

Public Hearing Inquiry on Access to Transport for Seniors and Disadvantaged People in Rural and Regional Areas

Positive Stories from council-operated community transport services

At the end of the Public Hearing Inquiry on 19 September 2016, the Legislative Assembly Committee on Community Services (The Committee) invited Local Government NSW (LGNSW) to submit positive stories from council examples of how they had addressed local transport issues. Outstanding performance was demonstrated in various areas of service provision such as community partnership, collaboration, leadership and championing the needs of diverse groups. While some of these examples were from Sydney Metropolitan councils, they provide valuable options to consider in the future re-design of transport in rural and regional areas.

Community Partnership

Eurobodalla Shire Council

Many remote villages had no access to public transport at all. Council's CTS filled this gap by providing door-to-door transport to eligible clients. To accommodate the growing number of clients, council developed partnerships with local bus and taxi companies. For example, council referred clients to Rixons' buses who provided services at subsidised rates. They also operated on weekends so clients were able to visit Canberra. Council occasionally used their buses for special trips such as for Aboriginal cultural events.

Mosman Municipal Council

Council has a reciprocal arrangement with two other local CTS providers and is able to use the other providers' assets when needed. This relationship maximised resources and minimised inconveniences to service users.

Collaboration

Wollondilly Shire Council

Council developed a great working relationship with the Transport for NSW Regional Coordinator, who assisted and encouraged Council to apply for the Country Passenger Transport Infrastructure Grants Scheme. As a result, Council was successful in receiving funding and was able to upgrade rural bus stops to increase accessibility.

With growing demand for transport and a shortage on volunteers, council worked with Volunteering Macarthur on the Volunteer Driving Program. Through this collaboration, council secured three more drivers. As a result, all client bookings were successfully accommodated this year.

Leadership

Yass Valley Council

In order to open the CTS to the wider community, council encouraged its clients to rename the bus which is now known as 2582 (the local postcode). Council also successfully applied for funding for an extra local bus to run in Yass and service the transport disadvantaged, regardless of age, socio-economic background or disability.

Championing the needs of diverse groups

Uralla Shire Council

University of New England contacted council to establish a fortnightly bus run for a group of isolated, non-English speaking Iraqi women and children. As a result, this group was able to regularly attend social meetings at the 'One of a Kind' centre in Armidale.

Dubbo Regional Council

Council collaborated with the Wellington Local Aboriginal Land Council and Transport for NSW to attract clients from Aboriginal backgrounds. Extra funding was received to create a bus wrap for one of the buses. A local Aboriginal artist was commissioned to paint an Aboriginal painting, which symbolised Wellington, to reduce barriers and increase community ownership. The Aboriginal community now uses the bus for cultural tours, regional events and local funerals.