventative strategy (interviewee). Koori youth are also included in this category.
- older people without licences or cars or who may have handed their licenses in: these people may have never driven but always been driven by a partner; may have driven themselves but reached their 'drive by date' (Life Matters, ABC Radio, 2003); or may have been ambulant, walked and used public transport but through failing health or fear for personal safety, feel less confident using those options. They then become heavily reliant on others for transport.
- economically disadvantaged people and families without a car, or those with one car that is unavailable due to the worker taking it with them all day and who live in areas where PT is not providing a service suitable to meet their mobility needs. Many interviewees cited the problems of poorer families and solo parents who have moved to the country due to more affordable house prices and then find that they experience social isolation and have difficulty dealing with the limited transport options available (Frost, 2002 p.5). Some may be 'fragile' car owners, where their car is not dependable. Koori families are also part of this category.
- very low income individuals living in hostel accommodation where their entire benefit is handed over and they have no money to spend at all, let alone having money to access transport. Those who are homeless or who are in crisis situations also fall into this category.
- people with psychiatric disabilities and those who are chronically or acutely ill, who are unable to access the public transport system or drive themselves.
- HACC categories: the frail elderly and disabled, for which the PT service may be inaccessible, these are the most extensively served client groups for community transport at present.
- outer metro, regional or rurally isolated people where public transport is sporadic at best and non-existent at worst.

A number of the above categories are worthy of special mention. There are a number of geographical areas with little or no public transport provision and so transportation is severely restricted for people living in these areas, particularly for those who do not own or have access to a car. There is great, as yet unmet, need to provide transport services for people in these 'empty pockets' of the public transport service. These areas are not only regional and rural, there are many outer metro areas with little or no PT services. Even where PT does exist, it may operate within restricted hours only and commonly will not run at evenings or weekends. This aligns it with the timetable of most CT services that generally offer services in the daytime only. For evening or weekend events, entertainment or visiting there may be no transport options at all. 'The lack of transport access during these critical recreation periods manifests itself into social isolation for those reliant on CT' (Larne Pty Ltd cited in DOI, 2001 p.13). Even in areas where a taxi service exists (and in some country areas there is not one), a taxi journey may prove too costly for many in need of evening or weekend transport.

There are also those for whom the cost of public transport is prohibitive. These people may not access transport services that do exist because it is just too expensive for them to afford. CT may be a feasible option for them, but they can only access it if they meet the client based criteria most HACC funded services have been set up to serve (and that predominantly means HACC clients only).

There is also the problem of public transport reach. In the metropolitan area much of it is radial - feeding into the CBD, when people have a need to travel across the metropolitan area east/west or north/south. In regional and rural areas this is also often the case, with towns being serviced by Melbourne destined services which means that services in other directions or that serve as a means of transport around the town or regional centre itself are often non-existent. CT often services a particular geographical area, usually identified by local council boundaries. It will not transport passengers beyond those boundaries.

With particular reference to regional and rural townships a couple of interviewees alluded to an unsavoury situation where a number of PT and CT service developments were being quashed. This was due to fears from Local Traders Associations that they would lose business to bigger regional centres, such is the sensitivity to losing their customer base in some of these smaller towns. However many of those wishing to travel outside their small town, who require transport, may do so for purely social reasons. Ironically members of the traders association are likely to own a private vehicle and be able to shop and recreate where they chose.

### ***Entertainment and Leisure Disadvantage***

All of the above listed sectors of the community are disadvantaged for entertainment and leisure access. Of particular note are those transport disadvantaged in rural, regional and outer metropolitan areas - for instance youth who have a yearning to be social but have no option but car use if that is available to them (Green and McDonald, 1996 p.39), and older people for whom visiting friends is an important feature of their social lives but for whom evening and weekend transport options do not exist. Even those with ready access to CT often find that it prioritises medical trips over requests for leisure/social destinations, and even if social requests are accommodated they have to fit into daytime, weekday service operation time. As one CT provider commented *'we make essential trips but that is all, clients miss out on quality of life trips'*. Many CT providers understood very well the importance of leisure and recreation but it was not a priority for their services and there was no spare capacity in which to accommodate it. As one interviewee stated *'I am in favour of it - a healthy society enables people to participate in society...social exclusion occurs when people cannot move around freely'*.

It was agreed by almost all of those interviewed that leisure and recreation activities were not at all well served by CT. In some areas churches and Rotary Clubs try to provide for these trips but the reality is that there are only very patchy, and sometimes non-existent, services for social

destinations. This shows a major failing of the public transport system as well as CT services, which could provide for more access. As one interviewee stated *'There are so many after hours barriers to go out to the movies, go bowling, go to see a friend, [people] can't get to the local station to go to the footy at the weekend'*. Similarly, trips for social connection where a person wants to visit a friend or relative are not provided for. *Even if a person wants to visit a relative in hospital or attend a friend's funeral they may find that there is not the transport available to enable this journey* (interviewee).

It was also thought that transport in itself can be a social experience, particularly for older people, as it is a means of meeting others and making new social contacts.

In the absence of access to (or knowledge of) PT or CT, people have to fall back on family and neighbours for transport, if they have or know them, and if they are willing to help out. For young people and older people, where it is available, it often falls to parents or relatives, and particularly women, to do extensive transporting of others that should not be necessary - ferrying children and young people to activities and events, and running errands with ageing parents (interviewees; STPP, 2000 p.1). This is both time consuming and creates unnecessary dependency.

As a National Community Organisation for Social Services (2002, p.5) proposal clearly articulated 'The social implications of poor transport access are often widely underestimated. People who do not have access to a car are often isolated and limited in their ability to actively participate in society. Social isolation has broad implications for poor health outcomes'.

### **Holidays**

Another leisure area is holidays which may cease when older people can no longer drive, if their holidays were previously car based (Harris cited in Harris, 2000 p.7). There is also limited PT provision to holiday destinations in this state.

### **Food Access**

There were only a few responses to enquiries around problems with food access. Some CT services offer shopping trips and social meals. But there was a general feeling that little was known about this area. Some felt it was an emerging area of concern, which needed more investigation in order to ascertain the extent to which there was a problem. Youth and low income people, particularly those that were isolated, were thought to be particularly at risk. A few people acknowledged that where small towns had become bankrupt, people had to travel further afield to purchase staple goods, and this may prove difficult.

## **2.3 Variety of Community Transport Services Available**

### **Who are the CT service providers?**

Currently CT is provided by numerous agencies. Commonly they are community based organisations and while for some their sole business is the provision of CT, for others it forms only a part of their business, along with provision of other community based services. Frequently the services rely heavily on voluntary input and are funded by external grants via the HACC funding system, local councils or charitable organisations. Some services are provided and run by local councils, other organisations with a stake in CT are the Red Cross, churches, rotary clubs and welfare organisations. City councils and voluntary sector CT providers do the majority of CT provision and are constrained by the funding sources they can access. They are however well aware of the shortfall in transport provision existing in the community. CT focussed



organisations that do exist are distributed in an ad hoc manner and grow out of community pressure and identified need as opposed to any strategic government level planning.

### ***Range of models***

In Victoria the predominant CT model is a service provided for HACC funded clients, providing access to HACC services or medical and hospital appointments as its priority transport destinations. In some instances they offer services to the local shops and community destinations: library, council offices, local strip shopping centre and market. Sometimes it involves a council funded bus running on a fixed route around the local community, while other services provide a door to door service. These are generally coordinated, independent, voluntary or charitable services. They involve volunteer drivers providing minibus or car based transport sometimes utilising the volunteer's own vehicles at minimal cost to the clients. Some services are also council aligned or coordinated and the majority operate on weekdays and rarely provide evening or weekend services. In general services are available by prior booking only, to those who fit the HACC funding criteria, and operate within closely defined geographical boundaries, usually defined by council areas (Department of Infrastructure, 1999).

There are however a number of other services that have been organised to get people to local shops, to help people access public transport or to fill the gaps in public transport service provision for a particular section of the population. A full range of models are provided under section 4.

### ***CT Service provision and planning***

CT services vary greatly from area to area in terms of who is served, how well known it is, what is provided and how well the service is established.

There is no ready formula for assessing need or levels of provision of CT for any given community (Harris 2000, p.10). CT services grow and are organised according to the motivations of community services or councils to seek funds or allocate funds for particular services. As such CT service provision is both ad-hoc and developed in a fragmented, isolated way. Some areas have numerous CT services, some have very few. Provision of comprehensive services versus narrowly focussed services is also a matter of 'pot luck'.

The recent awarding of the Flexible Connections grants via a joint Department of Human Services (DHS) and Department of Infrastructure (DOI) funding scheme has allowed for regional and rural CT service development in 9 sites over the next 3 years. This is the first comprehensive funding of CT to non-HACC clients in Victoria seen to date (and is discussed further under 2.5 supportive programs).

