

INQUIRY INTO OVERCOMING INDIGENOUS DISADVANTAGE

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YWCA NSW Submission to the Standing Committee on Social Issues: Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage

YWCA NSW has identified lack of adequate transport as a key factor contributing to social exclusion; this is especially notable in urban fringe, regional and rural areas, including indigenous communities. Transport is identified as inaccessible by people in these communities for the following reasons:

- the individual cannot meet the cost of public transport;
- there are insufficient or a complete lack of services and
- there are limited running times or uncoordinated timetables across communities and modes of transport.

Alongside the feelings of isolation and depression that are reported by individuals who are cut off from the community because of a lack of adequate public transport there are other secondary effects for the community. These include:

- increased antisocial behaviour (e.g. driving without a license, stealing cars);
- increased unsafe behaviour (e.g. hitch hiking);
- reduced access to childcare, further education and sporting facilities;
- reduced opportunity for training and employment;
- reduction in the provision of valuable community services by not-for-profit organisations due to the high transport costs that need to be included in service budgets and
- common purchase of cheap cars which are less reliable and thus more expensive to maintain and have greater negative impact on the environment.

YWCA NSW consultation with community representatives focused on exploring some possible solutions to this issue. A recurring idea was the use of a range of transport stock that is currently under-utilised within communities. School buses that are parked for

most of the day or the weekend could become part of a regional response to accessibility. Another possibility is the provision of small bus services which could make several regular trips a day into areas not currently serviced such as outlying villages. Other valuable initiatives which are either in place in some areas or have been trialed are noted below; YWCA NSW would support the implementation of any of these in the appropriate communities:

- **subsidised taxi services, taxi clubs or discount taxi days;**
- **provision of vouchers for use on public transport;**
- **shared car schemes.**