The Victorian Community Transport Association is a network of CT providers run in a voluntary capacity that aims to provide input on standards and practise in the CT arena in Victoria.

The Office of Senior Victorians within DHS has commissioned a volunteer drivers training manual, in order to create a generally accepted standard of volunteer driver training across the state. The training is developed with driving of older people in mind (Effective Change, online).

### ***Human Powered Community Transport***

An undeveloped area in Australia is physical health enhancing CT. This transport includes pedicabs, bicycle provision, supported walking (which includes supported access to PT), as opposed to a totally motorised vehicle based CT system (see Appendix 2: Case Studies 1, 2, 6 and 10). From a health promotion perspective these examples provide scope for improving the health

benefits of the transport experience, while at the same time providing a cheap (or indeed free) form of transportation.

It must be reiterated however that social connection, even if delivered via motorised transit, has significant health benefits.

### ***Social Implications of Transport***

A number of service providers commented on the fact that their service was the only social contact a client may have in their week. It was clearly apparent that for many CT users the volunteers and staff providing CT services were of great social importance to their clients, and made a huge impact on the enjoyment of their trips. Some drivers and volunteer helpers went as far as providing plant cuttings and swapping knitting patterns to try to engage further with clients.

It was also frequently cited that fellow travellers made social connections and would become friends due to their regular CT use, even where these were hospital/doctor appointment trips. It would be interesting to examine how many of these medical trips would have been readily given up for a social destination if transport to such a destination had similarly been made available. As one interviewee stated, '*[HACC clients] will go to the Doctor every week to have a chat with the driver [on the way]- they will book them [Doctors appointments] more regularly.*'

## **2.4 Policy Context**

CT is not formally recognised by the state government. Therefore it does not come under any particular government department's remit or budget. Even HACC in DHS does not recognise CT as its responsibility; it merely funds most of it as a means of getting people to HACC related services and appointments. Local government provides some of the CT services, however policy developed to support it is scant.

As such seeking out policy directly addressing CT is not straightforward. No policy directed solely at CT development and delivery was found. There are however a number of policy and strategy documents that refer to or support the provision of CT, mainly in a very minor way.

This is not the case in other states. In New South Wales funds are pooled between the health and transport departments and CT 'money is allocated on a systematic basis by the Community Transport Group' (Harris 2000, p.21). In Queensland the state government has recently decided to create a community transport solutions unit to direct CT development and funding, to be housed within Queensland Transport.

There follows an overview of policy and strategy documents that would be expected to or do have some link with CT or participation in community activities.

### **2.4.1 Federal Policy**

**Auslink, Department of Transport and Regional Services, 2003:** The recently released draft national transport policy includes nothing about walking and cycling and very little about public transport, CT is not mentioned at all.

## **National Strategy for an Ageing Australia, Department of Health and Ageing, 2000.**

This strategy includes goals of:

- 'Increasing the availability of access to transport options that meet older people's needs in terms of timeliness, safety, cost, design and flexibility;'
- 'Encouraging business, communities and local government to meet the gaps in transport requirements of older people with flexible, innovative models;'

and an area for action as:

'Work towards improving the scope and breadth of planning to provide for increased consideration of the design and safety....of housing, transport,....with urban and rural developers'. (online)

### **2.4.2 Victorian State Policy**

- **Transporting Victoria Draft Strategy, DOI, 1998.** This strategy suggested the examination of the contribution taxi services can make to the transport web available to regional communities, and how they can contribute more effectively (cited in Harris, 2000 p.8).
- **Melbourne 2030: Integrated transport strategy (draft), Victorian Government, December 2002.** The 'Actions' section states that the directions outlined 'also improve access by walking, cycling and using public transport to a wide range of services and facilities. They also encourage development that .....improve community transport.....' However in Action 6: 'Ensure integrated planning for metropolitan transport' there is no mention of CT. A truly integrated transport strategy would incorporate CT services as they form part of the transport system and should therefore be integrated into the transport planning process.
- **Respect – The Government's Vision for Young People, a Department of Education and Training Strategy).** This strategy states as a priority 'assisting more students from rural and regional Victoria with transport options to ensure participation in education and training' (online)
- **Growing Victoria Together (2001).** A policy statement with one challenge being to 'Link Victoria to promote social cohesion and growth'. It also is concerned about rural and regional Victoria. Three policy platforms it proposes are:
  - Support older people to live active lives in the community
  - Enhance community participation and engagement in cultural activities
  - Build cohesive communities and reducing inequalities
- **Women's Health and Wellbeing Strategy, DHS (2002):** supports strategies such as, 'fostering social connectedness and facilitating economic and community participation'.
- **Making this the Age To Be in Victoria - A Forward Agenda for Senior Victorians, DHS (2003).** This agenda has outlined the following areas for action:
  - Enable senior Victorians to lead independent, active and healthy lives for as long as possible
  - Continue to develop safer and more accessible public transport services, and expand transport choices for seniors
  - Develop strategies to provide increased access to flexible transport options, particularly in rural and regional areas

- Improve information to older people about existing transport services
- **Victorian Rural Human Services Strategy 'The Context for Change', DHS (2002):** This overarching framework recognises that 'Community transport has been a difficult issue in Victoria for many years as there is no agreed definition, no policy framework and no single Government Department currently has responsibility for its coordination'. Therefore '...a project is being undertaken to establish a consistent policy and planning approach to community transport systems'. (La Trobe Valley Access and Mobility Study, 2001 p. 35).
- **State Coordination and Management Council:** The State Coordination and Management Council agreed in principle to establish a Multi-Agency Policy Team (MAPT) that would have a remit to look at rural access and mobility issues such as:
  1. roles of local, state and federal government
  2. establishment of equitable levels of access and mobility in rural Victoria
  3. identification and mitigation of impediments to integration of transport services
  4. extension to regional and metropolitan urban areas (DHS and DOI, 2003).

### 2.4.3 Local Government Policy

#### Community Safety Policies

There are a number of safety strategies and policies that support CT provision. These are often produced at a Council level and may include:

- community safety strategy
- safe driving strategy
- safe drinking strategy

For instance Corangamite Shire Council has a community safety plan (online).

#### Integrated Transport Strategies

A number of local councils have now developed an integrated transport strategy or plan. For example:

- Moreland City Council Integrated Transport Strategy: has a section under 'The public transport network' on community transport and suggests an action 'to investigate the potential to use taxis to maximise provision of community transport within constrained budgets'.

However the City of Darebin plan, *Going Places: the Darebin Integrated Travel Plan* makes no mention of CT.

A presentation given by Meadows in 2000 at the Inclusive Transport Conference in Canada clearly articulated that '...community transport is increasingly being recognised as having an important role to play in the development of an integrated transport policy.'

### 2.4.4 NGO Policy

Council for the Ageing, in their pre-budget submission 2002-3 outlined a number of transport related policy suggestions:

- That the government establish a cross-departmental committee to plan, pilot and implement strategies for improving the coordination and utilisation of existing community transport, for identifying gaps and transportation needs.

- That the government commences the process of developing a comprehensive community transport policy in anticipation of the growing numbers of Victorians who will be dependent on this form of transportation.

## **2.5 Supportive Programs**

A number of state and local government programs support CT provision:

### **Neighbourhood Renewal Program**

This program has adopted a number of strategies to try to combat disadvantage. One of its guiding strategies is to 'increase access to transport and other key services and improve government responsiveness.' (DHS, 2002 p.3). This program has included the LaTrobe Valley coordinated CT project, which aims to improve access to transport for a broad clientele across the shire. Another initiative has been to run a bus to the new skate park in Ballarat (online, *ibid*).

### **Victorian Community Building Initiative**

This initiative aims to build 'stronger social connections and inclusiveness' and has done this by funding a range of programs across the state. (online, Department of Victorian Communities, 2003)

### **Safer City Initiative**

This has led to some CT programs getting off the ground, such as the safe taxi rank schemes (see Appendix 2, case study 11).

### **Flexible Transport Program**

This is a CT funding scheme financed by DOI and DHS jointly. The target groups are pre-drivers, drivers with a restricted access to a vehicle, people without the finances to run a car, people with a disability of all ages and post-drivers who live in regional and rural Victoria. Nine projects were funded in July 2003 which should provide some development of CT services in the funded areas and provide CT to a broader range of client groups (media release, Victorian Government, 2003).

### **Rural Access Initiative**

Rural access workers have been funded by Disability Services Branch DHS, to provide access support for disabled people, through 'improving access and building community inclusion' (Dunn et al, 2003 p.1).

### **Integrated Transport Planning**

The Victorian Local Governance Association (VLGA) has embarked on an integrated transport planning project for councils across the state. This involves refining a tool for integrated transport planning that councils can use to aid their transport planning process. CT forms one aspect of the transport provision that is to be integrated into these plans (VLGA 2003 p.5).

## 2.6 Research

At present there appear to be three main areas of research taking place related to CT provision:

### Youth and Transport

The National Youth Affairs Research Scheme (NYARS), which is a joint Commonwealth/State/Territory youth research initiative, is funding a project called *Rural and Regional Young People and Transport*. A contract is currently being negotiated with Booz Allen Hamilton to undertake some of this work (personal correspondence).

### Regional Public Transport Provision and Gaps

DOI and RMIT are to conduct a piece of research to examine regional public transport provision. This project is in its formative stages and is presently looking for suitable funds.

### Transport Coordination Studies

A number of Councils have commissioned transport coordination studies, looking at how transport could be better coordinated and enhanced across particular geographical areas. Of note are:

- *Out and About – A transport coordination study* in the La Trobe Valley, Larne Pty Ltd, 98
- *Transport Links: A community transport system – for the community*, Hind, Woodland and Hind, 2000
- *In Touch through Transport*, Barwon Community Transport Strategy, Woodland, Hind and Hind, 2000
- *La Trobe Valley Access and Mobility Study*, DOI 2001
- *Gannawarra Shire Transport Strategy*, June, 2002
- *Opening Doors to Transport*, City of Port Philip Community Transport Project, Dec 2002 by Jenny Ashby and Assoc. Pty Ltd.
- *Getting Out and Getting Back. Developing a Community Transport Program in South West Victoria*, The Sophics, August 1998.

## 2.7 Community Transport Networking

There are a number of organisations with a particular interest in CT:

- **The Dusseldorf Forum** is an international organisation has a keen interest in all youth issues and in February 2003 organised a forum on youth and transport drawing together people from around Australia. Papers from this conference can be found at: <http://www.dsf.org.au/>
- **Local Government Road Safety** conference in Newcastle in 2003, which included papers covering safety focussed transport services - drink wise buses, safe taxi ranks, etc. (RCAG)
- **Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS)** held a conference on 'Flexible connections' in Brisbane in June 2003, and have an interest in flexible transport options to increase equity of transport access (home page, QCOSS, 2003).
- **Victorian Community Transport Association (VCTA)** is the CT networking organisation for Victoria. It is run in a voluntary capacity by interested members and

provides a website, list serve, newsletter, some advocacy, and addresses various aspects of CT provision in Victoria (home page, VCTA).

- **Travellers Aid** is a welcoming service for those travelling to Melbourne. This organisation has a particular interest in helping those in crisis, those who are homeless and those in need of transport support (Travellers Aid 2002 p.4,).
- **Community Transport Organisation (NSW)** ran a conference on CT called *Back to Basics* (online).

CT service providers in Victoria are in a haphazard way involved in or are aware of the above opportunities. There is no official coordinating or networking body and information is circulated by the voluntary networking organisation as best as it can given the meagre resources and volunteer capacity of its office bearers. Information and learning opportunities are often discovered and accessed in a completely piecemeal and serendipitous way, or by visiting other services to witness service practise and scope for themselves (interviewees).

### **3 Current issues and tensions**

During the discussions held with the variety of interviewees a number of issues became apparent. There were in some cases differing opinions as to the solutions to these issues, however an overview of each issue is provided.

In providing CT to a broader range of groups who are transport disadvantaged these issues require further consideration and the seeking out of suitable solutions.

#### **3.1 Service Issues**

##### ***Community Transport: Hours of Operation***

Much CT is organised using volunteers and often has a strict timetable and geographical reach. Most services do not operate in the evenings or at weekends unless of a high priority, so even where social and recreational services are the focus, these services are often only accessible during daylight hours. This severely restricts those using the service in terms of social/recreational activities they may wish to take part in. In some services vehicles can be privately hired after hours but generally there are restrictions on who the vehicle can be hired out to. Generating services for evenings and weekends to enable access to a broad range of activities and events is imperative.

##### ***Medical Appointments take Priority over Social Contact***

It is generally the case in HACC funded services that hospital and medical appointment requests take priority over social activity requests. In other words bookings for transport to medical destinations are given priority and other social or recreational requests are given lesser priority and so often remain unfulfilled requests, if there are not enough vehicles or drivers to meet demand. Therefore, transport needs that relate to social activities go unmet.

##### ***Under-Utilised Vehicles and Transport Services***

There are many vehicles in our communities – at schools, churches, recreation facilities, community groups, etc. Many of these vehicles are under utilised and only utilised for a fraction of the week. If they were tied into a centralised database they could be lent out when not needed by the organisation that owns them and put to good use by others. Providing vehicle coordinating services as some of the models above have done, goes some way to better utilising the vehicle resources that currently exist in the community.

There were a number of interviewees who advised that transport needed to be better integrated with the range of other transport services serving any given area. Of importance particularly to rural and regional areas was their concern that a number of vehicles were travelling around with spare capacity that could easily pick up passengers. There is currently a lot of wasted space in vehicles - returning school buses, Australia Post, couriers, backpacker minibuses. The school bus policy has recently changed to allow tertiary students access. Should others be allowed onto these buses as paying customers if space is available? School buses provide the most comprehensive coverage of the state of any transport service, so provide an ideal opportunity to offer spare capacity and return journeys to other clientele. All Australian Post delivery vehicles could incorporate passenger seating to fulfil a similar role.



Where backpacker buses drop off tourists for day trips, for instance, as well as picking up paying passengers en route they could become community vehicles at their destination locality, until such times as they are needed to do the return journey.

### ***Investing in Transport Rather than Vehicles***

Many clubs and activity centres have invested in vehicles and then have all the running, maintenance and insurance costs to deal with. This money could be better invested in organising suitable transport to the locations needed by looking at the range of vehicles already available in the area. A lot of money is tied up in ownership of vehicles that could be put instead into provision of transport services (by utilising vehicles owned by others, by looking at what other transport service providers could offer and by providing supported access to other transport services). For instance a Mackay taxi company invented a shared taxi ride system, which has proved very popular (QCROSS 2003, p.10.). This avoids the high costs associated with single occupancy taxi rides where PT was not readily available or easily accessible (see Appendix 2, case study 13).

Similarly where a vehicle is already owned it could be tied into a local CT coordinator so that it becomes part of that service and both its level of use and maintenance costs are addressed by the coordinating agency.

### ***Information Provision***

Information on all transport options (except those associated with car use) is generally lacking. Many people do not know what transport services are available in their own localities or neighbouring localities, and how to access these services. Information is lacking in both PT and CT services and so is a real barrier to transport uptake *'People do not know what services are available ... a real barrier is fear and lack of confidence about how to use the system.'* (interviewee)

Information on timetables, services and how to use the transport system are hard to seek out regarding public transport, and they are even harder to access for CT. Bus, train, tram services can be an enigma. Some people are therefore transport disadvantaged because they find it hard to find out what PT, let alone CT, services currently exist. Few CT providers actually advertise their services – most rely on word of mouth. They are concerned they would be swamped if they actually told the community at large of the services that they offered. This must mean a large population of people who are not aware of any transport service that they can access. As one interviewee put it *'Information is impossible to get hold of - too difficult for anyone to get hold of'* - thus limiting peoples ability to get around their community. They may even make major life decisions based on the limited knowledge they have of transport options in their locality, not realising options that they would be able to take up if they were aware of them. As one of the interviewees related:

#### **Life decisions based on lack of information about transport options**

An able bodied couple who lived in rural Victoria and had just given up their car wanted to attend a friend's funeral but had no way to get there. Through investigating transport to get to the funeral they found out about their local CT service and that it was available to give them a lift.

They were disappointed to find out about CT so late in the day as they had already sold their property and made arrangements to move into a retirement village in Melbourne. They had not been aware of any CT service in their neighbourhood up until the need to attend the funeral. If they had known about it they may well have stayed in their own house and community for longer.

### ***Networking across Community Transport Providers***

There is little networking across CT providers. The Victorian Community Transport Association tries hard via a list serve and newsletter to circulate information but there is a real need to build their capacity and provide a focal point for CT providers to share information, solutions to problems and network generally.

### ***Starting up a Community Transport Service***

Due to the lack of a coordinating central unit for guidance, starting up a CT service and getting access to information about the range of CT services already established is very difficult. New services providers have taken to going out to visit other service providers in order to learn about CT. This makes for a very time consuming and inefficient way to learn. Even finding out about the range of CT models that exist is difficult for them.

### ***Acknowledging Real Community Transport Need***

HACC funding is not designed to support transport and many people with transport needs do not fit the HACC criteria. There is a need to educate government and the community about the range of people who are transport disadvantaged and encourage funding to be appropriately provided to meet their transport needs also.

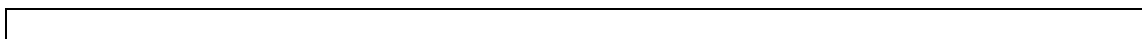
### ***Organised and Self Directed Transport Requests***

There is a tension between transport accessibility for organised events, sports, recreation, arts and those that can be attended in an ad-hoc, flexible way. The former has more opportunity to incorporate an organised transport option that would service those attending (as they are a finite population) the latter accommodating individual or self-directed attendance at activities is more complex to provide transport for. However providing for access to sport and recreation for those of the population not involved in organised sport, but who enjoy participating in sport or leisure activity informally, is still worthy of consideration and effort in terms of trying to meet their transport needs. This also allows for informally visiting friends and relatives.

## **3.2 Community Issues**

### ***Geographical Isolation***

In the areas where there is literally no public transport service available or access to it is difficult, people become isolated and lack opportunities to move about and access services, employment, and leisure. This includes regional and rural areas as well as outer metropolitan areas. Often it is left to CT in its piece meal fashion to try to fill the gaps. A minimum standard of provision for CT and for public transport would go some way to addressing this. Otherwise the social and ill health consequences associated with lack of social contact and inability to participate in civic life, as well as problems with accessing food will continue. With small townships being run down and so distances to services/amenities increasing, in some areas there are literally no transport services available. As one interviewee from a rural area stated *'there is no generally available transport for those who haven't got their own - no public transport apart from the school bus, no bus services within town or from out of town.'* Isolation is easily cultivated in such areas.



### **Long distance transport....by shopping buggy?**

A radio report recently cited the story of an elderly man from Horsham who had wanted to visit his friend 15km away and as there was no transport available to him had decided to get there on his 4 wheel shopping buggy. For a direct run he travelled all 15km up the western highway. (interviewee)

### ***Giving up Driving***

There were numerous comments on older drivers continuing to drive after their health had declined. These drivers were considered unsafe on the roads but did not want to give up their licence as they saw this as relinquishing their independence. This appears to be an exceptionally difficult time in a persons driving career and help with education regarding alternative transport options is badly needed. A short 'Wiser Driver' course has been run by Hawthorn Community Education Project addressing this problem to good effect (interviewee).

### **Dementia Behind the Wheel**

Radio National recently ran a piece about elderly people and driving and cited the statistic that there are presently an estimated 80,000 drivers on Australia's roads who suffer from dementia, but hanging up the car keys is something they are loath to do. (Lifematters, ABC)

### ***Cost of transport***

For some sectors of the community the cost of public transport is too high and so providing special fare reductions or other transport options would help people to move around easily. Taxi share schemes and cycle loan schemes have attempted to address this (see Appendix 2).

### ***3.3 Planning Issues***

#### ***Community Transport – the 'Hot Potato' of the Transport Sector***

CT appears to be a 'hot potato' that no state portfolio takes responsibility for:

- **The Department of Infrastructure** does not take responsibility for it, although the agency has in the past brought out a directory of CT services and has part funded the current flexible connections funding cycle
- **The Department of Human Services** provides perhaps the biggest funding investment through its HACC program for elderly and disabled clients, and currently is offering joint funding for CT with DOI through the 'Flexible Connections' program.
- **Local Councils** provide varying amounts of funding for CT services in their locality.

Thus a variety of services are provided in an ad-hoc and uncoordinated manner across the state. This often results in services that have strict geographical boundaries varying greatly in provision levels between geographical areas to the next and from one municipality to the next.

In order for CT to develop and gain proper funding support it is important that the state government decides where CT should sit and who has responsibility for it. There are a number of unresolved issues that need to be addressed from a statewide perspective including: agreed

service standards; dealing with gaps in service provision; and sharing experience and information to support service providers. Those interviewed offered different opinions regarding who should take responsibility for it. The new Department of Victorian Communities, Office of Local Government may be in a position to take on this role with cross reference to other departments - integration with transport via DOI, community care aspect of transport through DHS, and input from the Department of Women's Affairs and Department of Youth Affairs, and others. Or it may be possible for DOI to build on its Access and Mobility Unit and extend their remit further. A lead agency is required to provide a broad policy framework to enable the integration of CT planning into other transport planning strategies and activities. Examination of its integration with PT and taxi services is also required. Service delivery needs to be continued at a local level but provided in a more systematic and less ad-hoc manner. Support of CT at a state level is much needed.

### ***Gaps in Public Transport Service Delivery***

In areas where there is a limited public transport service, CT often attempts to take up the slack for particular client groups. This means that client groups utilising the CT services could probably use a public transport service quite happily if one was available. Providing minimum service standards for PT and CT would go some way to addressing areas where this might be the case. These areas include rural and regional areas (many regional centres have very limited public transport within their townships, and have to rely on services that pass through at inconvenient times), and outer suburban areas that have seen massive increases in population without matched public transport infrastructure being provided. Public transport's criteria for new routes also need to be looked at.

Currently CT cannot completely take up this slack so it offers 'top up' transport to client groups who it can attract funding for. This inevitably means that there are a range of people left isolated, dislocated from their community and with few options regarding accessing services, activities and resources that they may need. 'Services for disadvantaged groups should not detract from the mainstream public transport network, but should feed into it or provide a reasonable alternative for those who cannot access it.' (CTA, 2001 p.19).

State government needs to address how the two services should intersect and how they relate to each other. For instance school buses could be utilised during the day as a local community bus service if this could be coordinated across departments.

### ***Addressing Upstream Solutions***

A number of interviewees mentioned that transport issues or barriers could be perceived to be a symptom of a range of higher order problems, such as housing location, landuse planning decisions, poverty, and financial hardship. Some interviewees therefore felt that addressing 'transport' issues was not addressing the upstream issues that could have longer term effects in solving the transport problems. There was discrepancy between people who felt that immediate improvement of CT was needed and those that had a longer term view of transport solutions. The latter group felt that transport was an issue linked with a number of other aspects of society and taking it as a problem on its own without consideration of its context would not fully resolve the underlying problems that existed.

Certainly addressing prevention of further isolation would suggest that land use planning transport integration is of vital importance. One interviewee outlined the present situation succinctly: *'Interface councils are desperate to get PT into their developments, [it is] seen as a huge disadvantage [not to have any]. [If there isn't any] the purchaser is committed to a 2 car lifestyle. Often [these new suburbs are] not occupied by people who can afford that.'* New developments require a 70% occupancy rate before planned bus services are put in. New housing stock is even sold with the promise of PT, which may not eventuate.

## ***Transport Planning***

A number of councils have brought out integrated transport plans. These try to coordinate the approach of council across all transport modes. Some have included CT and some have not. In the UK a new planning mechanism is being brought in that dovetails in with integrated transport plans. These are called accessibility plans and look at transport access by the broad range of community members in order to ensure equity of access and make sure that barriers to access are dealt with (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003 p.61,).

## ***Infrastructure Support***

Infrastructure for non-motorised individualised transport choices needs consideration. This may involve the provision of parking systems for cycles or mopeds, or easy carriage for cycles on buses, and providing easier, safer and more attractive walking routes.

## ***Integrated Transport Services***

'Joined up travelling' is easiest for everyone, when safe walking routes or CT carries passengers to train lines that link to a variety of bus services at each stop, people feel they can make best use of the overall system. Addressing timetabling issues and access to transport services is critical to improving uptake of services currently on offer.

## ***Land Use planning***

Land use planning is an important consideration. Many housing developments are placed far away from amenities and services, thus necessitating a lot of travel in order to get to these service centres. Housing developments have also prioritised car access over public transport access and in some of the newer areas of Melbourne the public transport services are skeletal at best and often in the evenings and at weekends non-existent.

Bus routes have not always kept pace with the location of new developments. In addition, access to venues for informal learning, such as libraries and museums, can be reduced by timetables, which are structured around office hours.' (Social Exclusion Unit, 2003 p25).

Thus people living in outer suburbs have heavy reliance on car use as it is their only option. If they do not have access to a car, accessing services and amenities becomes very difficult. Design of new developments is also an important issue as some new housing estates literally cannot accommodate buses and so no service can be offered as it is not physically possible.

## 4 Community Transport Models

There are a number of CT models in operation in Victoria. Some are widely used and some are innovative and just starting out. There are also a number of models not currently in operation in Victoria that could be 'imported' or demonstrated for use here. This section reviews a selection of models that were collected during the course of this investigation.

### 4.1 Traditional Models

A selection of formal models that are well established and provide substantial CT services are outlined below:

- **Specialised Transport Service Provision** (outlined in 2.3 above). This is the most common model delivered in Victoria at present.
- **Single Use Transport.** There are a number of sports clubs, activity providers, and voluntary organisations that operate a minibus specifically for their own clientele. The cost of this is generally shared between the organisation and those using the transport or completely funded by the organisation. It is common to find these vehicles 'penned' for large parts of their week, when they are not in use.

### 4.2 Emerging Models

These models are growing in popularity as it is realised that CT should serve a more diverse range of clientele, with a diverse range of transport needs.

- **Specialised Transport Service with PT Support**  
This model provides the traditional model as well as support for catching public transport. This enables HACC clientele to access publicly available transport services, travel further afield and maintain their own independence (see Appendix 2, case study 2).
- **Brokerage and Transport Coordination**  
There are a few varieties of this model but commonly a database of available vehicles across the community has been generated. The varieties include:

**Vehicle Ownership and Brokerage Service.** This model provides a volunteer supported transport service utilising both vehicles owned and run by the organisation and also other vehicles available across a given municipality. This may involve coordination of vehicles owned by churches, clubs and other community based organisations. It undertakes a review of appropriate vehicles in the community with a view to taking over their management, and may go as far as taking full responsibility for the running and maintenance of these vehicles. This is done in order to provide an extended service and make maximum use of available vehicles in the community.

**Brokerage Service across all Transport Modes.** This service acts as a broker, and may or may not have vehicles of its own. However it utilises all available transport providers, which includes working closely with taxi, private hire and bus companies to get the best deal for the community. Volunteer drivers and professional drivers are used. It may run pilot services which if successful are handed onto the PT services in order to develop the current PT network. Integrating service developments with taxi and PT

providers enables the CT coordinator to look at how best to fulfil requests for transport from the whole suite of transport providers available. This type of service also provides transport information on what services are available and when, to help people plan their travel. It follows a recommendation in a recent UK CT action plan, to encourage 'collaboration with voluntary, statutory and private organisations to provide collective rather than individual solutions where public transport options are limited (especially at night and weekends' (CTA, 2001, p.10). This model allows for groups of all natures to hire a vehicle to meet their needs (see models 5 and 12).

**Brokerage and Transport Development Model.** This model was developed to provide development assistance to CT providers, whether it be on particular aspects of the service offered: insurance, training, working with volunteers or to develop new services that were required but did not as yet exist. This model has been adopted in south west Victoria and it seeks 'to offer definitive, specialist transport development for the region.' (Frost, 2002 p.3). A comprehensive database of commercial and community based transport vehicles is also maintained, in order to help other service providers to access suitable transport.

Funding for the above predominantly comes from the HACC scheme or from local councils. The clientele served are linked closely to the HACC criteria and people requesting services are measured by those criteria in order to be provided with transport. A few services have attempted to offer services to non HACC clientele, but for many that has proved difficult to do unless they have a broader funding base.

#### **4.3 Non HACC Models**

There are some models that serve either a broader population or a specific non-HACC population, that are being used in Australia:

- **Youth Bus Service**

In areas where youth have been identified as particularly transport disadvantaged, specific transport services have been laid on for them. These may take the form of a late evening and weekend minibus service that aims to fill the gap left by public transport services that do not operate at those times (see Appendix 2, case study 3).

- **Youth Transport Brokering Service**

This exists to allow people, eg youth, to go out to leisure activities of their choice in an affordable, safe manner. It involves a coordinator and office space and all vehicles used are accessed from spare capacity in the community or hiring of appropriate transport services to fit the particular trip requested (see case study 12 for further details).\

- **Car share**

A number of services have developed taxi car share services, where customers are grouped together in order to reduce individual costs and enable more efficient use of vehicles. One such service provides security personnel at a taxi rank late at night and enables taxi sharing for those going in the same direction (see Appendix 2, case studies 11 and 13).

- **Event Focussed Transport**

A number of bus companies organise trips to star attractions (mainly metropolitan) but few organise trips to smaller scale entertainment and arts locations. Providing transport for transport disadvantaged people to take advantage of arts programs is slowly beginning to take place.

### **Older people accessing the Arts**

Geelong Regional Arts Centre in regional Victoria, recognises the difficulty older members of the community have in reaching the regional centre so laid on a bus to help them access the arts venue. This is for people who have money but no transport, the bus operates to morning performances and provides transport and a lunch for a special rate. The people using the bus get a social outing, a good meal and company along the way. This service has worked out very well and has proved very popular (see case study 8 for more details)

- **Door to Door PT Service**  
number of services have been developed that build flexibility into PT fixed route services. For a small surcharge fixed route vehicles will deliver or pickup a person to/from their front door (see Appendix 2, case study 7).
- **Supported Public Transport Use**  
This service provides volunteers to accompany people to a public transport service they wish to use. It may also involve 'training' or 'buddying' in order for people to get used to how to be a public transport user – selection of tickets, where the most convenient bus stop is, etc.. This is of particular value to people with disabilities, older people and those from different ethnic backgrounds who may have language or confidence barriers to using these systems. This allows access to destinations further afield than local CT transport could offer (see Appendix 2, case studies 1 and 2).
- **Feeding into the PT Service**  
A recent report from the UK suggested that a role for CT was the 'development of community-based feeder services into the mainstream public transport network.' (CTA, 2001 p.10) There are a couple of very specialised services of this nature in Victoria, but they are not common eg City of Port Philip disabled minibus service (interviewee).

Sponsorship can sometimes be found for the above services but the services often exist on short term funding bases that have to be reapplied for on a regular basis. The extended PT services depend on the interest and flexibility of the PT operator involved.

Where CT does not exist or is not widely known about, older people with unfulfilled transport needs and money to spare are finding motorised shopping buggies increasingly attractive.

#### **4.4 Informal Models**

There are also informal models that interviewees have referred to but due to their nature these remain undocumented and organised in an ad hoc, informal way:

- **Meeting Point Coordination**  
People in rural areas establish particular meeting places with a notice board. Drivers call past the meeting place before leaving town to see if anyone wants a ride.
- **Special Occasion Bus Hire**  
A group of people hire a bus or maxi-taxi for a particular social activity to ensure safe travel for all who attend.



### **Young People Party Initiative**

In Ballarat young people attending each other's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday parties have taken to organising themselves a hired bus to take them to and from the party venues. This has involved hiring and paying for a bus that they have contracted for the evening. No other transport options would be available unless their parents were prepared to taxi them, if a car (and the inclination to venture out very late at night) was available at home, or they could afford to pay for multiple taxi fares (interviewee).

- **Car Sharing**

Participants at a particular activity or event agree to share the same car in order to travel together. This often happens amongst churchgoers, neighbours and club members eg RSL, and relies heavily on trust. One interviewee suggested that people needed to start recognising that there was a need and think about offering lifts. In the UK there is an 'adopt a neighbour' scheme to try to encourage this kind of supportive thinking. Also the 'circle of friends' concept used in classrooms to provide support to those who need help may be a useful model to look at in this regard (reported by interviewee). Hawkesbury Youth Transport project in NSW is investigating a 'coordinated car pool' service between parents and young people (p.21, Fulton).

- **Hitching a Lift**

In many country areas people without access to cars have no other choice but to hitch a lift if they cannot organise an informal arrangement with someone else who is a car driver. This obviously has implications for safety and freedom of time chosen to travel.

### **Hitching a Ride to the Shops**

In one rural area a mother of a large sized family could only get to the shops by hitching a lift, which she did regularly with a load of shopping to feed her large family. There were no satisfactory public transport service to offer a means of getting to and from the shops easily, so resorting to hitching was the only option as the woman did not own a car and lived a considerable distance out of the local town. (interviewee)

## **4.5 Innovative Models**

There is a general sense in which CT is seen to be a car replacement or public transport replacement service. There are instances where people are taken a relatively short distance or where public transport services are a relatively short distance from their homes. As such supported walking or cycling, or linking to PT services may be an interesting development from the provision of motorised local linking services. These would obviously have positive health outcomes as well as enabling closer connection with the local community (see also volunteer support to access PT services in 4.3 above).

A number of models from abroad have provided insights into other ways of operating CT services. Some of these have particular health promotion and physical activity benefits. These include:

- **Bicycle/Moped Provision**

This idea has been implemented in the UK and involves a service that hires out moped or bicycles to young people for a certain loan period in order to enable them to afford to travel further. Both mopeds and bikes provide economic and easily mastered forms of transport (see case studies 4 and 10). These services are organised to allow them access to education/training or work opportunities more easily, but could as easily allow access to other activities. Training and safety equipment is supplied and opportunities to purchase the moped or bike, or to secure other ways to travel are supported towards the end of the loan period. These models are already in action in New Zealand, Germany and UK (, Khong 2003, p.25).

- **Pedal Taxis**

These are made available for those who are transport disadvantaged to travel within their own locality. They are very cheap to run and cheap to hire and provide a door to door local, accessible transport service for those who would otherwise find it hard to travel around (see Appendix 2, case study 6).

- **'Eating with friends'**

A gathering together of people for Sunday lunch at a restaurant or community house. This has apparently been organised in Tasmania. Similarly 'lunch with a bunch' in Westbay offers a social eating opportunity (reported by interviewees).

A number of models do not exist as yet but could do, these include:

**Adult Walking Bus**, for those who are ambulant but who want companionship or require support in getting to a specific destination.

**Cycle Buddies** where people are matched to a cycle buddy to help them to build confidence in their cycling and get to know safe routes and tips on how to get to their chosen destination. 'Cycling pods' could also be formed by particular groups wanting to travel to the same destination at the same time.

#### **4.6 Case Studies**

A number of case studies have been collected during the course of this investigation and they can be found in full in Appendix 2. They offer a more descriptive look at how the different models operate in practise. Further information can be obtained from the auspicing agency involved.

<b>Case study number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Location</b>
1	“Feeling Good About Using Public Transport” project.	Darebin City Council, Victoria
2	South port day links – public transport support scheme	City of Port Philip, Victoria
3	Wyndham Youth bus service	Wyndham City Council, Victoria
4	Wheels to work	North Yorkshire, UK
5	La Trobe Valley	Victoria
6	Pedal taxi and commodity service	Downham, UK
7	Telebus service	Melbourne, Vic
8	Musical mornings participation study	Geelong, Victoria
9	LLEN school bus extension scheme	Hamilton, Victoria
10	Pedal to Work	North Yorkshire, UK
11	Ballarat Safe City Taxi Rank	City of Ballarat, Victoria
12	BAT bus	Byronshire, NSW
13	Taxi Transit	Mackay, Queensland

## 5. Conclusion

This scoping report has involved looking beyond the usual clientele that CT supports and delving into the unmapped territory of a range of other disadvantaged transport users. It also attempts to identify how CT has potential to fulfil the transport needs of a diverse range of community members in order that they can better participate in community activities. As such it was a project of discovery.

Each transport disadvantaged group has its own problems and context to deal with and many people suffer a number of disadvantages. However this report attempts to take an overview across all disparate groups. It has drawn together some recommendations for VicHealth to review and consider for future action.

There are a number of innovative models and approaches for CT that could be incorporated into VicHealth's funding agenda. There are also a number of areas where VicHealth could play an advocacy role around community transport provision and its implications for access to recreation activities and food in particular. There is a sense of loneliness about how CT providers operate at present. They are eager to learn about what is done elsewhere (even within Victoria), who can provide support, and what the best approach is. VicHealth is very well placed to address some of these issues.

This report has set out to clarify who the transport disadvantaged are, describe the virtually absent policy context, and what models are available that could help to remedy their situation. It has also attempted to identify particular health promotion models, some of which have not been tried yet in this country or elsewhere.

Social exclusion has a number of unhealthy side effects. Supporting access to transport for people who otherwise would find it difficult to participate in community life, could go some way to providing pathways towards more equitable community involvement.

## **Acknowledgments**

Thanks must go to all the interviewees involved in this project, who gave so generously of their time and expertise. Thanks also to the staff at VicHealth for their support and encouragement, and to Mike Gotts for his expert secretarial skills. Special mention must be made of the advice and guidance provided by Kellie-Ann Jolly, who commissioned and managed this project, and was pivotal to it reaching its final form.

Rachel Carlisle, July 2003.

**Appendix 1**

**Interviewees**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
Meagan Height	La Trobe City Council
Maureen Brewer	Moreland City Council
Carol Hooper	Mornington Peninsula City Council
Bronwen Machin	City of Port Philip
Jennifer McInnis	Wyndham City Council
Suzie Strain	Victorian Local Government Association
Angela Pollock and Gerri Papadimitriou	Darebin Community Health
Jo Spence	Northern Care and Share
Brian Dunn	RuralAccess
Carolyn Fuller,	Southport Day Links
Sue Frost	South West Community Transport Development Project, Hamilton
Philip Whiting	TransAccess and Victorian Community Transport Association
Richard McCann	The Travellers Aid Society
Carley Northcott	WDHS Community Services
Robyn Erwin	Geelong Performing Arts Centre
Leo Styles	Highland LLEN
Kerry Irwin	Gippsport
Jill Evans	Leisure Networks
Peter Bourke	Valleysport
Douglas Savage	Department of Human Services
Christine Kilmartin	Access and Mobility Unit, Department of Infrastructure
Shelagh Krummel,	RMIT, Hamilton
Rosemary Green	University of Ballarat
Keith Foote	Bus Association Victoria
John McPherson	Environment Victoria
Anne Harris	RACV

## Appendix 2

### Case Studies

<b>Case study number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Location</b>
1	“Feeling Good About Using Public Transport” project.	Darebin City Council, Victoria
2	South port day links – public transport support scheme	City of Port Philip, Victoria
3	Wyndham Youth bus service	Wyndham City Council, Victoria
4	Wheels to work	North Yorkshire, UK
5	La Trobe Valley	Victoria
6	Pedal taxi and commodity service	Downham, UK
7	Telebus service	Melbourne, Vic
8	Musical mornings participation project	Geelong, Victoria
9	LLEN school bus extension scheme	Hamilton, Victoria
10	Pedal to work	North Yorkshire, UK
11	Ballarat Safe City Taxi Rank	City of Ballarat, Victoria
12	BAT bus	Byron Bay, NSW
13	Taxi Transit	Mackay, Queensland

## Case Study 1: “Feeling Good About Using Public Transport” project, Darebin Health Centre

**Location:** Darebin Community Health (DCH) Melbourne. In May 2001/2002 the Occupational Therapy/Health Promotion teams at DCH developed and implemented the “Feeling Good About Using Public Transport” project.

**Project outline:** Using a peer leadership model, peer volunteers worked with participants and their carers, to build their confidence in using public transport. ‘Peer volunteers’ in this project are members of the community with physical disabilities who use mobility aids and are confident in using the public transport system. ‘Participants’ are members of the community with physical disabilities who use mobility aids and would like to learn how to use public transport but are less practiced users.

The project is helping to build understanding and awareness in the community of the public transport needs of people with physical disabilities who use mobility aids. Mobility aids include walking sticks, frames, wheelchairs and scooters. It is also helping to make the bus operators more aware of a wide range of customers needs.

The project is a combination of workshops and supported travel training to build confidence and develop positive relationships with public transport companies.

**Benefits:** The benefits of the project, so far, have been to reduce social isolation, build friendships and improve the independence of people with physical disabilities using mobility aids, to access everyday community services using public transport.

As one participant said ‘It is opening our world, allowing us to explore new places.’

**Resource base:** Funding for this project is from the Community Support Fund (CSF). This project won a Victorian Public Health Award in 2002 and is being expanded in 2003 to include a more diverse range of community groups, including people from non-English speaking backgrounds.

**Evaluation:** A formal evaluation has not been done, but feedback and reflection on how things went and what people feel about it, are an integral part of the project to ensure that the training meets the needs of those involved. So far the participants have found the project to be very beneficial.

**Sustainability:** a future development will be to set up a social group for people to move into, once they have completed their ‘training’. It is apparent that most participants want some continuing involvement, the social support group will be organised by two of the management group/peers. The project funding period runs to the end of 2003 and the future is uncertain after that time.

**Contact:** Angela Pollock [angela.pollock@dch.org.au](mailto:angela.pollock@dch.org.au)  
or Geni Papadimitriou [geni.papadimitriou@dch.org.au](mailto:geni.papadimitriou@dch.org.au)  
Project hours Wed - Fri Phone 9489 1388 ext 451

### **References:**

Darebin Community Health. ‘Feeling food about using public transport for people with disabilities’ in *Victorian public health awards for excellence and innovation 2002*, Award for innovation p.12-13.



## **Case Study 2: South Port Day Links: public transport access service**

**Location:** South Port, a section of the City of Port Philip, Victoria

**Outline:** South Port Day Links offers a number of community transport and community support services including chat mates, walk mates, garden mates, pet links and transport links.

The transport links service includes minibus and sedan car use, providing a supported door to door service for mainly HACC clients to access appointments and activities.

The transport links service also offers a scheme whereby a volunteer can assist an individual to access public transport. This service may be needed because the individual cannot get to the public transport stop without assistance or because the individual cannot get onto the public transport once at the stop. This support allows them to retain their independence for longer.

The volunteer is booked by the individual to meet them at their home and take them to the public transport stop they want to get to and see them onto the service they require. A volunteer can also be booked to meet them on their return journey.

**Benefits:** Those who are able to are supported in continuing their public transport use to aid independence and mobility around their neighbourhood. It is common that community transport services serve a particular geographical area, the use of supported public transport allows users to go further than the geographical boundaries the community transport service operates within. It allows individuals to retain independence and access to their greater community.

**Resource base:** funded through HACC funding for community transport services.

**Contact:** Carolyn Fuller, Coordinator, South Port Day Links, tel: 9646 6362

### Case study 3: Wyndham Youth Bus service

**Location:** The City of Wyndham runs a Youth Bus service.

**Outline:** The Youth Bus service offers a service to young residents aged 12 - 18 years that runs on Friday and Saturday nights from 9pm to 1.30am. The service operates with a team of 14 volunteer drivers and uses one of the Council's 21 seater community buses. It also employs a local security company to provide a security officer who accompanies the driver throughout the evening.

The service travels a circuit of 6 pickup points around the town and drops passengers at the street intersection nearest their home. It has been found that most of the passengers use the service to go 'out' rather than home.

**Benefits:** The service commenced in August 2001 as an initiative of the Council's Community Safety Strategy. Amongst other things, this Strategy identified limited transport options for young people because the local public transport services run their last service at 7pm every evening, and that young people (teenagers/young adults, especially males) were over represented as victims and perpetrators of crimes. This service provides the opportunity to travel throughout their local council area in safety.

**Resource base:** This is an initiative under the Council's community safety plan and is funded by the council. The cost to Council for the first year pilot was \$34,000 which covered the cost of a coordinator (one day/week), promotion and advertising, contribution to bus expenses and on-costs. The cost of security services has been added to subsequent budgets.

**Evaluation:** At the end of the first 12 months, the service had transported over 2500 people, averaging over 90 per weekend. Surveys of the passengers indicate 'mates place' as the most popular destination. From observation, unstructured social interaction is the most common activity for this client group.

**Contact:** Jennifer McInnes on Fridays on 9742 0777.

**References:** This text was largely compiled from summary information supplied on the Dusseldorf forum web site <http://www.dsf.org.au/> and during discussion with the contact officer.

## Case study 4: Wheels2 work, Yorkshire, UK

**Location:** Northallerton, a regional town in, North Yorkshire, England



### **Outline:**

Young people in this rural area of Yorkshire found it difficult to get to work as there was little or no public transport available to them to get to the local regional centres for the beginning of their working day. A scheme was developed that made mopeds available to young people who could borrow them for the first 6 months of their new employment. They received training and insurance, and the use of the mopeds cost them \$7 per week.

The Wheels2Work project, started with a dozen mopeds and presently manages forty.

### **Benefits:**

This project has allowed young people to accept employment in regional centres and remain in their original community. It has provided the transport support to accept work opportunities that may have otherwise had to be turned down. The young people are encouraged to buy their own moped after the first six month loan scheme finishes.

**Resource base:** The mopeds were provided by a special careers and community centre.

**Contact:** Andrew Johnston, Rural Transport Coordinator, 'Wheels 2 Work' project, North Yorkshire, UK, e-mail: [wheels2work@ne.communicate.co.uk](mailto:wheels2work@ne.communicate.co.uk)

**References:** <http://www.communicate.co.uk/ne/wheels2work/>

## **Case study 5: La Trobe Coordinated Community Transport**

**Location:** Provides transport services across the council area of La Trobe Shire, La Trobe Valley, Victoria.

**Outline:** The project is designed to provide a range of transport options for people with a disability, frail aged, youth, rurally isolated, socially disadvantaged or unemployed. This service addresses transport needs for any transport disadvantaged group or individual and works across transport providers to meet client needs.

To do this it has developed a database of vehicles in the area in order to aid the more efficient use of those vehicles (many were not previously used to capacity). A pool of volunteer drivers have been trained to operate these vehicles and support the clientele using them. The service has also formed close links with the local taxi and bus companies in order to extend its transport options. Thus prospective users approach the coordinator who then looks to broker the appropriate transport required. This can include meeting needs of sports groups, isolated residents, access to large events, etc.

The council also runs a regular service utilising its own minibus to a range of fixed destination locations including: LaTrobe Regional Hospital, Adult Day activity Centres, Vocational training units. This service is available for those who are eligible only.

**Benefits:** There is a huge unmet need for transport in LaTrobe Shire. There is little and often no public transport available and numerous sectors of the community are therefore left isolated or very dependent on others for their transportation needs. This service provides a destination specific service and a transport brokering service that run in parallel. The former is firmly established and the latter is under development at the present time.

**Resource Base:** This is a coordinated transport project funded through the LaTrobe Ministerial Taskforce and the Department of Human Services. It is funded for 3 years and is presently going into year 2.

The fixed destination service is provided with the help of HACC funding.

**Contact:** tel: 5135 3999 or 0438 514 027

## Case study 6: Downham Cycle taxis, UK

**Location:** Downham Housing Estate, Lewisham, London, UK



**Outline:** Downham cycle taxi cab service offers a taxi and commodity delivery service in a council housing estate in England. It enables people to call a local service and get a lift to where they want to go by pedalled taxi. The service was set up because it was recognised that there were insufficient public transport and community transport services in the area. The service is cheap to use and is primarily for elderly people, but others can use it for a slightly higher rate. An additional service is the use of cargo-cycles to deliver goods to those who need them, this includes shopping purchased, or other errands.

**Benefits:** The service users have found the service invaluable, it has enabled social contact amongst older people, access to shopping and getting shopping home, ability to get around their neighbourhood without having to rely on others for help. 'Some users even reported that the cycle taxi service was the only way they got to spend time outside their houses'.(Velovision 2003)

As one service user reported: 'It's been wonderful, I don't have anyone else to do this for me and if it wasn't for them [Cycle Taxis] I wouldn't be able to do these things. Before if I wanted something, shopping or to go down to the post office I had to rely on neighbours or sometimes my friend, when she was well, which wasn't always. Now I can hop in and I'm away, whenever I need to go I can, I don't have to trouble anybody' (Velovision 2003)

**Contact:** Brian W Esler [b.w.esler@herts.ac.uk](mailto:b.w.esler@herts.ac.uk)

**References:**

Jake Elster, 'Case study 3 – Downham cycle taxi project' in *Cycling and social inclusion*, Centre for analysis of social exclusion, UK, P 54, online

Brian Esler, 'Cycle taxis take off' in *Velovision*, UK, Issue 9, March 2003, p 38-39

## Case Study 7: Telebus service

**Location** Eastern suburbs, Melbourne



**Outline:** TeleBus was originally developed to provide an effective bus service to new estates, where the road network made it difficult for normal bus routes to access the new areas. There are now 12 Telebuses operating in Mooroolbark, Lilydale, Croydon Hills, Chirnside Park and Rowville, with the possibility of more to come as suitable areas are investigated.

The original aspect of the service (i.e. servicing new estates) is still important, but small buses have recently been "rediscovered" as a cost effective way of providing service in areas of low passenger demand.

Currently, TeleBus passengers can use the service in two ways:

- they may board or leave the bus at one of the fixed stops in the area, and pay the normal MET fare.
- they may telephone and request to be picked up from home, or may ask the driver to be dropped off at home. In either case, passengers pay a small surcharge for this personalised service.

Four super-Lo floor, fully air-conditioned vehicles were added to the telebus fleet in April 2002.

**Benefits:** The service offers patrons a true demand-responsive bus service and an improved peak hour timetable designed to provide better co-ordination with trains at Lilydale and Mooroolbark Railway Stations.

It has been found that the service is particularly well used by young people, as well as older people and those with prams or mobility difficulties.

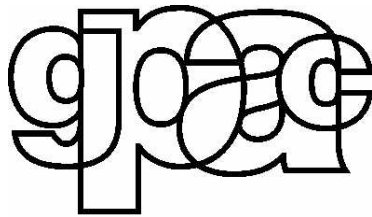
**Resource implications:** The service falls into the same category as all other route operations, they are part of the contract to run services arranged with DOI. The only incentive provided to the company to run such a flexible service and to cover the significant extra running costs is that the company keeps 100% of the pick-up and drop-off surcharges (these charges are dictated by DOI).

**Evaluation:** Evaluating the service has been done through customer surveys and financial analysis. The customer response is extremely positive, except where customers want an express service and were provided with a longer trip. Financially the Telebus service could not stand

alone on the current fare structure. It would always require some injection of funds or an increase in the surcharge (this is not being proposed at the moment).

**Contact:** Telebus is run by the Invicta bus company, Ph 03 9735 3133, Email [enquiries@invictabus.com.au](mailto:enquiries@invictabus.com.au)

## Case study 8: Musical mornings participation project, Geelong



**geelong  
performing  
artscentre**

**Location:** Organised by the Geelong performing arts centre for audience members from particular shires in surrounding regional areas.

**Outline:** This project is in its pilot phase and has just started operation. The scheme collects individual older people in a minibus and takes them to a musical morning performance, which is a program run out of the Geelong Performing Arts Centre. The participants in the scheme are recruited through the meals on wheels service. The morning outing involves a roast lunch at the Arts Centre after the performance, along with transport to and from the performance.

**Benefits:** The benefits are that older people from further afield, who are isolated, are provided with transport to get to an arts event they would not otherwise be able to attend. As they are transported in a minibus, they travel with others which gives an opportunity for creating a social outing. Sharing a meal together also enables social bonds to form.

**Resource Base:** This scheme is funded by a partnership between the Council, who provide the minibus and the Arts Centre who pays for the petrol and supplies the volunteer driver with a free ticket for the performance. The local Lions Club is also involved. Each participant only has to pay the cost of an ordinary musical morning ticket, plus a small surcharge for the roast lunch.

**Contact:** Robyn Erwin, Development Manager, tel: 52251214, [robyn@gpac.org.au](mailto:robyn@gpac.org.au)



## Case study 9: LLEN school bus extension scheme

**Location:** Ballarat regional area, Victoria

**Outline:** A free school bus accessibility pilot program for young people (15-19 years old) attending TAFE and ACE programs in Ballarat ran for terms 3 & 4 of the 2002 year. Access to transport has been identified as one of the major difficulties in increasing engagement of young people in post compulsory education and training. This scheme allows spare space on school buses to be used for post school students.

**Benefits:** This pilot enables students to continue with their education when they would have found accessing transport to get to and from the education facility difficult otherwise. The return journeys still have to fit in with the school timetable, if a homeward journey is to be travelled on the school bus system too.

**Resource base:** There is no cost incurred by offering this service as the buses would have been travelling the same route to the schools anyway.

**Evaluation:** The program evaluation recommended to the Victorian Learning and Employment Commission (VLESC) the extension of the program to the rest of Victoria. The Victorian Government has authorised and announced changes to the school bus guidelines that enables young people, 15-24 years old and engaged in accredited education and training programs, to access spare capacity on free school buses.

**Contact:** Leo J Styles, tel: 55378423, e-mail: [styles.leo.j@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:styles.leo.j@edumail.vic.gov.au)

## Case study 10: Pedal to work

**Location:** Northallerton, a regional town in North Yorkshire, England

**Outline:** This is a bicycle leasing scheme, similar to the 'wheels to work' scheme (see case study 4), which provides a transport solution for young people who need a means of getting to their work place, but who travel for shorter journeys of less than 4 miles.

The scheme supplies a bicycle plus support equipment to young people for free, for up to 12 months.

**Benefits:** This scheme allows access to work for young people who would otherwise be transport disadvantaged and possibly not be able to take up an employment opportunity if this scheme was not in existence. There are also obvious health benefits that would accrue to anyone using cycling as their major means of transport on a regular basis.

**Resource Base:** A grant of A\$ 20,000 was used to purchase 12 push bikes. Each youngster was also issued with safety equipment & literature: lights, helmet, reflective belt; Highway Code, video's & manual.

**Contact:** Andrew Johnston, Rural Transport Coordinator, North Yorkshire, UK  
e-mail: [wheels2work@ne.communicate.co.uk](mailto:wheels2work@ne.communicate.co.uk)  
<http://www.communicate.co.uk/ne/wheels2work/>

## Case study 11: Ballarat Safe City Taxi Rank

**Location:** Ballarat City Centre, Ballarat

**Outline:** This service operates every Sunday from 1am to 5.30am and provides a supervised taxi rank in the centre of Ballarat for those coming home from night clubs and late night entertainment. BSCTR also operates on special events such as University 'O' Week, Christmas 'break ups', New Years Eve and Ballarat Cup Day.

The supervised rank enables queued waiting and sorts out taxi sharing. This allows a multishare option where multiple travellers get into the same taxi. Taxi share occupants benefit from a cheaper trip while the taxi driver makes slightly more money per shared trip.

Two Security Staff specifically trained in positive proactive crowd control staff the BSCTR during all operation times. Security staff have been provided with training in patron grouping by the Ballarat Taxi Co-operative.

**Benefits:** This scheme allows a higher degree of safety in the taxi rank, organisation of lift share, and allows young people to get home in a more orderly manner. Through the presence of the security guards the problems of unruly behaviour are not tolerated and are dealt with as necessary.

It is a council led risk reduction program.

**Resources:** BSCTR was established by a Work Group of the Ballarat Safe City Program, a project of the Ballarat Healthy Community Program. This scheme is sponsored by the taxi company and Tabcorp. It costs \$37,000 per year and this covers extensive advertising of the service available aswell as the security guards costs. The scheme is funded on a yearly basis and future funding is not guaranteed.

**Evaluation:** The Ballarat Safe City Taxi Rank (BSCTR) was established in November 2000 and to date has had over 83,174 patrons, who appreciate the security and safety, minimal waiting and prompt transport home. Ballarat Central Business District benefits from reduced public and private property damage, and reduced noise, incidents and threats to staff and clients.

Customer surveys have shown that users appreciate the service for the safety it provides on their homeward journey. Parents of young people using the service also reported that they appreciated the service being available.

*'Excellent idea. Security Guards are very helpful and a real safety requirement' (Over 35-year-old male)*

*'Fantastic service – I have never waited more than 10 minutes even when the line is very long!' (21-25-year-old female)*



Partners involved in this scheme: the Chairperson of the Ballarat Safe City Program & Local Ward Councillor (front centre), local Police Inspector, security guard and various sponsors, including Tabcorp.

**Contact:** Mary Quinn, tel: 53205677, e-mail: [maryquinn@bendigo.vic.gov.au](mailto:maryquinn@bendigo.vic.gov.au)  
Note: a similar rank is available in Warrnambool and Bendigo.

## Case study 12: BAT bus , recreation access for youth

**Location:** Tweed, Byron and Ballina, NSW

**Outline:** This service does not own any vehicles but instead books vehicles as needed. Young people between the ages of 12 to 25 can book a vehicle for no less than 8 people to access a social or recreational activity. This service ensures safe delivery and return of the party to their destination and then back to the meeting point or if necessary their individual homes.

It offers demand responsive transport and young people book it in advance and organise where they want to go. Activities accessed include: movies, the beach, galleries, theme parks, festivals, bowling, rainforest tours, skate parks, national parks/camping, youth activities centre, theatres. The coordinator also offers support and advise on organising an outing as need be.

Prices are kept low to make it the easy and cheap option to take. Volunteer drivers are provided and chaperones can be too as necessary.

**Benefits:** This service allows youth a freedom of access to entertainment that they would not otherwise have. The regional area served has no public transport and young people would otherwise be completely reliant on a car driver to get to entertainment venues and organising lifts is not always possible. It allows the young people to organise their own outings and sort out the transport they need with ease.

“The young people are happy because the service is there, the bus companies are happy because we’re chartering their vehicles and giving them some extra income, and the community loves it because it’s an opportunity for young people to get around independently.” Melissa Armstrong, Coordinator.

**Resource base:** NSW Department of Transport provides \$25,000 per year to pay for coordination of the service and the option of hiring chartered buses and professional drivers as required. It is auspiced by Tweed Byron Ballina Community Transport and has been running successfully for eight years. The coordinator works 8 hours per week taking bookings, a volunteer management committee oversees the project and volunteer drivers are used wherever possible.

**Evaluation:** Evaluations took place annually when the service was first set up, statistics and reports are produced regularly.

**Contact:** Melissa Armstrong, BAT Coordinator, ph: 02 66 858 771, [batbus@norex.com.au](mailto:batbus@norex.com.au)

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## Case study 13: Taxis transit, QLD

**Location:** Mackay in North Queensland

**Outline:** Mackay taxis offer a car sharing service via their taxi fleet. Customers phone up a half hour in advance and those going in a similar direction then get picked up from their homes en route. The service runs to various popular destinations, and the cost is the same as a normal bus fare per passenger, no matter how full each taxi is.

**Benefits:** This community transport services allows car share benefits to be passed on to the customer. Hence customers get a bus fare rate taxi ride that goes in the most direct route to pick up the customers booked in, saving both time and money for users. "Because we're moving people in smaller groups than a bus service, with infrastructure that's already in place, it means that we can do it much more cost-effectively and reduce travel times considerably.' (Max McBride, p10, QCOSS)

**Resource base:** this service operates using the vehicles and infrastructure that form the taxi service Mackay Taxis, including normal sized and maxi-taxis. There is no additional funding built into this service, it is independently run.

**Contact:** Max McBride, Mackay Taxis, tel: 131 008

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